



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

May 9th, 2019

CPW Hunter Education Building, Pueblo, CO

Committee Members present:

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

Administrative Assistant:

- Hanna Cook

Guests: Bob Holder (DWM), Louie Ossola (Landowner), Louis Ossola Jr. (Landowner), Allen Vitt (CPW Biologist)

Meeting called to order by John Stroh at 10:10 AM

Introductions

General Public Comments

Mike updated the committee that interviews for the new director are underway. We should know within the month who the new director is. CPW is also in the process of setting the big game season structure for the next five years. Drafts should be posted on the CPW website this summer for public review and comments.

There are concerns about flooding in burn scar areas. Some areas on USFS property will likely remain closed for safety concerns.

Budget Report

The 2019 budget report was reviewed.

Old Business

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

New Business

DAU Plan Revision E-27-Allen Vitt

The current elk population estimate in DAU E-27 is 2,085 elk. This is above the current population objective of 1,450-1,650 elk (set in 2007). CPW has held public meetings and sent out surveys. The results show that people would like to see more elk in this DAU. They met with landowners in the Hillside community who have had conflicts with elk in the past. They have said that elk distribution in the area has changed after recent wildfires. Elk have been staying on USFS property more, and this has reduced conflict. Based on data and public input, the CPW recommendation is to increase the population objective to 1,800-2,200 elk. The population is

currently already within that range, so increasing the objective would allow CPW to manage elk at current levels. This is an over the counter unit, so there is no proposed alternative for sex ratios.

The committee supports the proposed population objective changes. The committee feels that there is enough good wildlife habitat on public lands to support the objective increase. Recent fires and habitat projects have increased the amount of available habitat, and they have not heard complaints from landowners. In addition, the committee has worked with landowners who are interested in continuing to improve habitat for wildlife, so the committee does not feel that this new objective will increase conflicts in the future. This increase should provide additional hunting opportunity, especially on public lands that have experienced habitat improvement as a result of fires and projects. **The committee will submit a letter of support.**

DAU Plan Revision E-28-Allen Vitt

The current elk population estimate in DAU E-28 is 2,082 elk, and the sex ratio is 38 bulls per 100 cows. This is above the current population objective of 1,400-1,600 elk and within the sex ratio objective of 35-40 bulls per 100 cows. CPW has held public meetings and sent out surveys. The results show that people would like to see more elk in this DAU. Based on data and public input, the CPW recommendation is to increase the population objective to 2,400-2,800 elk (alternative 3). The current population is closer to the new proposed objective than the previous objective, so CPW will be able to manage elk populations for only a slight increase. The increase would be slow and gradual rather than a drastic change. Based on data and public input, the CPW recommendation is to keep the sex ratio objective at status quo.

The committee supports the proposed population and sex ratio alternatives. They feel that habitat quality has increased, especially on public land. The committee's efforts to complete habitat projects have been overall successful, so the area can support a larger population of elk. Elk distribution is still a concern, but the committee feels that they have the resources to deal with conflicts if and when they come up. They will continue to work with landowners and public land agencies to complete habitat projects to help reduce current and potential conflicts. The survey and public comment results show that the community would like to see an increase in elk, so the committee is confident that this proposed alternative will be well received. Landowners have been working with HPP on habitat improvement as well as conservation easements, so development is not currently a big concern. They will re-evaluation if/when development increases in the future, but for now they are confident that the proposed alternatives will be positive for the area. **The committee will submit a letter of support.**

OK Ranch Spring Development-Louis Ossola Jr, Bob Holder

Louis has already completed a lot of habitat work on his properties, and is placing most of them under conservation easements to help protect habitat for wildlife. He has the rights to 6 adjudicated springs on the OK Ranch. Existing ponds dry up regularly, and the springs are often so mucky that wildlife won't drink from them. Louis would like to develop some of the springs and feed water into stock tanks to provide clean and reliable water for wildlife. He would like to develop two springs to feed several tanks and a pond. The committee reviewed the design and made some amendments. They would like Louis to leave the lower riparian area and natural pond alone, as it provides important habitat for wildlife. They would like him to develop one spring to feed one or two tanks. Louis agreed to the changes and will develop one spring, and will do others in the future if this is successful. He has agreed to leave the riparian area untouched. **The project was approved for \$6000.**

Fence Material Support 2020

This program has been done annually to provide landowners with reimbursements for fencing materials to repair fences damaged by big game. DWMs or committee members can sign and hand out vouchers to eligible landowners. Eligible landowners must be engaged in agricultural production or livestock operations within SDCHPP boundaries, and they must allow some hunting access (cannot charge more than \$500 per gun for hunting access, vouchers, or services). Landowners are allowed one voucher per year, with a maximum of \$600 per voucher. Vouchers can only be used once. Unused funds are forfeited. Only eligible materials will be reimbursed.

The committee voted to continue this program with a limit of \$600 per landowner. Landowners are allowed up to \$600 of reimbursement for fence materials to fix damage cause by big game. Total project limit is \$5,000.

The committee will also continue the stockpile program in which landowners are allowed to take white vinyl wire and/or tire tanks from the committee stockpile to be used for projects in the SDC area. Vouchers must be fully filled out and returned to Hanna Cook as soon as materials are received by the landowner. Vouchers can be approved by DWMs or committee members, but only CPW staff is authorized to distribute materials. Limit 1 roll of wire per landowner per year. Landowners are allowed a materials voucher and a reimbursement voucher in the same year. Mike will track down the committee's spinning jenny.

Meals/operating expenses

The committee voted to allocate \$500 for working meeting meals and \$500 for committee operating expenses, including committee member recognition.

Remaining Committee Business/Other Discussion

8 10 ft tire tanks have been delivered to Lathrop State Park.

Destiny Chapman is the new USFS District Ranger (replacing Paul Crespin).

Dave updated the committee that the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) is looking for people who want to serve on the RAC committee.

CPW has implemented a mandatory CWD check for buck and doe rifle hunters this year. CWD testing fees will be waived for other licenses. This should help CPW to collect data on CWD in the area.

The committee inquired about filling Arlie Riggs' position. Arlie was the 4th livestock grower representative on the committee, and the statute only calls for 3. Committees cannot add extra positions that go beyond statute anymore, so they will not fill Arlie's position or add any others.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 PM

The next meeting will be held on: July 23rd at 10:00 AM at Lathrop State Park.

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