



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Grand Mesa HPP Committee

Phone Conference

July 29th, 2019

8:00 p.m.

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

Guests: Travis Bybee, CPW; Matthew & Sylvia Ringer

Introduction: Committee members and guests were introduced. The remaining FY20 budget at the start of the meeting was \$55,625.00.

New Business:

The committee discussed a conservation easement proposal from Matthew and Sylvia Ringer. The property is located in Garfield Creek adjacent to BLM, and includes 240 acres of important winter and spring habitat for big game. The surrounding area is generally very dry, and the water sources on the property are the primary water source for big game in that drainage. The previous landowners did not live on the property and much of it was not maintained. The current owners are rehabilitating the property with weed control work, water developments, and bringing more acres into forage production for livestock and big game. The neighboring hayfields on private lands are currently being subdivided for development, which will negatively impact big game movements in the area. The Ringers are seeking a conservation easement on the property, which is expected to cost about \$75,000.

The committee noted concerns that CEs could become an overwhelming majority of funding requests for the committee. However, the committee also recognized that in areas where agricultural lands are being converted to residential developments at increasing rates, it is important to preserve appropriate habitat for big game. The location of this property within the Garfield SWA complex is critical for wintering animals and for managing big game conflicts. The project was approved for up to \$10,000.00 in transaction costs, pending the State Council and/or other cooperators agreeing to fund the remaining cost.

Next Meeting: TBD