



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM STATE COUNCIL ZOOM MEETING

June 23, 2020 Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Pat Tucker, Garrett Watson, Hunter Seim, John Hardwick, Greg Jungman, Terry Everhart, Gary Visintainer, Mick Davis, Robbie LeValley, Sheila Lamb, Teri Polley, Katie Richman, Samantha Sorensen, Hanna Cook

Guests: Todd Peterson, North Park Sportsperson's Representative
Seth Gallagher, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Manager, Rocky Mountain Regional Programs
Emily Orbanek, GOCO, Parks and Wildlife Program Manager
Chris Yuan-Farrell, GOCO, Senior Program Officer, Stewardship and Trails
Matt Schiltz, Granby State Forest Service
Nate Thomson, Tyler Mountain Ranch Manager

Discussion and Updates with Garrett Watson, Deputy Regional Manager, NW Region:

With the forecasted population growth in the state, Garrett shared with the State Council CPW's interest in recreation, grant opportunities and how these may directly affect HPP. The increases in land use will also change our landscape and put more pressure on our private lands affecting our ranches and farmers. Garrett expressed how important HPP is to maintain the partnerships with our private land folks. Colorado Outdoor Partners is working with CPW to create region wide roundtable partnerships for outdoor recreation; getting the stakeholders together to discuss outdoor recreation. HPP is being looked at as a potential model. As the landscape is impacted with outdoor recreation, more conflicts will occur with big game wildlife on private lands. CPW will continue to see immerging conflicts based on land use practices across the state as Colorado grows and outdoor recreation continues to rise.

Solar energy requests in Moffat County are large footprints on the landscape and are gaining traction; commercial hemp production is quiet this year, and not much activity in oil and gas with the prices being low. CPW offices are beginning to open up after COVID 19 and the State Parks are being utilized more now than ever.

Committee Video/Phone Conferencing Updates

All the committees are doing very well with the virtual meetings and this will continue at least through Labor Day. Concerns about not only local people getting together but introducing admins and others from outside the local area pose concerns for in person meetings right now. HPP will follow the direction of DNR and the Governor's office, and once travel is allowed, Pat will continue looking to incorporate occasional virtual meetings especially during the winter months.

Recognition Discussion

In the past, the council has discussed recognizing members that have been with a committee twenty years or more and currently there are twenty plus members. The council considered gift cards or a scaled down version of the Joe Gerrans' bronze statue award with a guideline of \$85 to \$100 per member. Pat and Teri will research further.

Budget Updates

The committees will spend approximately two million for FY20. HPP will get 2.8 million for FY21; \$166,000 more than last year and nearly \$300,000 more than two years ago. The state council reverted nearly \$600,000 last year and increased the committee budgets by 10% this year and next year. Of the \$250,000 the council offered up for weed control and fencing on the State Wildlife Areas, less than half was spent. The council had a lengthy discussion of the budget excess.

NFWF/GOCO Restore Update and Proposal for Next Year

Emily Orbanek, Chris Yuan-Farrell and Seth Gallagher updated the council on the first year of the RESTORE application process and those projects that were awarded. The State Council collaborated with GOCO contributing \$250,000 for FY20 giving Pat a seat at the table representing HPP along with the other partners - Habitat Stamp, Water Conservation Board, NFWF, GOCO and the Gates Family Foundation. In the initial round, there was \$2.7 million dollars to award and 53 applications received totaling just under \$20 million dollars. They were able to fund eleven projects and of the 50+

applications, approximately six applications fell under the sub category of habitat and fell within the HPP local committee areas.

The \$250,000 HPP contributed funded two projects: The first project to CPW and BLM for a project entitled 'Improving Big Game Winter Range and Restoring Habitat' to support the West Slope Mule Deer Strategy in Moffat, Rio Blanco and Routt Counties – shrub and juniper mastication and fence removal work. The second project 'Restoring Meadow and Sagebrush Habitat and Fencing' through Wildlands Restoration Volunteers in the same region. NFWF is working to finalize the agreements for these two projects.

One of the goals in this program was to generate interest in large habitat restoration projects. The timeline for the second round will be similar to the first year; the application window will be open longer this year to solicit the proposals and the goal is to post this on an annual basis so it will be predictable for the partners who are applying.

NFWF is the program administrator and can direct money that has particular priorities associated with it to specific projects to achieve those priorities. GOCO has a multiyear commitment to the RESTORE program funding the NFWF administration costs.

The State Council supports the RESTORE project and approved \$500,000 for FY21 for projects that fit the HPP criteria.

Bison Grazing/SWA White Wire Projects

Republican River committee received a proposal from a landowner that was retrofitting a cattle ranch into a bison grazing operation. The committee approved the project for \$44,000 but Pat, after consulting with Ken and Mick, did not approve. The project was changed to help the landowner with two water development projects and some wildlife friendly fencing and white wire in appropriate areas.

Area 6 Elk Collar Project Discussion

Bill deVergie, AWM area 6 talked to Pat about a possible elk study - elk movements in relation to wolves - in the northwest part of the state. This project ended up being funded from Auction Raffle and no HPP involvement was needed.

Tamarisk Update Discussion

In the past, the state council has said they did not want to support streambank tamarisk removal projects; Pat has received a couple more requests but used the Council's memo to explain HPP's position.

Recreation and HPP Discussion

Pat had a discussion with the folks in Gunnison about an elk movement study primarily directed to the influences of recreation and movement of the elk. They were going to the local committee requesting \$5000 for trail cameras. The state council reassured Pat that not all project proposals are HPP projects, but once the studies are completed, HPP will entertain their involvement.

Special Project Requests:

Tyler Mountain Forest Restoration/Recovery (Matt Shiltz & Nate Thomas)

The HPP State Council approved \$75,000 for this project, which was designed by the CSFS to stimulate aspen regeneration. The Middle Park HPP committee, previously approved \$25,000; the total HPP contribution is \$100,000. The money is for one year and becomes effective July 1st. The State Council recognizes it may not be possible to spend this entire amount by June 30, 2021 and will work with the applicant to make any remaining funds available after that date.

Arkansas River USFS project tentatively on the agenda was not presented at this meeting

Roundtable/ No Future Meeting Scheduled at this Time