



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM STATE COUNCIL MINUTES

**1pm – 5pm on June 17; 8am to 12 noon on June 18
Marriott Residence Inn, Glenwood Springs**

Members Present: Robbie LeValley, Greg Jungman, Mick Davis, Ty Bevan, Gary Visintainer, John Hardwick, Hunter Seim, Sheila Lamb.

CPW Staff: Pat Tucker, Garrett Watson, Michael Blanck, Teri Polley, Katie Richman

Guests: Chris West, NFWF

Ty Bevan from Collbran was introduced as the new Livestock Grower representative on the Council.

Michael Blanck, DWM from Collbran, was introduced as the new HPP Program Manager.

Mick Davis was recognized for his long service to the San Luis Valley HPP committee and to the State Council. Mick received a bronze elk statue in appreciation for all his work.

Budget Information/Discussion:

Pat presented several handouts showing expenses incurred to date. Since bills were still being received and processed, the numbers presented will change.

In those same handouts, committee budget allocations for FY22 were reviewed and approved. The Council had approved a 10% increase in committee budgets for FY21 and FY22 with the intent to evaluate how that money was being spent and whether the increase should remain. However, in light of Covid, the Council felt that FY21 was not a typical/normal year and agreed to extend the 10% increase to FY23 and then evaluate if should remain or be increased or decreased.

Pat also reviewed the Council's \$250,000 funding for weed control and fence work on SWA's. Less than ½ of the money allocated by Council was spent. The Council approved \$250,000 for FY22 for SWA weeds and fences but Pat suggested that the process by which the money is given could be improved to make it easier for CWP staff to access it. Pat suggested that since there was already a process for SWA approvals, that weed and fence projects could follow the same process and the State Council could backfill committee budgets for projects they approved.

State Meeting: Pat reminded the Council that there will not be a state conference in 2021 due to uncertainties around Covid in February and March when hotel contracts and decisions would have had to been made. The next meeting will be in December 2022. Pat reviewed the reasons for the timing of the conference and the other ideas that had been explored. It was noted that only 1/3 of committee members attended the last conference even though the conference was being put on for them and was the main way the Council showed appreciation for all their work.

Virtual Fencing: Pat told the Council that HPP was involved in 2 experimental projects involving virtual fencing, one in Gunnison and one north of Gypsum. Since these were experimental projects, HPP will not participate in any other virtual fence projects at this time; instead we will let these projects get set up and see how things go and if there is a

value to them before any more HPP money is invested. It was noted that there should be several partners in this type of project. A guidance document was reviewed and will be posted on the HPP internal website for future use.

Administrative Assistant Update: The administrative assistant for the NW region left HPP in March and the AA for the NE/SE region left in May. Since Pat was retiring at the end of June, it was decided to wait until his replacement was selected before announcing these vacancies so that the new manager could pick his own staff. Since Michael Blanck has been selected, he will immediately begin working on the hiring process to get 2 new AA's on board. Until then, Pat relayed that only the committees covered by Katie would go back to normal business; the rest of the committees would wait until the new AAs had been hired. It was also pointed out that there would be learning curve as the new AAs and Michael learned the systems.

FS Burns: Pat related that there were 3 FS burns that were extended in FY22 – Gunnison, Vallecito/Piedra and the Haycamp/Boggy Draw. There was a stand alone Boggy Draw burn that was partially completed in FY21 but will not be extended into FY22.

FS/BLM Project Matches: There was discussion about appropriate matches for Forest Service and BLM projects, with the main concern centering around NEPA. It was agreed that NEPA was an agency responsibility and should not be the only match that a federal agency is providing for a HPP project. However, it was pointed out that the larger projects that HPP was interested in did occur on federal lands. No resolution was made but this issue will continue to be discussed. It will also be encouraged at the local levels to have the agencies provide better project matches.

Pat's Retirement: Pat had announced his retirement from CPW effective June 30th and the Council expressed their appreciation for the 15 years of service Pat had put in to the HPP program and a shadow box was given to Pat.

HPP Legislation: The statutory provisions for HPP funding expire at the end of June 2023. The Council had previously prepared a list of desired changes to the current statutes that emphasize clarifying existing statutes, maintaining the statutes that are working for the program and enacting statutes that improve the efficiency of the program. The Council reviewed the earlier document, made an addition in the purchasing section to allow for a CPI increase, and approved it as their desired proposal. This is essentially the same document that had been in circulation before and this makes the proposal ready to go to the legislature whenever HPP is allowed to by DNR and the Governor.