



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Montelores HPP Committee

Dolores Public Lands Center, Dolores, CO

June 6th, 2018

6:30 p.m.

HPP Members Present: Andy Brown, CPW; Nate West, BLM; Peter Foote for Ivan Messinger, USFS; George West, Ag Producer; John Sheek, Sportsman; Eldon Simmons, Livestock Grower

Guests: Tyler Kersey, CPW; Bonnie Loving, Montezuma County Weed Dept.

Introductions & Budget Report:

Committee members and guests were introduced. The remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$23,631.69.

New Business:

Project Application Proposals and Reviews:

1. Bonnie Loving presented a weed control project for FY19. The Mancos River corridor south of Hwy 160 is heavily infested with Russian knapweed and Canada thistle, which outcompete native vegetation and reduce the amount and quality of forage available to big game on public and private lands. This increases wildlife consumption of crops on agricultural operations, and related damage to fences. The proposal includes treating infestations on public and private lands along the river, including on BLM, STL, and Mesa Verde NP. Some areas will be reseeded as necessary to encourage native forage reestablishment. A total of approximately 900 acres will be treated in this project, and future retreatment and/or reseeded work may be needed on some of the more severely infested areas. Project cooperators included MVNP, BLM, SLB, CDA, Montezuma County, and private landowners, totaling \$95,047.83 in partner funding. The HPP request was for \$17,000 for contractor labor and seed. The committee was generally supportive of the project, but also expressed concerns about so much of the funding coming from state sources. The committee was also worried about spending a large portion of the annual budget so early in the fiscal year, as well as spending funding work on private lands that charge for hunting access. The committee approved \$8,500.00 for the project, with the possibility of providing more funds in the spring.

2. The committee approved \$9,000 for FY19 fence vouchers (\$300 increments, up to 3 vouchers per landowner), and \$24,100 for FY19 fertilizer vouchers (\$15/acre up to \$4,000 per individual).

Roundtable:

1. Tyler Kersey discussed a potential solar well project with a landowner experiencing heavy elk use on his stock ponds, causing them to go dry very early. The committee noted that well projects are risky for the applicants, as the committee will only contribute to costs if the well actually produces water. The project also needs to be evaluated for other water sources in the area, as it could be less beneficial to put water on the landscape and increase utilization of an otherwise dry area that normally would not sustain big game use.
2. The USFS will be working on clearing the Lake Canyon area of beetle kill, and may be interested in applying for HPP funds for hand thinning crews. The project would help clear out overgrown oak understory and increase forage for big game, and may provide opportunities for burn projects in the future.
3. The committee is interested in the Sweetwater Systems water development. The site in Cox Canyon may be a good project tour option later this summer, and the committee would like to have Gregory Hunt give his presentation at an upcoming meeting.

Next Meeting: TBD