



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Uncompahgre HPP Committee

2424 N. Townsend, Montrose

January 26th, 2017

6:30 p.m.

Uncompahgre HPP Members Present: Mike Surber, USFS; Kelly Crane, CPW; Bobby Gray, Sportsman; Todd Stewart, Ag Producer; Angela LoSasso, BLM

Guests: Renzo DelPiccolo, CPW; Garrett Watson, CPW; Mark Caddy, CPW; Kevin Duckett, CPW; Eric Freels, USFS; Lilia Falk, WRWC; Dean Stindt; Jim Free, UP; Mike Tarantino, WRWC

Introduction: Committee members and guests were introduced. The current remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$29,116.09.

New Business:

1. Garrett Watson addressed the committee about covering shortfalls with the annual landowner fertilizer project. Historically, the Game Damage section typically only dealt with large-scale agricultural productions; however recently claims have been on the rise from more small scale operations concerning minor losses such as single chickens or goats. This has resulted in much more DWM time being spent on Game Damage claims, which frequently involve a long paperwork process. The Area 18 DWMs are interested in approaching HPP for fertilizer vouchers for these landowners when these types of losses from Game Damage are not covered by the annual fertilizer program; however given the current popularity of the fertilizer vouchers, having a separate budget for Game Damage Fertilizer may be beneficial. The committee agreed to set aside up to \$5,000 for separate fertilizer projects that originate in Game Damage claims with the DWMs.

Project Application Proposals and Reviews:

1. Dean Stindt presented a proposal for continued work on Tom Flynn's property in Mailbox Park. The project involves 250 acres of hydroax work to cut back on pinyon juniper encroachment of sagebrush parks, with seeding to follow over 187 of the acres. Some sagebrush will also be hydroaxed to help rejuvenate the area. The project is supported by the Western Region Wildfire Council and the Colorado State Forest for fuels reduction work. Additionally, it was noted that the project area is largely patchwork BLM and private lands, and that this project was a continuation of previous work done on the adjacent BLM to reduce PJ and rejuvenate sagebrush parks. The committee discussed the seed mix at length, as well as the proposed application method of aerial seeding. Committee members were not comfortable having non-native seed species so close to BLM lands, especially via aerial seeding where accidental seeding of BLM lands could occur. Mr. Stindt stated that if the committee would require hand- or ATV-broadcasting with native seed, then Mr. Flynn would do so. The project was approved for \$1,000.00 from FY2018 with those stipulations, and the committee will write a letter of support so that Mr. Stindt may apply to the State Council for additional funding (approximately \$46,730.00).
2. Jim Free presented a proposal for continued weed control effort by the Uncompahgre Partnership in the Escalante drainage. The committee has participated in the past with oxeye daisy control, and recognizes that continued efforts are needed to maintain control of the infestation and prevent further spread. The committee noted that some of the overall project area included mapped Gunnison Sage Grouse habitat, and the project was tentatively approved for \$1,850.00 pending CPW clearance for sage grouse.
3. Eric Freels presented a proposal for continued hydroax and seeding work on the La Fair area of the Uncompahgre Plateau. He stated that the previous work in the area including low intensity fire has shown good early results with vegetation reestablishment. The next phase of the project will involve a total of 800 acres, and will include mastication and aerial seeding of PJ encroachment. Grazing will be held on a 1.5-year rotation, and will not be allowed in the seeded areas before the vegetation can establish. Additionally, some small water features along existing creeks may be included to help hold water in the soil. The committee noted that some proposed treatment areas were located in sage grouse habitat; Mr. Freels stated that if he could not receive sage grouse clearances that part of the project would be relocated to other areas outside of sage grouse habitat or dropped altogether. Kevin Duckett noted that the previous phase of La Fair thinning has been successful in relieving big game pressure on private inholdings in the area. The committee committed \$4,500.00 from FY2018 funds for the project, and will write a letter of support for the project so that it can be submitted for the FY2018 State Council Grant.
4. A fencing proposal from Joseph Scriffiny (Falcon Agriculture) was reviewed. The existing fence is old woven wire for sheep, and is in disrepair. The proposal is to

remove 1.25 miles of sheep fence and build a new wildlife-friendly fence. The fence would be to HPP specs with wire spacings and a high-visibility top wire. The committee tentatively (pending Gunnison Sage Grouse clearance) approved half of the project for \$8,665.00 to be completed in FY2017, and would like to have the other half re-submitted in FY2018.

5. Fence repair projects from the Garvey Brothers Cattle Company and Marla Fritzlen were reviewed. These are small repair projects that the Garveys submit every year, and the committee feels that repairing fences damaged by big game helps prevent big game entrapment or death, as well as increasing landowner tolerance for big game. Both projects are located in potential Gunnison Sage Grouse habitat, and they were tentatively approved for \$1,000.00 (Garveys) and \$500.00 (Fritzlen) pending CPW sage grouse clearance.

Other Business:

1. The committee noted that coming into FY2017, a significant portion of the budget had already been spent because of funds committed during FY2016. The committee recognizes that some projects have unavoidable timing conflicts with the state fiscal year; however they would not like to get into the habit of committing funds from the upcoming year's budget. Projects should be appropriately applied for in the fiscal year in which they will take place whenever possible.
2. The committee reviewed a letter received from Joellen Turner & Mike Morgan requesting that HPP issue landowner voucher hunting tags in lieu of the fertilizer program. The committee noted that HPP does not have the authority to issue licenses, and reaffirmed that they feel the fertilizer program is an appropriate and beneficial use of funds to help offset damage from big game to agriculture producers. A letter detailing this response will be prepared and sent to Joellen after review by the committee chairs and Pat Tucker.

Other Business:

1. Kelly shared a marketing email from Arkansas River Seed. The vendor is familiar with HPP and would like the committee to keep them in mind in case of any seeding projects or other needs.
2. The committee may wish to move to a set schedule of meetings for FY2018 to avoid conflicts with committee members and with other HPP committees. This item will be revisited at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: February 16th, CPW Conference Room at 6:30pm