



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Uncompahgre HPP Committee

September 4th, 2019

6:30 p.m.

Uncompahgre HPP Members Present: Kelly Crane, CPW; Bobby Gray, Sportsman; Angela LoSasso, BLM; Todd Stewart, Livestock Grower; Bob Black, Livestock Grower

Guests: John Harold, Bill Head, Austin Shelby, Michael Perkovich, Ethan Mendel, Cady Daniels, Linda Daniels, Mark Caddy, Sydney Mendel, Rahm Haggai, Doug Dillon, Blu Bean, Craig Grother, Courtney Haynes

Introduction: The current remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$58,746.80.

Public Comments:

1. Craig Grother informed the committee that a plan for expanding bike trails on BLM lands around Nucla was being developed. The steering committee for the plan is aware that CPW and HPP have implemented habitat improvement projects in the area, and want to consider habitat and winter range concerns. The current plan involves high-density stacked loops in areas that have previously been treated with mastication work, seeding, travel management, and special distribution hunts. Mr. Grother requested historic HPP project information for the area to present to the planning committee. After the draft plan is completed, it will be submitted to the BLM for NEPA and a public comment period.

New Business:

Project Application Proposals and Reviews:

1. Doug Dillon presented a water development project. The Dillon property was previously considered for a conservation easement, and the committee provided a letter of support due to the importance of the big game habitat in that area; however the easement ultimately fell through. The property is adjacent to USFS, BLM, and SWA lands, and experiences heavy use by deer and elk. There is sufficient water at lower elevations on Sawmill Mesa, however the area where the property is located higher on the Plateau is very dry. Currently, a spring feeds into an old catchment system, but it does not effectively provide a water source for big game. The

proposal includes pumping the spring water to the top of the property, where it will be piped into three 600-gallon drinkers near the SWA and BLM boundaries. The total cost for materials is anticipated to be \$10,000 - \$12,000, and the committee approved \$4,900.

2. The committee reviewed a fencing project for Dave Griffith. The current fences are 100+ years old, and consist of woven wire sheep fence. The Griffiths utilize the area for cattle and hunting. The property is located in important winter range, and is utilized by significant numbers of deer and elk. The project was approved for \$3,627.00 in materials from Game Damage and 6 rolls of high visibility wire from HPP. Landowners will provide labor to remove the old fencing and construct new wildlife-friendly fencing to HPP specs.
3. The committee reviewed a fencing project for Ella Marolf. The property is located in Sanborn Park, and receives heavy winter and spring use by deer and elk. Livestock are only present during the summer. The Marolfs have completed a number of small fence repairs and weed treatments with HPP, and are continuing work on replacing dilapidated old fencing on the property. High-traffic points will have wire gates for crossings. The project was approved for \$2,790 for materials, and 1 roll of high visibility wire.
4. Bill Head presented a fencing proposal for John Harold. The property is located in important migratory and winter range for deer and elk, and the fencing on the property consists of 40,000-feet of old woven wire sheep fence. The project includes removing the sheep fence and replacing it with new wildlife-friendly fence to HPP specs. The total request is for \$94,000, which exceeds the committee's remaining budget for the year. The committee discussed breaking the project into phases to be accomplished across multiple fiscal years, and the landowner indicated that the northern fence line was the highest priority. The project was approved for \$5,000 and 2 rolls of high visibility wire, and the committee will consider funding additional phases of the fence in future years if the landowner returns with subsequent applications.
5. Bill Head also presented a similar proposal for Shirley Thorpe. The project includes removing 2640-feet of old sheep fence and replacing it with wildlife-friendly fence. The project was approved for \$3,000 and 2 rolls of high-visibility wire, and the committee will consider funding additional phases of the fence in future years.
6. The committee reviewed a fencing project from John Lloyd. 3960-feet of existing fence is in severe disrepair from the previous owners, and does not properly contain livestock. Parts of the property are left as forage for big game, and cattle trespass from neighbors and USFS reduces the amount of forage available for big game. The project involves removing the old fence and constructing new wildlife-friendly fence to HPP specs, including 2 jumps. The project was approved for \$5,000.
7. Linda Daniels presented a fencing proposal. The property is located on Big Cimarron, and experiences heavy use by big game, especially during migration. The existing fence consists of old woven sheep wire. The project includes removing 2 miles of old fence, clearing the line, and constructing new wildlife-friendly fence to HPP specs including high visibility wire. The project was approved for \$25,000.
8. Austin Shelby presented a seeding proposal for the CSFS. There has been a large ongoing fire mitigation effort on Log Hill, and many of the landowners are experiencing flushes of weeds in treated areas. The proposal is for seeding the treated areas on 24 different landowners to prevent weed establishment. The committee discussed several concerns with the project, primarily that most of the proposed treatment areas were immediately adjacent to roads or houses within a subdivision. While some of the properties were larger parcels or were adjacent to public lands, the committee did not feel that these would significantly improve habitat for a

large number of big game animals. There were also concerns that improving habitat on these properties may lead to new or increased conflicts with big game and other landowners in the area; as well as issues with cash matches and some of the work already having been completed in previous fiscal years and a lack of long-term maintenance agreements.

The committee identified some of the proposed parcels (or portions of parcels) where the benefit to habitat and wildlife was more appropriate for HPP funding and requested that, if funded, the participating landowners provide a 50% cash match for the seed cost. However, the committee ultimately concluded that the benefits of improving small parcels of habitat within a subdivision were not sufficient to award HPP funding, and the project was denied. The committee noted that fire mitigation projects are generally more oriented towards preserving infrastructure, and while there may be some marginal benefits to habitat, most fire mitigation projects would likely not be a good fit for HPP funds.

Roundtable:

1. The travel management plan for Burn Canyon-McKee Draw is being updated, and a closure of the trail from the county road to the permittee boundary is being implemented. This will help protect important habitat for big game.
2. The HPP Statewide Meeting will be from December 3-5 in Grand Junction.
3. Future potential projects include a fence repair for Melvin Distel; a fence project from Jack Perrin; and a water development from Oscar Massey.

Next Meeting: November 6th @ 6:30pm