

ARKANSAS RIVER HPP

DISTRIBUTION MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENTS

CHANGES FROM 2010-2020

- Added “Executive Summary” section.
- Consolidated and updated “Introduction”.
- Updated committee members.
- Added “HPP Orientation” section.
- Added HPP Statute.
- Expanded on and updated “Committee Objectives and Strategies”.
- Updated “Area and Habitat Descriptions” and added GMU Boundary and Land Ownership Map.
- Added big game population summary info with current data including summer and winter range maps for Elk, Deer, Pronghorn, and Moose.
- Added “Impact Areas” section.
- Added “Game Management Objectives” section.
- Added “Operating Guidelines” section to show minimum requirements when considering project funding.
- Added “Operating Guidelines” section regarding program eligibility
- Updated “Management Activities” section and renamed it “Management Strategies”.
- Updated “Budget Guidelines” section.
- Added “Current and Foreseeable Issues” section.
- Removed “Arkansas River HPP Committee Accomplishments” and “ARHPP Fencing Program 1996-2009” sections.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Habitat Partnership Program
Arkansas River



DISTRIBUTION MANAGEMENT PLAN



DRAFT

Approved- Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission _____
This plan is valid for 10 years from approval date.

2020-2030

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	2
Map: Arkansas River HPP Area.....	3
Committee Members.....	4
Introduction.....	5
-HPP Orientation	
HPP Statute.....	6
Committee Objectives & Strategies.....	7
AR HPP Area Description.....	8
-Map: GMU Boundaries	
-Map: Land Ownership	
-Habitat Description	
Big Game Population Summary.....	10
-Maps: Deer, Elk, Moose, and Pronghorn Range	
-Impact Areas & Map	
-Game Management Objectives	
Project Types & Priorities.....	17
Operating Guidelines.....	18
Management Strategies.....	19
Budget Guidelines.....	20
Current & Foreseeable Issues.....	21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Distribution Management Plan (DMP) is the basic framework for the Arkansas River HPP Committee for the next ten years - 2020 to 2030. The updated plan drafted by the Arkansas River HPP committee is centered on the goals and objectives of the committee. These include addressing forage and fence conflicts caused by big game, endorsing sound stewardship practices, continuing to work on improving habitat on both public and private land, and promoting connectivity between projects. These actions will seek to benefit both domestic livestock and wildlife populations alike.

The Arkansas River HPP committee has seen several significant changes to the program area since the last DMP update. These include an increase in population growth and the subsequent development of historic open space, working ranches, and landscapes into subdivisions and second home sites. The area has also seen an increase in outdoor recreation. All of these activities have resulted in both a loss of habitat and increased habitat fragmentation. The committee will continue to monitor and adapt to these changes, and projects will be implemented wherever the committee believes that they will effectively reduce or eliminate big game conflicts and assist CPW in achieving game management objectives.

The Arkansas River HPP committee has identified project types and priorities and developed operating guidelines to help inform funding decisions and prioritization of projects. Budget guidelines show allocations of funds based on past projects and request. Budget allocations may change as new opportunities arise. The committee has identified current and foreseeable issues for the area and has specified project types and management strategies that are aimed at adapting to these issues in order to continue reducing wildlife conflicts and helping CPW in achieving game management objectives.

The committee will continue to be flexible in addressing conflicts, resolving issues and focus on the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat on both private and public lands.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Jeff Williams, BLM Representative, Chairman | Started HPP Term: Nov. 2009 |
| 2. Aaron Atwood, Livestock Grower Representative | Started HPP Term: Mar. 1994 |
| 3. Joe Moore, Livestock Grower Representative | Started HPP Term: Jun. 2012 |
| 4. Brett McMurry, Livestock Grower Representative | Started HPP Term: Mar. 2015 |
| 5. Tyrel Woodward, Sportsman Representative | Started HPP Term: Jan. 2019 |
| 6. Jim Aragon, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Representative | Started HPP Term: Jan. 2003 |
| 7. Stephanie Shively, U.S. Forest Service Representative | Started HPP Term: Jan. 2013 |

INTRODUCTION

The Arkansas River Habitat Partnership Program Committee was established in March, 1994 to address conflicts between wildlife populations and livestock operators. The committee consists of seven members representing agriculture, sportsmen, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Historically, lands in the committee area were primarily used for agriculture production, natural resources, and recreation. Some past management practices by public and private landowners have led to increased forest densities, spread of noxious weeds, and lack of plant species diversity. Like much of Colorado, the area has recently experienced significant growth in human population, housing development and recreation. Development in many areas is changing the character of the land use and impacting traditional ranching through transition of agriculture open space to rural subdivisions. An increase in recreation has resulted in conflicts with permitted livestock grazing on public lands and displacement of big game wildlife populations. These impacts are beginning to increase the fence and forage conflicts within the committee area through loss of wildlife habitat and increased big game damage on ranch lands. Population growth and recreation is expected to increase into the future resulting in further challenges to the committee.

The committee is actively involved in mitigating and minimizing conflicts between big game and agricultural interests in an area that contains a wide variety of big game species and landownership patterns. Partnerships have been developed with both private landowners and public land agencies in order to address the identified conflicts and assist CPW in achieving game management objectives. Solutions have involved habitat improvement through large scale vegetation manipulation projects, water enhancement projects, and fencing on both private and public lands.

HPP ORIENTATION

HPP was initially started to resolve fence and forage conflicts caused to agricultural operators by deer, elk, pronghorn and moose. While the law governing HPP was broadened in 2002 (“...reduce wildlife conflicts...game management objectives”), in 2017 the State Council and the NW Region Manager reaffirmed the intent and focus of HPP.

This direction provides for HPP participation, whether by local committees or the State Council, to be limited to those conflict resolution projects or game management objective projects that involve deer, elk, pronghorn and moose.

HPP STATUTE - (C.R.S. 33-1-110)

(8) (a) The habitat partnership program is hereby created to assist the division of parks and wildlife by working with private land managers, public land management agencies, sports persons, and other interested parties to reduce wildlife conflicts, particularly those associated with forage and fence issues, and to assist the division of parks and wildlife in meeting game management objectives through duties as deemed appropriate by the director.

(b) The director, with the approval of the commission, shall have the authority to appoint a "habitat partnership committee", referred to in this section as a "committee", in any area of the state where conflicts between wildlife and private land owners and managers engaged in the management of public and private land exist.

(c) A committee shall consist of the following members: One sports person who purchases big game licenses on a regular basis in Colorado; three persons representing livestock growers in the area of the state in which the committee is being established; one person from each of the federal agencies that has land management responsibilities in such area of the state; and one person from the Colorado division of parks and wildlife. All persons on any such committee shall be residents of the state of Colorado.

(d) The duties of a committee are the following:

(I) To develop big game distribution management plans to resolve rangeland forage, growing hay crop, harvested crop aftermath grazing, and fence conflicts subject to commission approval;

(II) To monitor program effectiveness and to propose to the council changes in guidelines and land acquisition planning and review as appropriate;

(III) To request for the committee, on an annual basis, funds from the council consistent with the distribution management plan developed by any such committee;

(IV) To expend funds allocated by the council or acquired from other sources as necessary to implement distribution management plans;

(V) To make an annual report of expenditures and accomplishments of the committee to the council by August 15 of each year;

(VI) To nominate a person to act as a representative of agricultural livestock growers or crop producers to the habitat partnership council for the area of the state where such committee is organized;

(VII) To reduce wildlife and land management conflicts as the conflicts relate to big game forage and fence issues and other management objectives.

(e) The committee shall be authorized to procure from land owners, land managers, or other providers, materials or services necessary for carrying out activities identified in the distribution management plans pursuant to subparagraph (IV) of paragraph (d) of this subsection (8); except that all such procurements shall be certified as within the scope of the activities and funding levels authorized in such distribution management plans before any such procurement may be authorized.

COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Resolve fence and forage conflicts and minimize game damage on public and private lands. Identify and mitigate forage and fence conflicts and impacts through a range of prescriptions on private and public lands to affect distribution and increase big game harvest in those areas with conflict.

Strategy:

- Reduce big game forage conflict on private agriculture lands by implementing habitat improvement projects on adjacent public lands.
- Work with public land agencies and private landowners to improve livestock distribution techniques through implementation of water developments and fencing to reduce forage conflicts.
- Work with landowners who harbor elk during hunting season to improve hunting opportunities and elk dispersal.
- Provide technical information, materials and/or financial aid to landowners experiencing fence damages caused by big game.
- Leverage funding from a variety of partnerships.

Objective 2: Stewardship- Support the agricultural community for persistence of healthy traditional agricultural operations; provide guidance to landowners to encourage comprehensive land management plans and a community-based collaborative effort; assist private landowners with financial and technical support in the implementation of conservation practices and habitat enhancements.

Strategy:

- Develop methods to “showcase” good stewardship that benefits wildlife habitat.
- Avoid contributing to management practices detrimental to wildlife and agriculture.
- Providing educational materials to promote accountable land stewardship and responsible recreation.
- Leverage funding from a variety of partnerships.

Objective 3: Habitat Enhancement and Protection- Implement habitat improvement projects designed to resolve wildlife conflicts by fostering relationships with agencies, organizations, and individuals that will promote productive discussions; and integrating resources that will allow the implementation of cooperative projects dedicated to the benefit of wildlife habitat.

Strategy:

- Prioritize projects that will leverage multiple benefits to the wildlife resource by using established criteria to evaluate proposals.
- Maintain a strong positive relationship with natural resource managers, sportsmen, and landowners.
- Enhance habitat on public lands to support resource management objectives.
- The Committee will give a high priority to forage enhancement and improvements on public and private lands when conservation partners and/or organizations demonstrate a significant cost share.
- Leverage funding from a variety of partnerships.

Objective 4: Connectivity- Increase effectiveness of habitat manipulation projects and implement a landscape-scale philosophy by increasing the scope and connectivity of projects.

Strategy:

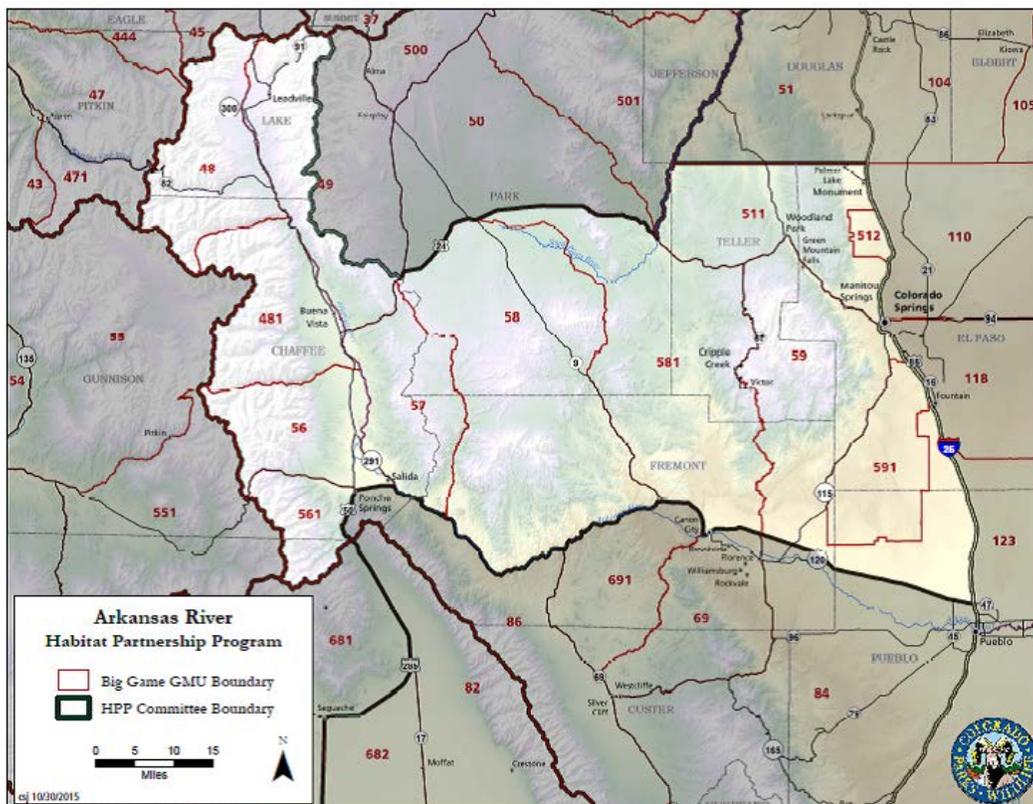
- Develop and maintain a map depicting past, ongoing and prospective habitat projects.
- Solicit and coordinate habitat treatments which incorporate public and private land, creating a link between past and future treatments on a landscape scale.
- Increase percentage of external matching funds contributed to HPP projects.

ARKANSAS RIVER HPP AREA DESCRIPTION

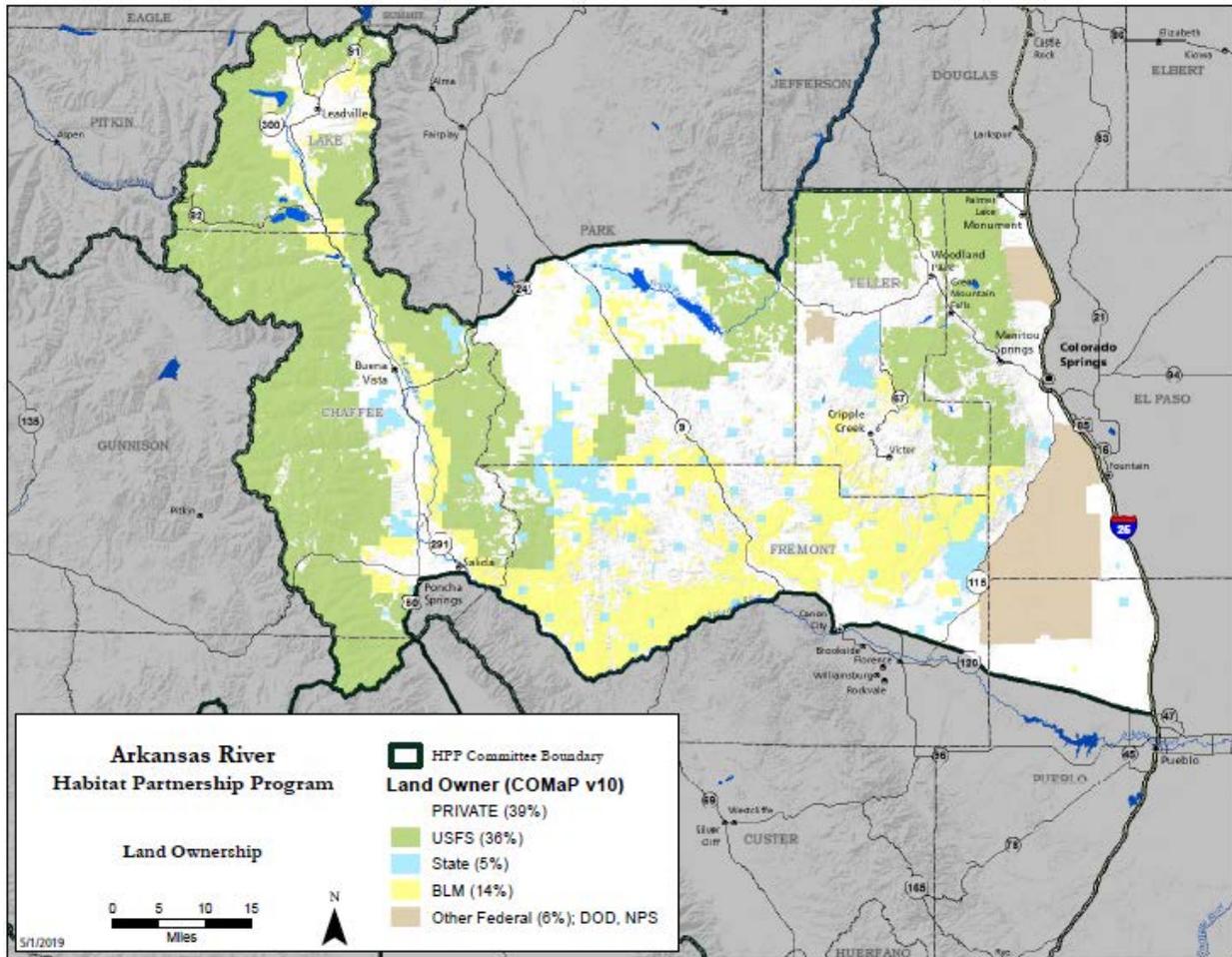
The Arkansas River program area is in central Colorado and includes all of Game Management Units (GMU) 48, 481, 56, 561, 57, 58, 581, 59, 591, 511 and 512 and the Lake and Chaffee county portions of GMU 49. Ownership of the 4,308 square miles in the program area is 39% private, 36% U.S. Forest Service, 14% Bureau of Land Management, 5% State of Colorado, and 6% other federal. The area ranges from 4,800 feet elevation at the southeast corner, at Pueblo, to the highest point in Colorado, Mount Elbert, at 14,433 feet.

The program area includes the western half of the city of Colorado Springs, the northern portion of Pueblo and the towns of Woodland Park, Canon City, Salida, Buena Vista and Leadville. Around and between these cities are large expanses of rural residential developments ranging in density from one house per one half acre to one house per forty acres. Also included in the program area are Fort Carson and the Air Force Academy.

ARKANSAS RIVER GMU BOUNDARY MAP



ARKANSAS RIVER HPP LAND OWNERSHIP MAP



HABITAT DESCRIPTION

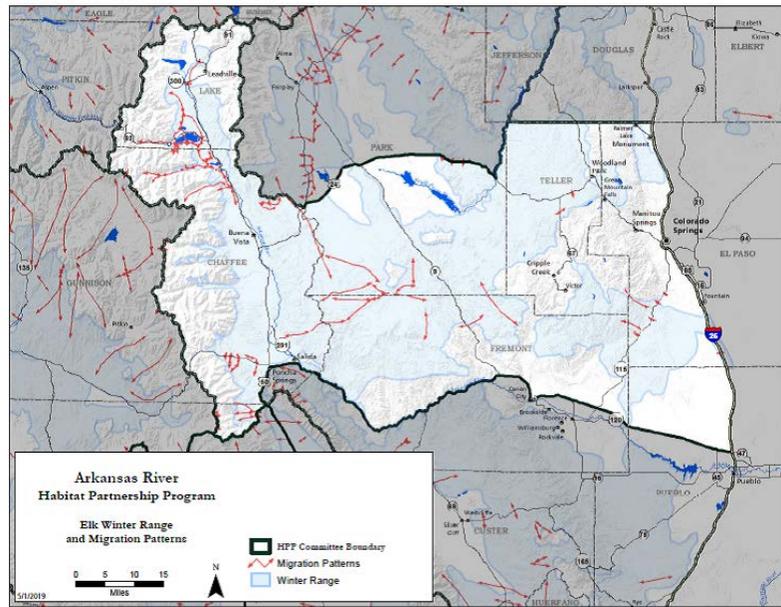
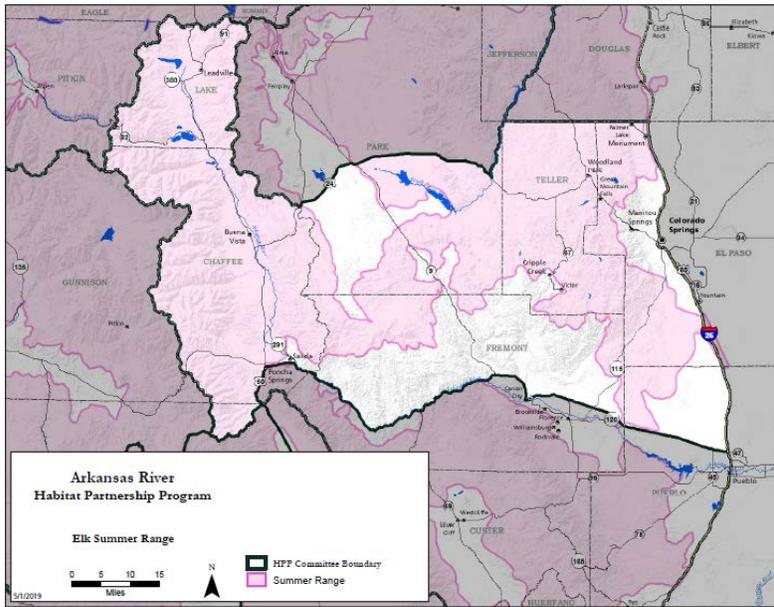
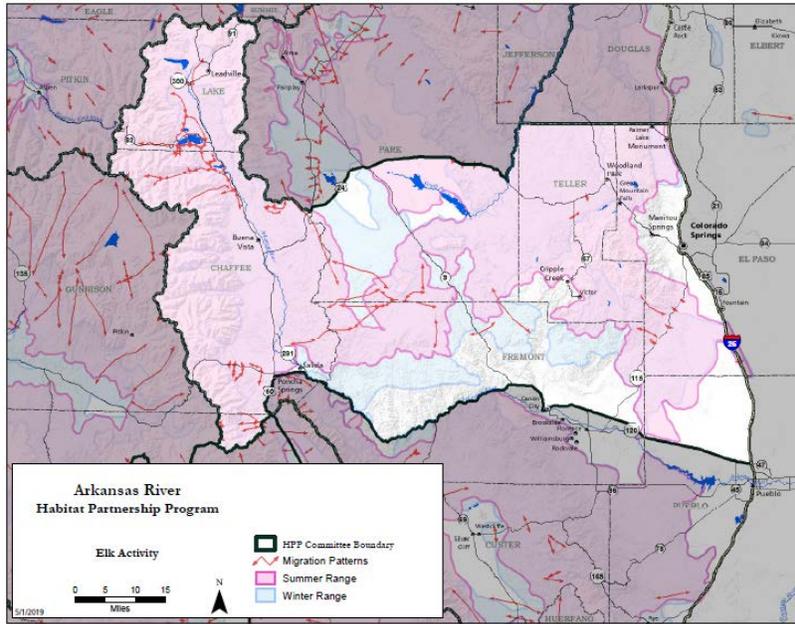
The Arkansas River HPP area extends from approximately 4,640 feet in elevation on the eastern portion of the area to 14,433 feet in elevation at the summit of Mount Elbert in Lake County. The continental divide and Collegiate Peaks dominate the area on the west boundary.

Principal biotic communities include short-grass prairie grassland, montane shrub, montane conifer, montane grassland, sub-alpine conifer and alpine. The wide variety of habitat types provides for varied animal densities and therefore varied conflicts. Precipitation in the form of rainfall and snowfall, along with elevation, drive the biotic communities. The higher elevations receive upwards of 20 inches annually while lower elevations may receive less than 6 inches. Agriculture is the most dominant land use in the Arkansas River HPP area with livestock grazing occurring on both private and public lands. Along the valley bottoms and river courses, irrigated fields of hay and alfalfa can be found. Truck farms, nurseries, and orchards are in operation near the towns of Penrose and Canon City. The Canon City and Salida areas have both seen increased development of marijuana and hemp farms.

The Arkansas River, namesake of the committee, is the major river system in the area. Tributaries, which flow into the Arkansas River, include South Fork of the Arkansas, North Fork of the Arkansas, Cottonwood Creek, Half-moon Creek, Trout Creek, Badger Creek, Four Mile Creek and Fountain Creek. There are numerous other smaller drainages throughout the area.

BIG GAME POPULATION SUMMARY

ELK RANGE MAPS



ELK - The Arkansas River HPP area includes three Data Analysis Units (DAU) or Herd Management areas.

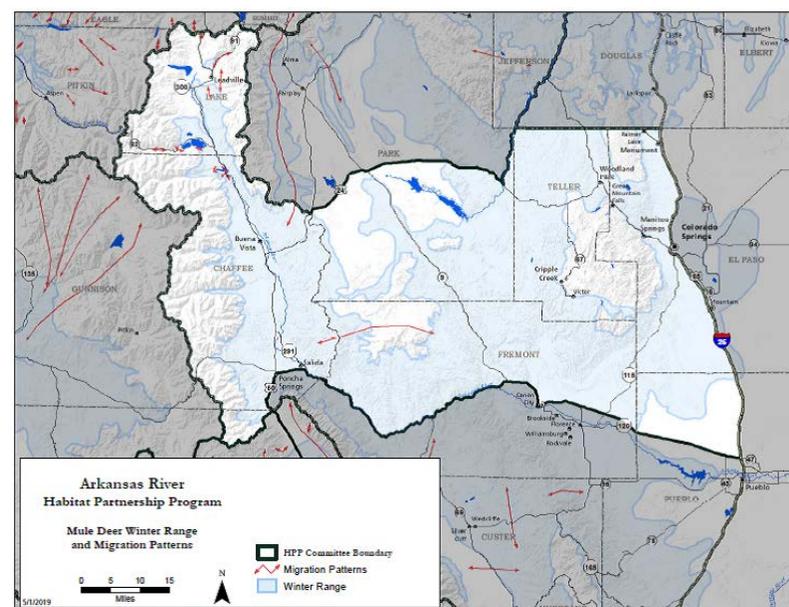
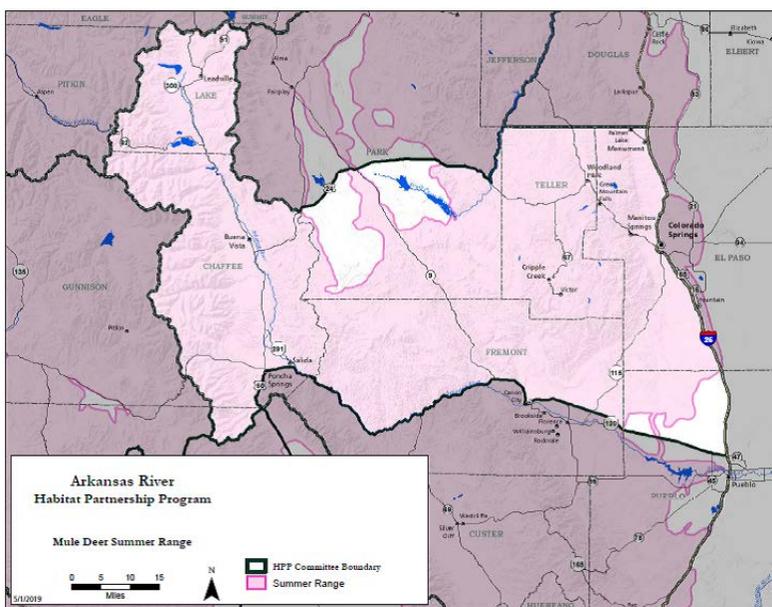
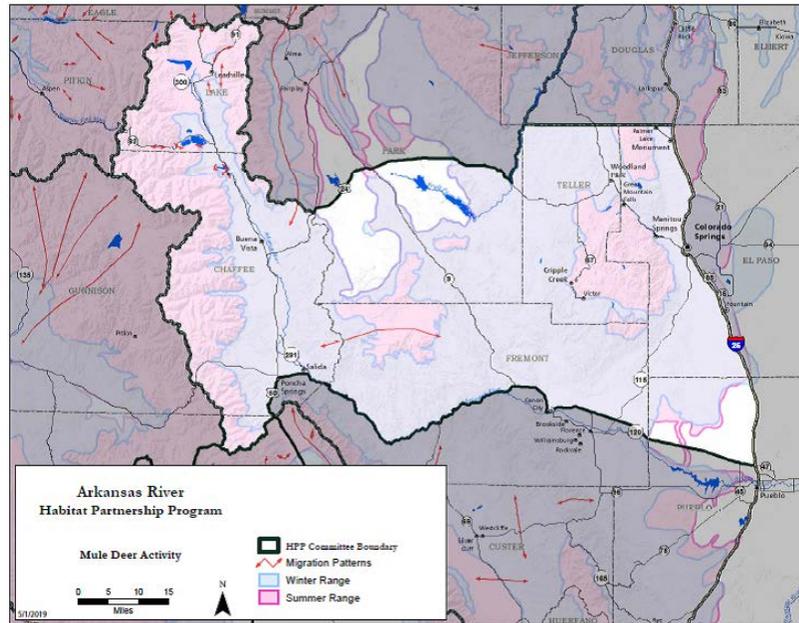
E-17 - Collegiate Range includes GMUs 48, 56, 481, 561. It is located on the western side of the Upper Arkansas Valley, east of the Continental Divide and runs from Leadville south to the summit of Poncha Pass. Forage conflicts caused by elk are concentrated on agricultural fields at lower elevations occurring throughout the growing season. This elk population is currently within the Management Objective of 3,150 - 3,500 animals.

E-22 - Buffalo Peaks includes GMUs 49, 57, 58. It is located on the east side of the Upper Arkansas Valley and runs from Leadville south to Colorado Highway 9, located outside of Canon City. Conflicts caused by elk are limited to isolated agricultural areas and growing crops. This population is approximately 500 animals over the Management Objective of 3,150 - 3,500 animals.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is currently attempting to bring this herd within population objectives through regular season licenses.

E-23 - Eleven Mile includes GMUs 59, 511, 581, 591. It is located west of Interstate 25 including portions of Fremont, Pueblo, El Paso, Park and Teller counties. This area also includes Fort Carson Military Base and The Air Force Academy. Forage conflicts caused by elk occur mainly in the western portion of this area. This herd is slightly over the population objective of 2,700 - 3,300 animals by 200 animals. Efforts are being made by CPW to bring this herd within population objective through regular season licenses and use of dispersal licenses in those areas where conflicts are occurring.

DEER RANGE MAPS



DEER- The Arkansas River HPP area includes three Data Analysis Units (DAU) or Herd Management areas.

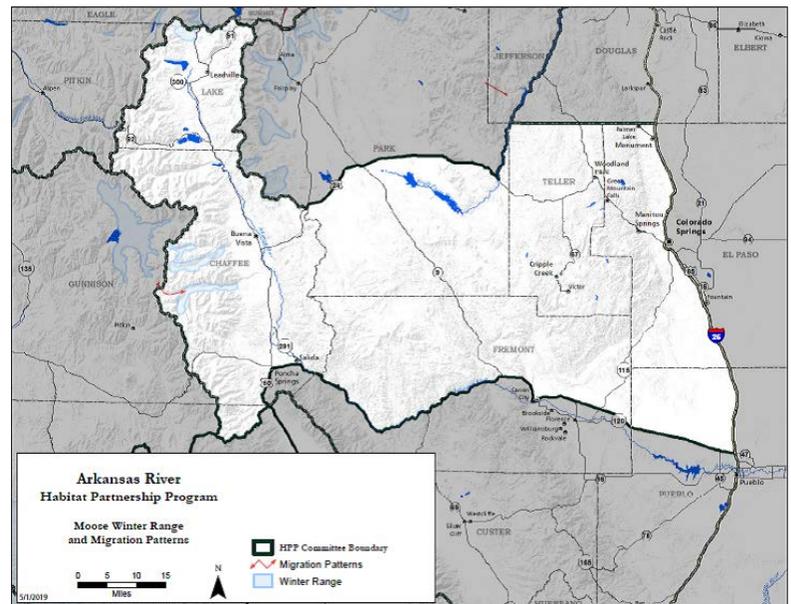
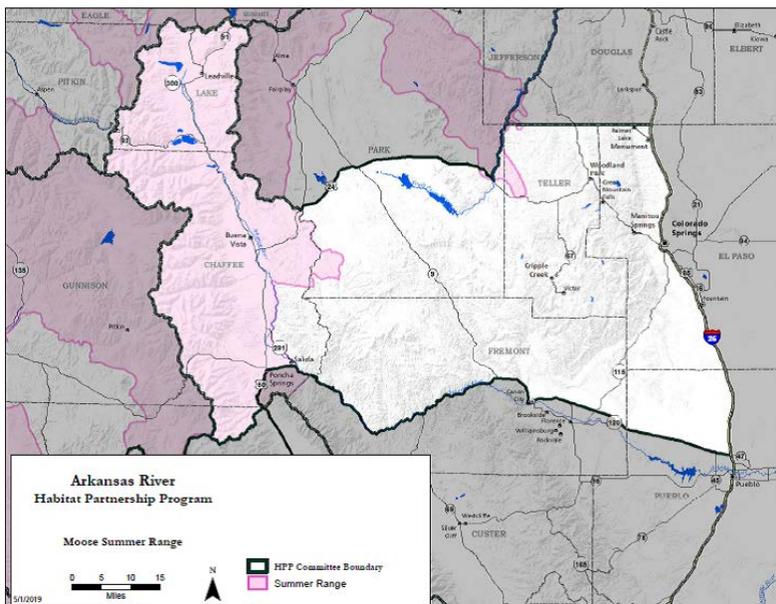
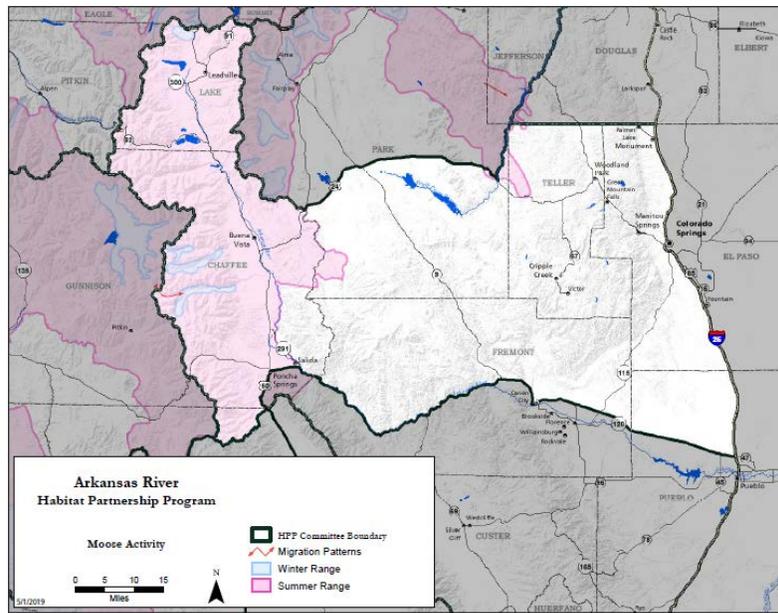
D15 - Cottonwood Creek includes GMUs 48, 56, 481, and 561. It is located on the western side of the Upper Arkansas Valley and east of the Continental Divide and runs from Leadville to the

summit of Poncha Pass. Currently the population is below the population objective of 7,000 - 7,700 animals by 3,000 animals. Conflicts caused by deer are minimal in this area.

D16 - Cripple Creek includes GMUs 49, 57, 58, 581. The area runs from Leadville south and east to the Phantom Canyon Road in Fremont County. Currently the population is below the population objective of 16,000 - 20,000 animals by 2,000 animals. Conflicts caused by deer are minimal in this area.

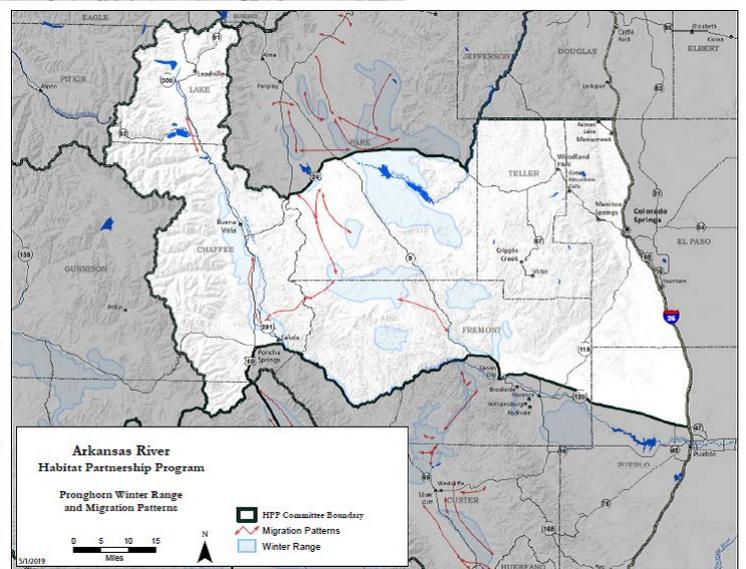
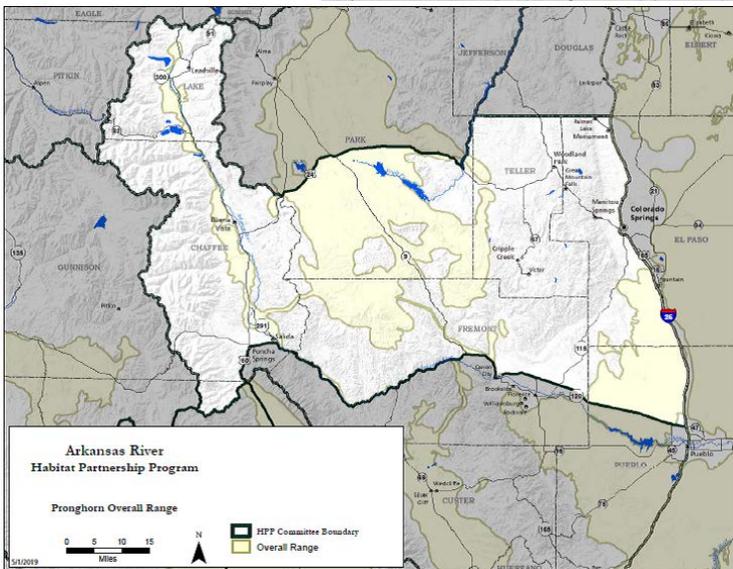
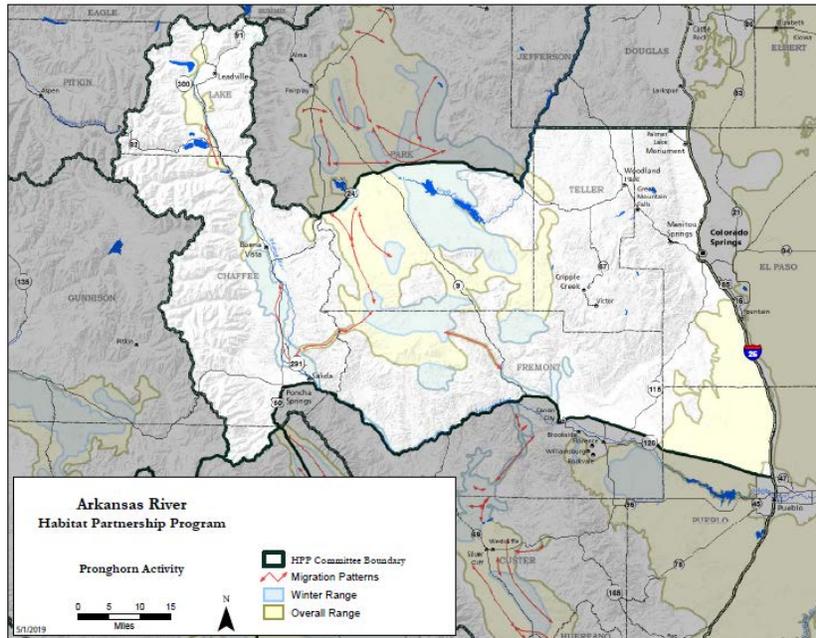
D50 - Rampart includes GMUs 59, 591, 511, 512. It is located west of Interstate 25 and includes portions of Fremont, Pueblo, El Paso, Teller and Park counties. This area includes both Fort Carson and Air Force Academy military installations. Currently the population is within the population objective of 4,000 - 5,000 animals with a population of 4,500 animals. Conflicts caused by deer are minimal in the area and if present, fall outside the efforts of HPP and are centered in the Urban/Wildland interface.

MOOSE RANGE MAPS



MOOSE- The Arkansas River HPP committee area currently does not have a Herd Management Plans for Moose that fall within the boundary area. Moose are expanding into the area, predominately on the west side of the committee area in GMUs 48, 481, 56, 561. It is estimated the population ranges from 45 - 55 animals. That portion of GMU 49 which falls within the Arkansas River HPP committee area is estimated to contain 50 moose. Currently there are no known conflicts between the low number of moose that occur in the area and livestock producers.

PRONGHORN RANGE MAPS



PRONGHORN- The Arkansas river HPP area includes three Data Analysis Units (DAU) or Herd Management areas.

PH-30 - South Park includes GMUs 49, 50, 57, 58, 500, 511, 581. The eastern portion of GMU 49 and GMUs 50 and 501 do not fall within the Arkansas River HPP area. Conflicts with pronghorn are minimal in those areas within the Arkansas River HPP area where they are found. Population Objective for PH-30 is 1,000 - 1,200 animals. Current population estimate is 1,060 animals.

PH-39 - Collegiate Range includes GMUs 48, 56, 481. The Herd Management Plan is currently being developed. Draft Population Objective is 150 -200 animals with a current population estimate of 200 animals. Currently there are no pronghorn conflicts within this area.

PH-31 - includes GMUs 59 and 591 and currently does not have a DAU or Herd Management Plan. Pronghorn habitat is limit within these GMUs and no conflicts are noted.

Table 1. Data Analysis Unit Summary for Arkansas River HPP Area

Management Herd	1990s Population Avg.	2000s Population Avg.	2010 - 2018 Population Avg.	Current Population Management Objective
Elk- Collegiate Range E-17	4,500	4,000	3,500	3,150-3,850
<i>Game Management Units:</i>	48, 56, 481, 561			
Elk- Buffalo Peaks E-22	4,000	4,000	4,000	3,150-3,500
<i>Game Management Units^:</i>	49, 57, 58			
Elk- Eleven Mile E-23	4,000	3,500	3,500	2,700-3,300
<i>Game Management Units:</i>	59, 511, 581, 591			
Deer- Cottonwood Creek D-15	4,000	5,000	4,000	7,000-7,700
<i>Game Management Units:</i>	48, 56, 481, 561			
Deer- Cripple Creek D-16	8,000	12,000	14,000	16,000-20,000
<i>Game Management Units^:</i>	49, 57, 58, 581			
Deer- Rampart D-50	4,000	5,000	4,500	4,000-5,000
<i>Game Management Units:</i>	59, 591, 511, 512			
Moose	+	+	+	No Objective
<i>Game Management Units:</i>	48, 481, 56, 561			
Pronghorn- South Park PH-30	+	+	+	1,000-1,200
<i>Game Management Units^:</i>	49, 50, 57, 58, 500, 511, 581			
Pronghorn- Collegiate Range PH-39	+	+	+	150-200*
<i>Game Management Units:</i>	48, 56, 481			
Pronghorn PH-31	+	+	+	No Objective
<i>Game Management Units:</i>	59, 591			

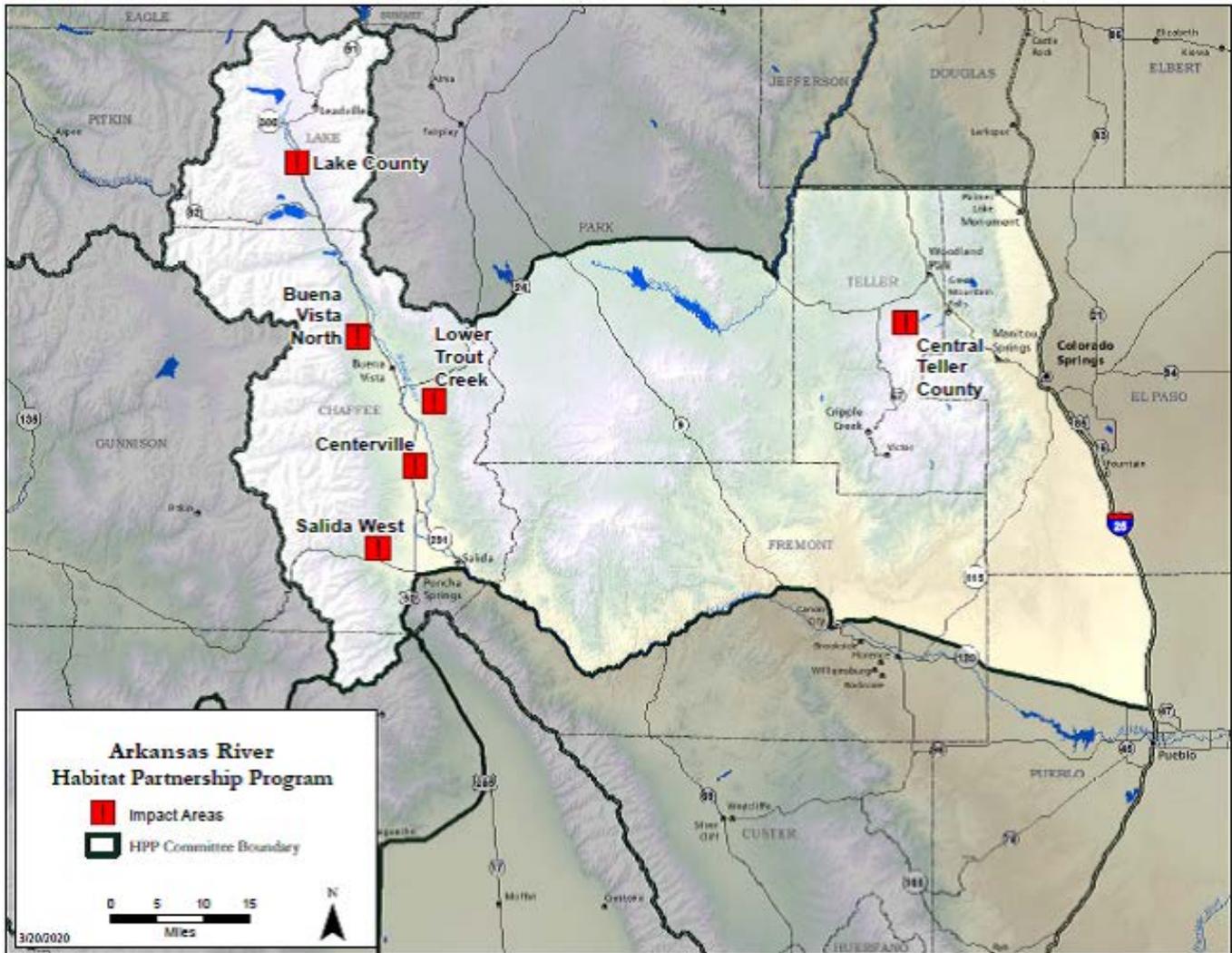
*DAU plan being rewritten in 2020 or 2021-Objective may change

+ Not enough information to model population

^GMUs 50 and the east side of 49 do not fall in the ARHPP committee area

IMPACT AREAS

Impact Areas are identified geographical locations within the service area of the Arkansas River Committee where, historically, game damage conflicts between growing crops, and residual forage and big game animals, primarily deer and elk, have occurred. These areas are agricultural farms and ranches, which are privately owned and operated. Impacts vary from seasonal to year round depending on location. Development in surrounding areas has influenced big game use on adjoining properties and often creates artificial refuges due to limitations on hunting, resulting in a reduction in harvest of big game animals. Habitat improvement projects have been done in or near most of the identified impact areas. These projects include thinning, roller-chopping, and water developments. Fence conflicts occur throughout the program area and these conflicts are addressed through assistance to landowners in the form of fence repair materials and a reimbursement program.



LAKE COUNTY - The Lake County impact area is comprised of several privately owned ranches. These properties are some of the few remaining working ranches in the area. Conflicts include fence damage and wintering elk on residual forage.

BUENA VISTA NORTH - The Buena Vista North impact area consists of privately owned hay fields, which elk impact. This conflict includes both growing crop issues and residual forage.

LOWER TROUT CREEK - The Lower Trout Creek impact area is several privately owned hay fields irrigated by the use of center pivots. These areas are impacted by both deer and elk during the growing season and loss of residual forage.

CENTERVILLE- The Centerville impact area is one of the largest impact areas within the Arkansas River. Geographically, the area is comprised of working ranches, hay production areas and large lot subdivisions. Conflicts include year round use by elk on growing hay fields and residual forage.

SALIDA WEST - The Salida West impact area consists of the few remaining working farms and ranches west of Salida. The conflicts in this area are predominately associated with elk on growing crops.

CENTRAL TELLER COUNTY - The Central Teller County impact area involves both forage and fence conflicts. This area consists of working ranches and developed subdivisions. Harvest opportunities are limited due to presence of large subdivisions in rural areas and Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument.

Projects will be implemented wherever the committee believes that they will effectively reduce or eliminate big game conflicts and assist CPW in achieving game management objectives within the Arkansas River HPP area. The committee understands that changing land use patterns, recreational pressures on wildlife habitat, and other new challenges may affect these impact areas as well as create new impact areas in the future. These issues may also create the need for projects intended to achieve/maintain desired management objectives.

GAME MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

In addition to resolving wildlife conflicts, HPP is also statutorily directed to “assist the division in meeting game management objectives...” This assistance will be directed towards a) maintaining/increasing the population in a given area primarily by habitat manipulation projects; b) maintaining/decreasing the population in a given area primarily by habitat manipulation projects and/or pursuing hunting opportunities; and c) participating in research activities aimed at habitat, population, disease, and/or movement factors that influence big game populations.

PROJECT TYPES & PRIORITIES

Habitat Manipulation: (including but not limited to)

- Prescribed burning
- Water developments
- Weed control
- Herbicide Vouchers
- Fertilization
- Seeding
- Hand thinning
- Mechanical treatment (chaining, roller chopping, hydro axing, etc.)

Fencing Projects: (including but not limited to)

- Fence vouchers for fence repair materials
- Construction of new fences (usually > ¼ mile in length)
- Landowner reimbursement for purchased fencing materials
- Prototype or experimental fence designs
- Wildlife crossings or retrofitting fences to be more wildlife-friendly

Game Damage Projects: (including but not limited to)

- Stackyards- materials and/or labor
- Distribution hunts
- Hunt coordinators for distribution hunts, youth hunts, etc.
- Forage purchases

Baiting

Information/Education Projects: (including but not limited to)

Seminars

Workshops

Brochures

Electronic media: websites, etc.

Comment letters

Travel management: signage, temporary fencing, etc.

Research/Monitoring Projects: (including but not limited to)

Habitat

Population

Inventory

Movement

Conservation Easements (transaction costs only)

Archaeological Clearances (and other NEPA required clearances)

HPP projects may be undertaken on public lands, private lands or a combination of both as needed wherever the local committee believes the project has the best chance to effectively reduce, minimize or eliminate the big game/livestock conflict or assist CPW in meeting big game management objectives.

OPERATING GUIDELINES

In order to accomplish the goals and objectives of this plan, the Arkansas River HPP committee will utilize the projects listed above in accordance with the following operating guidelines:

1. Has the applicant/landowner acted in good faith and cooperation with CPW? To maximize program effectiveness, applicants or landowners with a history of misconduct related to the HPP program shall be ineligible for program participation.
2. The committee prefers that the landowner/applicant is engaged in agricultural production or livestock operations. Project applications from landowners that are engaged in agricultural productions or livestock operations may be given preference over those that are not.
3. Applicants must allow a reasonable amount of hunter access on their property during big game seasons.
4. Applicants may not have charged more than \$500.00 average per gun for hunting access, vouchers, or services on their property.
5. Fencing vouchers are provided to eligible landowners. If damage is greater than what can be covered by one voucher, landowner is encouraged to appear before the committee and discuss other fence alternatives or request additional assistance.

6. This is a partnership program, so the committee encourages applicants to have a 50/50 match for funding requests. This can be a cash match or an in-kind match.
7. A completed HPP project application is required for all projects.
8. The HPP project evaluation is required at the completion of all projects. The committee and/or its representatives will make site inspections to monitor progress and success of projects.
9. Project applicants are strongly encouraged to attend meetings to assist in presentation of the project. If project applicants are unable to attend the meeting to present their project to the committee, the committee may table the project until the applicant can attend.

In an effort to be consistent and fair to all applicants, the committee has established operating guidelines that detail priorities, eligibility requirements, project rules and limits, and other policies. The committee retains the authority to review and update these guidelines as necessary to meet the changing needs of the program area; however, these standard rules should apply to most HPP projects and will be enforced by the committee with few exceptions.

Monitoring projects is critical for the long- term sustainability of the HPP program. To provide documentation, determine treatment effectiveness, and be able to convey results, monitoring will be done on all projects. Specific monitoring methodology shall be matched to the treatment. Monitoring data will be submitted to the HPP local committee and Administrative Assistant.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Management strategies were developed to achieve the committee's objectives. Strategies primarily involve resolving big game conflicts through habitat manipulation, fencing, and game damage projects; or achieving big game management objectives through information and education, research and monitoring, or conservation easements. Most HPP projects will fall into one of the following management strategy categories.

1. HABITAT MANIPULATION: Improving habitat on private, public, and tribal lands draws big game away from impact areas; improves big game distribution; holds big game for longer periods of time on public lands; or improves forage abundance, availability, or palatability such that it reduces competition between big game and livestock.
2. FENCING PROJECTS: Repair of existing fences and/or construction of new fences help alleviate ongoing big game damage, and offset the financial burden to landowners. Fences will be wildlife-friendly to HPP specifications. Maintenance of fences will be the responsibility of the landowner.
3. GAME DAMAGE PROJECTS: Providing stack yards for landowners otherwise ineligible for them and using hunt coordinators and forage purchases address pending damage problems that CPW may be financially liable for.
4. INFORMATION AND EDUCATION: Producing and distributing informative materials helps public land agencies and private land managers educate the public and provides information about the programs, agencies, conflicts and user responsibilities. Travel management may include signage or education on closures or activities that will benefit big game.

5. **RESEARCH & MONITORING:** Projects will include, but not be limited to, those focusing on habitat condition, populations, inventory, and movement patterns. While these types of projects may be funded, the committee’s primary focus will be on conflict resolution between big game and livestock.
6. **CONSERVATION EASEMENTS:** Conservation easements help to protect a property’s conservation values, particularly agricultural productivity, wildlife habitat, and hunting access.

BUDGET GUIDELINES

The base-operating budget for the State HPP program is based on 5% of total annual revenues for big game license sales in Colorado. The HPP State Council then allocates funding to the individual HPP committees. The Arkansas River HPP budget was developed to best meet the goals and objectives outlined earlier in the plan, while maintaining the flexibility to deal with emergencies and take advantage of opportunities.

Within certain parameters, the statewide HPP financial system allows local HPP committees to carry specific project dollars over from year to year if the project is ongoing or the funds have been committed. This allows us to better address long-term management and larger, more complicated projects as well as giving us the flexibility to more efficiently prioritize our projects.

Additional funds are also available through the HPP State Council for special projects or unforeseen opportunities outside of the capacity of the committee. These dollars supplement our existing budget and allow us to take on special projects from time to time.

The Arkansas River HPP Committee has developed a budget allocation in line with our vision, which allows for short-term strategies to deal with immediate fence and forage conflicts caused by big game, but concentrates on adaptive, long-term management strategies leading to the establishment of healthy and sustainable rangelands. Our budget for the ten-year period has been broken down as follows:

BASE BUDGET ALLOCATION:

Habitat Manipulation	60%
Fencing & Game Damage	20%
Research/Monitoring	10%
Conservation Easements & NEPA Related Activities	10%
Information & Education	5%
Administration	5%

TOTAL ALLOCATION: **100%**

It is important to acknowledge that the budget allocation is based on past projects, future projects that are likely to be proposed as well as committee emphasis in funding certain project types. While these are desired and/or likely allocations, the committee retains the ability to shift funds as needed between categories as projects and opportunities arise or as situations dictate.

CURRENT & FORESEEABLE ISSUES

The Arkansas River HPP Committee recognizes that land ownership, land use, and social policies will continue to change. This will result in new conflicts and challenges, but the ARHPP intends to remain flexible and seek out creative solutions to continue to reduce wildlife conflicts and assist CPW in achieving game management objectives. Current and foreseeable issues for the committee include, but are not limited to:

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

According to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Colorado's population has dramatically increased since the 1990s to over 5.5 million today. In 2040, the population in the state is expected to reach over 8 million. Given the relatively mild climate and easy access to the front range population areas, the Arkansas River HPP area has also seen population increases in the past 10+ years. This population increase has resulted in increased private land development in the committee area and significant loss of open space, rangeland and wildlife habitat. This places additional pressures on the remaining undeveloped agricultural lands and public lands and based on the expected Colorado population growth into the future, these impacts will continue and intensify.

RECREATION

The ARHPP area is experiencing a surge in recreation popularity as the Colorado population increases. Most of the recreation impacts are occurring on public lands, but private lands have also been affected. The committee area is seeing a large increase in the development of hiking, biking and motorized trails. In addition, there is a significant increase in dispersed camping which has led to loss of livestock/wildlife forage, an increase in soil erosion, and direct wildlife displacement. These activities are negatively influencing big game distribution patterns and placing more pressure on the limited private lands available as big game habitat. Both private and public landowners have also seen an increase in vandalism to fences, gates, and other property as a result of recreationists trying to access the area. Damage to fences and gates being left open increases the risk of cattle escaping from private lands and grazing allotments, which in turn increases the pressure on agricultural producers. As a result, recreation activities influence or even amplify big game conflicts on both private and public lands. Based on the expected Colorado population growth into the future, these impacts will continue and intensify.