



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Gunnison Basin HPP Committee

300 W. New York Ave, Gunnison CO 81230

November 1, 2018

11:00 a.m.

Gunnison Basin HPP Members Present: Paul Mowery, Livestock Grower; Navid Navidi, Sportsman; Steve Guerrieri, Livestock Grower; Nick Gallowich, CPW; Matt Vasquez, USFS; Kathy Brodhead, BLM; Shane Cox, Livestock Grower

Guests: Ron Slocum, Gregory Hunt, Matt McComb, USFS; Colton Rosalez, USFS; Dayle Funka, USFS; Pat Medina, USFS; Brandon Diamond, CPW; Aleshia Rummel, NRCS; J Wenum, CPW

Introductions, Budget, & Old Business:

1. Committee members and guests were introduced. The remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$134,000.00.

New Business:

Project Application Proposals and Reviews

1. Ron Slocum presented a fencing proposal for Mike Gerdin's property on Big Blue Creek. The area experiences heavy use by deer and elk during much of the year, especially during migration events as the ranch lies in a migration corridor; and the property is adjacent to BLM on two sides. The existing fence consists of two panels of woven sheep wire, with much of the bottom panel buried into the ground. Fawns and calves are frequently caught up in the fence and killed when herds are utilizing the area for forage or water from Big Blue Creek. The landowners have already replaced large portions of woven wire fencing with wildlife-friendly on other parts of the ranch, and this is expected to be the last portion. The proposal includes removing 1.5 miles of existing fence and replacing it with wildlife-friendly fencing to HPP specs, including the use of high visibility wire.

The committee noted that removing woven wire fencing would be very beneficial to big game, and would complement planned USFS improvement projects (including fence removal) in this area, and strongly supported the project. However, the committee was also aware of possible budget constraints if large-scale fence projects become more common in the future. The committee discussed implementing a price-per-foot cap on fence projects, and determined that \$1.50/ft would be appropriate. The project was approved for \$17,140.00, which includes fence removal and construction as well as costs for ordering 6 rolls of high visibility wire.

2. Brandon Diamond presented a fencing project proposal for Craig Eisen. The property is located at the end of Big Soap Park, and is surrounded by USFS/grazing allotments and wilderness areas. Soap Park has been identified as a migration corridor, and the property experiences heavy elk use throughout much of the year, including some winters. The landowner produces forage exclusively for big game; however the neighboring grazing allotments have downed or missing fences, resulting in frequent cattle trespass which reduces the forage available for deer and elk. The landowner would like to construct wildlife-friendly fencing that excludes the neighboring cattle. This is a fairly novel approach to conflict resolution; however the committee felt that it was within HPP's scope to both reduce conflicts with agricultural operations and to improve habitat conditions for big game and they supported the project. However, the proposed design consisted mainly of single-line electrobraid fence, which the committee felt would not be sufficient to deter cattle, and would present long-term maintenance issues. Several alternate designs were discussed, including laydown fencing or a mix of hard fence and laydown fence, with gates and/or jumps as necessary. The committee requested that Brandon Diamond and Nick Gallowich work with the landowner to redesign the project, and possibly seek NRCS funding, and then reapply at the next meeting.
3. The committee briefly discussed beginning an inventory of high visibility wire from Kencove. The wire is a clear benefit to improving fence safety for wildlife, and in areas of mapped Gunnison Sage Grouse habitat, use of high visibility wire is required to receive GSG clearance. However, in recent years fence projects have not been in high demand. The committee may reevaluate the need for an inventory in the future, but will not place a bulk order at this time.
4. Gregory Hunt gave a presentation on Sweet Water Systems, a company in Cedaredge that installs underground water catchment and filtration systems. The catchments fill during runoff and heavy flow/storm events, and act as a reservoir throughout the rest of the year. The filtered water can be piped to drinkers in a discrete area for wildlife use, or can fill tanks for livestock use. When tanks or drinkers are appropriately spread throughout an area, livestock and big game can be better distributed across the landscape. The overall cost for a system is higher than a traditional water catchment and tank setup; however Sweet Water Systems require exceedingly low maintenance costs and are expected to last for approximately 50 years or more. The committee is interested in exploring this option for future water development projects.
5. Matt Vasquez reviewed upcoming USFS projects, including prescribed burns. The USFS will be conducting burning in Soap Park, and will seek HPP funding in the early spring.

Roundtable:

1. Dayle Funka (USFS) recently moved from the Saguache area to Gunnison. She participated with the San Luis Valley HPP committee on a number of projects, and is eager to partner

with Gunnison Basin HPP. The committee discussed priorities and strategies for the area, particularly noting water developments and fences.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 21st @ 11:00am