



## **HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES**

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019**

**Tony's Mountain Pizza, Silver Cliff, CO**

Committee Members present:

- Mike Trujillo, Colorado Parks and Wildlife AWM
- Terry Everhart, Livestock Grower
- Dave Gilbert, BLM
- Kenn Lutz, Livestock Grower
- Arlie Riggs, Livestock Grower
- Dwaine Robey, Sportsperson
- John Stroh II, Livestock Grower
- Jeff Outhier, USFS

Administrative Assistant:

- Hanna Cook

Guests: Bob Holder (DWM), Gretchen Holschuh (DWM), Louie Ossola (Landowner), Justin Krall (DWM), Patty Knupp (NRCS), Charles Bryant (Huerfano County Noxious Weed Manager), Derald Riggs, Gayle Riggs, Allen Vitt (CPW Biologist)

**Meeting called to order by Mike Trujillo at 10:10 AM**

### **Introductions**

#### **General Public Comments**

Allen Vitt updated the committee on some of his projects. The studies he has been working on (elk, deer, and predators) have been going well so far. Elk appear to be using burn scars heavily (i.e. Junkins Park) because the aspen and the grass have been reestablished and are growing well. They have seen a couple of female mountain lions that have traveled much farther than is typical with female lions. Initial reports for the studies should be released in the summer.

#### **Budget Report**

The 2019 budget report was reviewed. The Iron Dollar project will still be getting done by the BLM, but as it stands right now they will no longer be using HPP funds.

#### **Old Business**

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

The Sangre de Cristo Distribution Management Plan has been approved by the State Council, and will now be going to the commission for approval.

## **New Business**

### Pueblo State Wildlife Area Hydro Axe-Gretchen Holschuh

Gretchen is asking HPP for \$15,000 to pay a hydro axe operator to complete a habitat treatment on 90 acres of Pueblo SWA. The work will be done with the hydro axe that was purchased by CPW and SLB. CPW will also contribute \$3,000. There are three treatment areas that total 90 acres that will be treated at \$200/acre. Juniper trees have been encroaching on historic meadows and this has created poor wildlife habitat, so big game have been moving to neighboring private lands and have caused a lot of damage. They are currently issuing game dispersal licenses to help with game damage, but this habitat treatment could help reduce the game damage altogether and eliminate the need for dispersal licenses. Removing juniper trees will promote understory regeneration and will increase the amount of forage for wildlife, and will improve water availability. Some larger trees will be left to provide cover. The committee suggested adding signage to show which organizations funded and completed the work, as there are a lot of visitors to Pueblo SWA so a lot of people would see the sign.

**The project was approved for \$15,000.**

### Trujillo Creek Habitat Improvement-Bob Holder, Louie Ossola

Louis Ossola and his family have recently purchased the South Trujillo Creek property and would like to do some habitat treatments and spring developments in order to improve wildlife habitat on the 495 acre piece of land. They plan to put this property under a conservation easement once the work has been completed. They are asking HPP for \$20,000 to match their own \$20,000 for aspen improvement, cedar removal, spring development, and weed control. This will also help with wildfire mitigation, but the main goal is wildlife habitat improvement. Based on the application it is unclear what exactly the committee would be paying for with their funds. They would like to see an itemized list of exactly what would be accomplished with the \$20,000 (i.e. acres treated, number of spring developments, etc.). The committee would like to see more detailed information before proceeding with this project, and have asked the landowner to redo their application and present it at the next meeting.

**The project has been tabled until they have a new application with more details.**

### Custer County Weed Management Discussion-Charles Bryant

Charles is currently working with Custer County to get their noxious weed program running and in compliance with noxious weed law. They have a local advisory board that is revisiting their noxious weed plan. Charles would like to know if the committee is interested in supporting the Custer County noxious weed program by providing funding to match the county's purchase of herbicide. Herbicide will be sprayed on Custer County lands and right of ways. CPW will also be matching some money to control noxious weeds on state properties in the county. The committee would like to have a formal application to show specifics, but they are comfortable with funding the purchase of herbicide to be sprayed on Custer County lands.

**The project was approved for \$1,000 contingent on a formal application.**

### State Council White Wire Order

The HPP state council will be making a bulk order of white vinyl wire to distribute to local committees. Each committee will be allowed \$5,000 in white vinyl wire (24 rolls) if they would like it. The Sangre de Cristo Committee currently has 26 rolls at Pueblo Office. They would like to continue to encourage landowners to use white wire and they have room at the Pueblo SWA to store additional rolls, so they will accept the \$5,000 of allotted white wire.

## **Remaining Committee Business/Other Discussion**

### Committee member attendance

It is important that committee members attend meetings as often as possible, and that they RSVP for meetings. Hanna needs to make sure that there are enough committee members for quorum at the upcoming meeting, so sending her an RSVP is important.

### Committee recognition award

The committee would like to thank Arlie Riggs for her 15 years of service on the Sangre de Cristo HPP committee. Arlie was given an award as a thank you. Arlie has been instrumental to the success of the committee and everyone appreciates everything she has done for them over the years.



### Tire tank update

The PO has been approved and an order has been placed. Hanna is waiting on delivery confirmation.

### State Council updates:

Local committee budgets will remain the same for the next fiscal year.

The state council will start funding weed spraying and fencing projects on SWAs. Funds will be distributed to regional managers who will decide where to use them (within HPP boundaries), rather than coming to local committees for requests. Habitat projects will still go to local committees for approval.

The HPP statewide annual meeting will be happening on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> in Grand Junction, and the topic will be water.

Patty updated the committee that NRCS received \$32 million in total EQIP funds for FY 2019. This year, they received 10% from the Farm Bill dollars instead of the 5% that they normally receive. They have \$3.27 million for wildlife projects in FY 2019, and they are currently preapproving grant applications. They plan to have all of the money obligated by May 31<sup>st</sup>. EQIP

applications are accepted year round and they are usually “batched” in January when they are screened, ranked, and potentially funded.

Mike updated the committee that the Crazy French Ranch has been purchased by The Nature Conservancy, and they have asked CPW to be the land manager. In a few years they will likely look at giving the ranch to a public land entity. TNC is working with CPW on surveying and setting management plans for the future.

**The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 PM**

**The next meeting will be held on: May 9th at 10:00 AM at the Pueblo Hunter Ed Building.**

Hanna Cook, HPP Administrative Assistant  
4255 Sinton Rd  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907  
719-227-5221  
[hanna.cook@state.co.us](mailto:hanna.cook@state.co.us)