



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

San Juan Basin HPP Committee

San Juan Public Lands Center, 15 Burnett Ct., Durango

April 12th, 2017

6:00 p.m.

San Juan Basin HPP Members Present: Dan Huntington, Michael Schmidt, Aran Johnson, Anthony Garcia, Sandy Young, John Gardner, Adrian Archuleta

Guests: Reid Ackerman, David Hall, Karen Kerasotes, Amy Schwarzbach

Introductions, Budget, & Old Business:

1. Committee members and guests were introduced. Katie Richman reviewed the budget and gave an update on current projects. The remaining budget at the beginning of the meeting was \$18,390.96.

New Business:

Project Application Proposals and Reviews

1. Reid Ackerman presented a proposal for a pond reconstruction project. The pond is about 15 years old and has become very eroded, and does not hold water well. The area is located in critical winter range for deer and elk, and is close to BLM land, reservation land, and a highly used migration overpass on Hwy 160. Additionally, the project area is located within a conservation easement. The proposal is to reconstruct the pond and incorporate rip rap into the eroded areas to help prevent deterioration in the future. The project was approved for \$1,900.00.
2. David Hall and Karen Kerasotes presented a proposal for a pipe fence project. HPP has previously completed a pipe fence on Pick Bar Ranch, which has so far been highly successful in allowing wildlife to cross and utilize the area without injury to the animals or damage to the fence. The proposal is to continue to remove hog wire fencing on the ranch

and construct a new 48” fence with pipe on the top and smooth wires below. The committee discussed whether to allow variances in fence height from the standard specification of 42”. While the committee does not want to set a precedent of allowing non-standard wildlife friendly fencing, the consensus was that due to the unique design of the fence, it would still be considered “wildlife-friendly”. Additionally, the fence is expected to settle several inches over the first year due to the weight, so the final height would be less than 48”. The project was approved for \$5,000.00.

3. Amy Schwarzbach gave a review of a potential conservation easement project. The Cool Water Ranch includes 2800 acres bordered on all sides by USFS and BLM lands, and very near to several other conservation easements. The area receives heavy use by deer year-round, and by elk during migration and winter. The property includes irrigated hayfields and an old burn area, which is heavily utilized by big game. The current owners allow hunting, and are interested in pursuing a conservation easement on the property. Additionally, there are several miles of fencing that will require replacement in the future, and the landowners would like to install wildlife-friendly fencing. There is no proposal for either project at this time, but the committee would consider either project in the future.

Other Business:

1. The committee continued to discuss variations in fence specs. Additionally, the committee considered instituting a cap on fence project funding. Several other committees limit fence projects to \$1.25 per foot of fence. The committee will not adopt that rule at this time, but will keep it in mind as they begin to review the HMP.
2. The committee’s HMP will expire in FY18 and must be reviewed and renewed. The committee will review the plan and dedicate a meeting in FY18 to revising the HMP. Additionally, the committee would be interested in seeing a comprehensive review of how the San Juan Basin budget is typically spent, and how that compares to other committees. Katie will prepare this for the next meeting.
3. The Statewide HPP Meeting will be December 5th – 7th, 2017 in Grand Junction. Committee members are encouraged to submit ideas for topics and presentations.

Meeting adjourned. Next meeting 6/14/17 at 6:00pm, San Juan Public Lands Center.