



## HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

### Grand Mesa HPP Committee

2004 Elm St, Collbran CO 81624

November 29th, 2018

1:00 p.m.

**Grand Mesa HPP Members Present:** John Walter, Livestock Grower; Harley Metz, Sportsman; Heidi Plank, BLM; Kirk Oldham, CPW; Paul Bernklau, Livestock Grower; Eric Freels, USFS

**Guests:** Teresa Nees, Mesa County Weed Dept.; Pat Tucker, CPW; Scott Hoyer, CPW; Michael Blanck, CPW; Bob Morris, CPW; Greg Gipp, George Gipp, Bill Morse, Brandon Bruton; Eric Bruton

**Introduction:** Committee members and guests were introduced. The remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$50,143.04. Pat Tucker gave updates from the October State Council meeting.

### **New Business:**

#### **Project Application Proposals and Reviews:**

1. Ty Bevan presented a fencing proposal. The project is the second phase of the fence that was constructed last fiscal year to improve grazing management, and includes 2700-ft of interior cross fencing to implement pasture rotation. Previously, no livestock grazing had occurred on the project area and the forage was left entirely to elk and deer. The landowner is now bringing the area into a light grazing rotation to encourage better vegetation rejuvenation, resulting in increased forage production. There is sufficient water on the property to support increased use of the pasture, and additional pond work is ongoing. The property receives heavy use by elk and provides a conflict-free area for big game to winter, which reduces game damage to nearby properties. The project was approved for \$4,093.75 for materials, and the committee will provide 2 rolls of high visibility wire.
2. Eric Bruton presented a fencing proposal. The existing fence is old and in disrepair, does not properly contain livestock, and presents entanglement risks

to big game. The project includes replacing the old fence with new wildlife-friendly fences to HPP specs. Gates will be installed every 200-feet, and will be left open for wildlife crossings when livestock are not present. High visibility wire will also be utilized, in conjunction with additional stays it increase visibility and sturdiness. The property experiences year-round use by elk, and seasonal use by moose and deer. The project was approved for \$3,578.35 for materials, and the committee will provide 1 roll of high visibility wire.

3. Kirk Oldham introduced the idea of involving HPP with Distribution Management Hunts within the area. CPW issues game damage licenses to landowners to help mitigate big game conflicts on private lands. Fair distribution of damage licenses can be achieved with HPP's involvement, ensuring that damage hunts are undertaken in known HPP conflict areas. HPP involvement in game damage hunts can also help the committee to identify emerging conflict areas and solicit new project proposals.

The committee discussed feedback from sportsmen that private-land-only hunting can become contentious when public sportsmen dollars are involved, as well as the need to balance public land hunting opportunities with mitigating big game damages to agricultural operations. Sportsmen should be made aware that game damage hunts are a CPW tool to manage big game populations and reduce conflicts, rather than an opportunity to hunt private lands. Some issues with damage hunts may include deer or elk that are only causing damage at night, when they cannot be hunted; or with uneven hunting pressure between neighbors and adjacent parcels. Ultimately, the committee would be interested in becoming involved and utilizing game damage hunts in the future. The discussion was tabled for future discussion.

#### **Other Business:**

1. The committee briefly discussed the upcoming Big Game Season Structure revisions; the Statewide HPP meeting in December 2019; the upcoming Distribution Management Plan revision; and upcoming elk and deer DAU comment letters.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, 3/7 - Silt Fire House**