



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES
CPW Area Office-0088 Wildlife Way in Glenwood Springs, CO
March 14, 2019
1:00pm

Introductions: **Members attending the meeting were:** DWM Darren Chacon/CPW, Pat Luark/livestock grower, Jim Nieslanik/livestock grower, Scot Doderer/livestock grower, Rick Bumgardner/sportsperson, Phil Nyland/USFS, Hilary Boyd/BLM & Admin. Samantha Sorensen/CPW. **Guests attending the meeting were:** DWM Brian Gray, DWM Matt Yamashita, AWM Kirk Oldham, Michael Lederhause, Rick Mueller, DWM Devin Duval, Joe Hood, Stephen Jaouen/NRCS, DWM Dan Cacho, and Wayne Pollard.

General Public Comments: N/A

Budget Report: Samantha presented committee members with a budget report and the beginning balance was \$112,125.00. Scot asked about the conservation easement from 2013; it was deemed a learning experience and since then the rules for CE have changed and HPP will only reimburse for transaction costs after closing. EVLT thinks there is still a chance the CE will close.

Old Business: Minutes from September 19th were presented and approved as written.

New Business: Lake Christine Fire Reseeding: Matt Yamashita pitched the proposal to committee members. 13,000 acres burned during the Lake Christine fire, a little fewer than 2,000 of those were on the Basalt SWA. The Ag fields were reseeded with dryland Ag mixes and now they're looking to reseed areas they couldn't reach with agency equipment. The plan is to aerial seed 625 acres just as the snow is starting to melt off in order to utilize water already on the ground. There's new growth already in the oak brush stands and they'd like to get it reestablished to prevent weed infestation and debris flows. They'd also like to aerial spray 300 acres with herbicide. Pat Luark asked if they plan to remove the burned PJ and Matt said they'll leave it because the deer and elk will still use it for cover. Jim confirmed that the SWA is open to hunting via foot or horseback. Matt wrapped up by stating the SWA is surrounded by FS and BLM land and in the next couple years they'll be doing similar projects. Previous thinning below the SWA by the BLM saved dozens of homes from being destroyed in the fire. The committee approved \$20,000.00 for the project.

Gov't Creek Allotment Pond Development: Wayne Pollard explained that he'd like to develop 2 new ponds and clean out 3 existing. Project site is on BLM property located between the Rifle golf course and Highway 13. He's already developed one pond in the middle but the idea is to draw cattle away from natural forage for elk; should also help to reduce conflicts on the golf

course. He doesn't need salt due to clay in the area but he does need to make an adequate hole to prevent/delay silt up. The committee approved \$2500.00 and agreed they would fund the project out of next fiscal year if he cannot make it happen this fiscal year.

Hood Ranch Vegetation Management: Joe Hood explained that this project is a continuation of past habitat improvements. He would again ask the committee to reimburse him for fuel and cost to rent dozer. 8-10 acres are accomplished each phase, it's slow due to the terrain and thickness. Dan Cacho pointed out that movement has improved after removing downed aspen trees. Darren mentioned a study out of WY where it was determined that elk will not utilize areas thick with downed timber. Dan reiterated that the area would be unusable if Joe were to do nothing. Joe uses Garlon 4a to keep the weeds and regrowth down. Joe was asked if there were any way to speed up the process and he said he might propose something bigger for next fiscal year and will get in touch with NRCS. The committee approved \$4,970.00 and agreed to fund the project out of next FY if Joe is unable to get it done by June 30th.

Hood Ranch Solar Well: Joe proposed a solar well project for FY20. Last well he did was a flat fee of \$7500 and if he hits water he'd like for HPP to pay for the materials. He doesn't think hitting water will be an issue since he'd be drilling near an existing spring. The committee approved \$7,500.00.

Royal Elk Ranch Water Development: Rick Mueller explained that the project site is located 10 miles up Coffee Pot Road. Their goal is to increase habitat and water sources for elk on the 2,000 acre property. The previous owner put in 2 miles of pipe and improved the ditch. Rick proposed the development of 2 new ponds and the cleaning of 5 existing ponds, 5 of which will need salt. Darren reminded the committee of a similar project where they decided only to fund half of proposed HPP funding request. Rick explained that the lower portion of the property is winter range but most is primarily utilized in the spring, summer and fall. Pat Luark voiced concern over the use of a large chunk of money to improve summer range when he'd prefer it be used on winter range instead. Dan Cacho pointed out that 34 needs a place to grow animals. Darren asked the committee if they'd be willing to fund a portion of the project. Rick thinks he'd be able to get to work by mid-May and finish by June 30th but the committee continued to voice concern over spending most of their budget. Samantha reminded the committee they could get additional funds from Pat and the State Council. Phil said he would like to see other partners but Stephen Jaouen with the NRCS pointed out it would be another year before Rick would see any funding from them. Rick voiced that he would really like to get something started this year. Phil thought revamping the application with a cost/pond for the April meeting would be best. The project proposal was tabled.

Remaining Committee Business/Other Discussion: Vouchers-160 acre minimum: Darren asked the committee if they would consider dropping the 160 acre minimum for fence vouchers. Rick Bumgardner felt the 160 acre minimum should stay and project proposals would continue to be an option. Mike Lederhause explained that he only has 75 acres but he sees a lot of wildlife damage and needs funding for fence repair and would like to improve his fields. Mike gave some history on the property and said if he had the money he would buy a bigger property. Pat Luark stressed that Mike had done a good job and understands he has a lot of wildlife but the committee feels the need to set a minimum on vouchers. Darren made it clear that there is no acreage minimum for proposing a project.

Select Next Meeting Date: April 30th beginning at 1:00pm in either Eagle or Gypsum. Future Agenda Items:

Roundtable: Pat Luark expressed concern over the number of game animals going down and felt more winter range areas need cleared. He also said that HPP should pay for NEPA and it was explained that the program already can pay for NEPA but it means the FS or BLM needs to do the project. Pat Tucker pointed out that he's been speaking to both federal agencies to pin point where projects are needed.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:27pm.