



## HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

### Grand Mesa HPP Committee

Zoom Video Conference  
August 15th, 2020  
1:00 p.m.

**Grand Mesa HPP Members Present:** Harley Metz, Sportsperson; Kirk Oldham, CPW; John Walter, Livestock Grower; Bob Mosher, USFS; Don Fulton, Livestock Grower

**Guests:** Pat Tucker, Bob Morris, Michael Blanck, & Travis Bybee, CPW; Joe Fazzi; Kiley Wheeler; Jim Toomer

**Introduction:** Committee members and guests were introduced. The final FY2020 budget was reviewed. The remaining FY21 budget at the start of the meeting was \$60,967.50.

#### **Old Business:**

1. John Walter informed the committee that his pipeline project was nearing completion. The work that has been completed looks very good, and John anticipates that irrigation will be much more efficient in the future.
2. Chuck Nichols' pond project was not able to be started in FY20, but he would still like to complete the work. The project was reapproved for \$1,251.00 in FY21.

#### **New Business:**

1. Jim Toomer presented a weed control project for West Divide Cattle Growers Association. The West Divide USFS grazing permits are heavily infested with noxious weeds, and cattle movements are helping to spread infestations to other parts of the forest as well as private lands. The project would involve hiring a contractor to treat weeds with herbicide across ~200 acres in three different areas, and includes matches from USFS for herbicide costs and \$1,000 cash from the association, as well as 40 hours of labor to cut trails. The DWM noted that reducing the presence of weeds and preventing further spread represented a good wildlife benefit, and the committee appreciated the matches from all affected parties. The project was approved for \$2,000.00 for the cost of the contractor.

2. Kiley Wheeler presented the annual Alkali Creek Cattle Growers Association pond cleanout project. The ponds have filled in with mud and fallen trees, and dams have washed out from spring runoff, reducing water storage capacity. Big game in the area utilize the ponds for water, but decreased water availability causes competition with livestock on the grazing allotments. The proposed match involves the Association members' time to plan machine travel routes and accompany the operator, as well as fuel costs, applying salt or bentonite as needed, and any additional reseeding, weed control, or other work on the disturbed ground around the ponds. The amount of ponds to be treated varies each year based on the travel routes that the machine can take to access the ponds. The committee thoroughly discussed whether "prep time" to map travel routes represented a sufficient match, as project planning and coordination is rarely considered an adequate match on other HPP projects. The committee requested that on future applications, applicant matches should include more "hard" costs such as the salt, bentonite, seed, and any additional cash for the machine operators. The committee also requested GPS coordinates, maps, and before-and-after photos to better account for project accomplishments. The project was approved for \$5,000.
3. The committee reviewed a fence application from Eric Bruton. The project area is used year-round by big game, especially during the winter and calving season, and supports large numbers of elk. The property currently has old degraded interior fencing, which does not properly contain livestock or allow for proper grazing rotation and presents entanglement risks for big game. The project involves removing the old fence and replacing it with new wildlife-friendly fences to HPP specs, including high visibility wire. The project was approved for \$3,227.46 for materials from Game Damage, and any remaining funding after placing the Game Damage order may be used to reimburse the landowner for additional fence materials purchase up to the approved amount. The committee will also provide 1 roll of white wire.

At this point in the meeting, Don Fulton had to leave and there was no longer a quorum.

4. The committee reviewed a fencing application from Shane Porter. Mr. Porter's BLM grazing allotment is located between two private landowners, and the boundary fencing is in disrepair. Both landowners experience cattle trespass from the allotment and are willing to help purchase materials, with Mr. Porter providing labor to build a new fence. The committee noted that they do not typically participate in fence projects on a public:private boundary, and also noted that the application was missing a materials list to justify the pricing. Since there was no quorum, the application was tabled for the next meeting. The committee also encouraged Mr. Porter to seek assistance from the BLM Grazing Advisory Board in the interim.
5. FY21 Fence & Herbicide vouchers and FY21 Meeting Schedule were tabled for the next meeting.

**Next Meeting: August 26<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00pm via Zoom**