



## HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is HPP?** - HPP, the acronym for the Habitat Partnership Program, is a wildlife conflict resolution program administered by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, overseen by a State Council and implemented locally in much of Colorado by local committees.
2. **What does HPP do?** According to the state law authorizing HPP, the purpose is “to reduce wildlife conflicts, especially those associated with fence and forage, and to help the Division meet game management objectives through duties deemed appropriate by the Director.”

The specific orientation of HPP is to focus on those conflicts caused by deer, elk, pronghorn and moose to agricultural operators by implementing both short term fixes and longer term solutions and to assist CPW to meet management objectives for those same species.

3. **Why did the CPW need HPP?** After the hard winter of 1983/84, there were many landowner concerns about the size of deer/elk herds, their impacts to private property and how the CPW was addressing those concerns. Secondly, state law makes CPW liable for fence and forage losses caused by deer and elk but the system to prove damages and to get compensated for them was difficult to work through and took too long when it did. With deteriorating landowner relations, increasing game damage liability and ultimately smaller big game herds, HPP was created to address these problems in a non-traditional way. HPP’s first purpose in 1990 was limited to fence and forage problems and in 2002 the purpose was expanded as described in #2.
4. **Who pays for HPP?** Big game hunters do. HPP gets 5% of deer, elk, moose and pronghorn license fees sold in the areas that have HPP committees. While actual amounts vary each year depending on licenses sold, HPP currently receives between \$2.3 - \$2.6 million dollars each year.

Although hunters provide HPP funding, matching money or time/labor/equipment is normally required of other agencies, organizations and private individuals to do projects. The appropriate match and level of match is determined by each local committee as they consider a project.

5. **Since hunters pay for HPP through their license dollars, what do they get from HPP?** HPP works hard to address problems that deer and elk cause private landowners, who provide much of the habitat these animals depend on. When we are successful, this maintains or increases landowner tolerance for wildlife on their property, which directly translates into the size of big game herds we are able to have today. HPP also works with the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to improve wildlife habitat and overall range conditions on public lands which

provides better hunting opportunities. Without HPP and the other private land programs the CPW has, we would likely have significant landowner and political pressure to reduce the herds to a level far below what we have now. This would result in fewer licenses able to be issued and less overall opportunities for hunters.

HPP's assistance to CPW to meet game management objectives directly impacts big game hunters because HPP is directly working on maintaining and/or improving big game herds and the hunting opportunities they provide.

6. **What do the other participants gain from HPP?** All participants get a faster, less "governmental" way to resolve conflicts, improvement of both private and public lands, leveraging of scarce money to share the costs and accomplish more and, perhaps most importantly, the development of critical dialogue and relationships between everyone involved to solve the problems.
7. **So, do other people contribute to HPP?** Yes, one of the founding strengths of HPP is the partnership aspect. People who bring projects to the local committees are expected to provide a "match", or contribution to the project. This may be money, equipment or their time depending on the project and other circumstances. There are also other entities and agencies that provide money and help to lower everyone's cost. Generally, local committees prefer to have a 50/50 match between HPP and the project applicant but if other entities are involved, this can be decreased to be fair to all.
8. **Who are on the local committees?** According to state statute, there are 3 people representing livestock growers, 1 person representing sport persons, 1 person from each of the federal land managing agencies in the committee area and 1 CPW representative.
9. **What kind of projects can I request help with?** First, committees welcome any projects that helps with your local problems with big game or which helps CPW's management objectives. The projects must relate directly to the purposes of the program – see #2 above. Typical projects include habitat improvement ( reseeded, water developments, shrub/tree cutting) as well as fencing projects and game damage projects.
10. **Where are projects done?** Projects can be done on private or public lands, or both, wherever the problem and/or solution exist.
11. **Surely there are some rules or guidelines committees have to follow?** Yes. Broad HPP rules are contained in state statutes and local committees have an operating plan approved by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission that defines their area, the conflicts and the potential types of projects that the committee may participate in. These plans are general by nature to provide the committee with the maximum flexibility they need to resolve local problems quickly. These plans authorize the committees to approve and fund project proposals.
12. **Do I have to allow hunting on my property in order to work with HPP?** In some committees, hunting is not a requirement for a project to be considered. In other committees, it is. However,

committees may request and work with you for hunting access in order to gain some additional harvest in these problem areas. Also, remember these 2 points: Hunters buying licenses is what keeps HPP and Parks and Wildlife operating. General tax money from the state is not provided to the CPW and 2) a little hunting pressure may move the animals off of your property where they are causing trouble and into areas where they are tolerated better or where more hunting pressure occurs which could result in fewer animals causing problems.

- 13. How do I do a HPP project?** First, contact one of the local committee members or local CPW office and discuss your situation. Check out the HPP web page to get some more information. If, after doing this you think your project is appropriate for HPP, get a project application from your CPW officer or download it directly from the HPP web page, get on the agenda for the next meeting and make your pitch!
- 14. Will HPP pay me up front for doing the work?** No, HPP operates on a reimbursable basis, meaning that the work has to be done and then HPP will pay the agreed upon amount.
- 15. Assuming I get approved for my project, when can I start?** Check with your committee but HPP strives to be quick and in many instances, you might be able to start immediately after you get committee approval. If HPP is contributing more than \$5000, additional reviews and approvals are needed before you can start. Don't start unless you've checked!
- 16. What happens if my project changes before completion?** Get back in touch with your committee. Committees realize situations may change and are willing to work with you but do not assume you may change plans or expenses without their authorization.
- 17. What permits do I need for my project?** HPP is a funding program, not a permitting authority and we don't know what permits might be needed for your project. It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary permits from the proper authorities.
- 18. Does HPP have a say in elk and deer population numbers?** Yes. One of the purposes of HPP is to make sure private landowner issues are considered when the CPW is setting herd numbers. When the CPW is setting numbers, HPP committees are solicited and respond with their opinions about the new proposal. Since HPP committees have a variety of members on them and are in the business to resolve conflicts, their opinion matters in the final decision made by the Parks/Wildlife Commission.
- 19. Do we really have too many elk?** Obviously, this answer depends on whether you're a hunter, landowner, outfitter, businessman or some other interested party, the specific location you're talking about and even the time of year it is. CPW has been aggressively working to lower the overall numbers of elk in the state and now most believe the overall number is just about right, with the current estimate being approx. 280,000 animals. Remember this number is a statewide estimate and varies from year to year with winter severity, hunting season success and other factors. Since CPW has aggressively been lowering elk populations for several years, hunters,

outfitters and local businesses have begun urging CPW to stop lowering populations and to even increase them because their hunting success and business operations have been affected.

Most current conflicts that landowners have and that HPP is involved with are the result of distribution problems, not overall population size.

**20. How come you needed HPP - doesn't CPW already have a game damage program?** The game damage program is an integral part of CPW's overall commitment to landowners experiencing damage issues. It provides payment for agricultural damages caused by big game and some prevention efforts, primarily temporary panels, permanent stack yards and apiary fencing.

HPP started because the regulations involving fence and forage damage claims didn't work for either the landowner or CPW. There was much disagreement over the amount of damage, whether deer or elk caused it, and what the value of the damage was for anyone to feel good about the outcome. HPP took a new approach to either fix the problem immediately (fence repairs, fertilizer or re-seeding) or to find longer term solutions such as habitat treatments or assisting with conservation easements. This positive approach has provided a well received alternative.

**21. In addition to the game damage program, doesn't the CPW have other programs to help landowners?** Yes, we do – and plenty of them. Most wildlife depends on private lands at some time during the year and everyone owes the landowners who provide these areas a great deal of thanks. There simply wouldn't be as many species or the abundance of species that we have today if it weren't for private landowners. People interested in our other landowner programs should check out the web page, [www.wildlife.state.co.us/landwater/privatelands](http://www.wildlife.state.co.us/landwater/privatelands) or contact the Division's private land program specialist at (970)472-4343.

**22. Is HPP working?** By all accounts, the answer is "YES"! HPP enjoys strong local acceptance by landowners, agency people and sportspeople as a fast and easy way to help with local problems that in the past simply weren't dealt with effectively and which help maintain adequate big game herds and improves the habitat for wildlife and the range resources for livestock. This acceptance also translates into CPW and political support for a positive program that is working.

**23. Where do I get more information?** First, contact your local CPW office or officer. They can talk to you about your local HPP. Look on the CPW website for information about HPP. Talk to your friends and neighbors – many of them may have already been involved. Check with your local agricultural groups; they likely have a member on the local HPP committee.

**Much information about HPP, including project applications, committee memberships and annual reports, can be found at <http://cpw.state.co.us/hpp>**