



## HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

May 15th, 2020

Video Conference

### Committee Members present:

- Jim Aragon, Colorado Parks and Wildlife AWM
- Aaron Atwood, Livestock Grower
- Joe Moore, Livestock Grower
- Jeff Williams, BLM Rangeland Management Specialist
- Stephanie Shively, USFS Wildlife Biologist
- Brett McMurry, Livestock Grower
- Tyrel Woodward, Sportsmen

### Administrative Assistant:

- Hanna Cook

**Guests:** Bob Carochi (CPW DWM), Aaron Richter (BLM), Julie Stiver (CPW Senior Biologist), Jamin Grigg (CPW Biologist), Kim Woodruff (CPW DWM), Patty Knupp (NRCS), Ron Torretta (USFS)

### Meeting called to order at 10:00 AM

#### Budget Report

The 2020 budget report was reviewed.

The Inmate Hand Thinning project will not be completed this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Grinch Burn Line Project will not be completed this year.

The committee budget has been increased by 10% for the 2021 fiscal year.

#### Old Business

The escape ramps have been ordered and are being kept with the tire tanks in Canon City. Vouchers MUST be filled out for anyone taking escape ramps.

The ARHPP DMP has been approved by the Parks and Wildlife Commission.

#### New Business

##### D-16 DAU Revisions-Jamin Grigg

CPW is updating the D-16 DAU plan for the next ten years. CPW will not be making any changes to the objectives in the previous plan, as this area is part of the ongoing study to determine the effects of mountain lions on mule deer survival. The current population objective is 16,000-20,000 deer, and the current population is modeled at 11,700 deer. The current sex

ratio objective is 30-35 bucks: 100 does, and the current modeled sex ratio is 22 bucks: 100 does. The population numbers are below objectives. Concerns for the area include conversion of agricultural pastures and other habitats for development, increasing human use of recreational land, and urban deer issues. Historically, the population does not rise above 14,000 deer. Jamin and CPW will review the objectives again to see if they should be lowered after the mountain lion study is completed and they have results to inform future decisions.

Chronic Wasting disease testing has all been on a voluntary basis in the past, so sample sizes have been small and positive results are very low. They will increase testing in the fall, so they will have a better understanding of CWD prevalence in the area.

**The committee supports the proposal to keep the population and sex ratio objective at status quo until the mountain lion study is complete. They will write a letter of support that will go to the wildlife commission.**

### **Project Application Proposals and Reviews**

#### BLM Elongated Mustard Helicopter Treatment-Aaron Richter

Aaron Richter is asking HPP for \$4,000 to spray elongated mustard on BLM property. Elongated mustard is an aggressive noxious weed that grows very easily in a variety of environments, so it has been taking over native grasses and reducing forage for big game. Herbicide is very effective at controlling this weed, so the BLM has been spraying in areas with infestations to control the spread of elongated mustard. They have found that spot spraying with a helicopter is the most efficient and cost effective way to treat elongated mustard, especially in areas that are hard to access on foot. The proposed area for this project is steep and rocky, so helicopter treatment will be ideal. Fremont County operates the contract with the helicopter pilot, so HPP would be reimbursing Fremont County for this project if approved. BLM will contribute additional funds, Colorado Department of Agriculture will provide herbicide, and Fremont County will provide contract administration and coordination.

Jim mentioned that this is a popular area for big horn sheep, and we are currently in lambing season. The peak for lambing is in April and May, so Jim, Jamin, and Kim agreed that spraying in mid-June would be acceptable to avoid affecting the sheep. The helicopter treatment takes about one day, so any disturbance should be minimal. Aaron agreed that they should be able to spray in mid to late June. The committee suggested increasing the amount to \$5,000. Aaron said that the additional funds that BLM would save with this increase can be used to spray weeds elsewhere in the area.

Aaron let the committee know that spraying will most likely occur in mid to late June, but if the weeds are not ready to be sprayed then they may have to push the project into July. The committee would like to see the spraying done in June, if possible, but they are willing to pre-approve funding for FY 2021 just in case they have to push spraying into July.

**The project was approved for \$5,000 for FY 2020, or FY 2021 if it is not possible to spray in June.**

#### Tire Tank Requests:

Dave Wolf is requesting 1 8ft tire tank to replace an old metal tank that is fed by an existing spring. **The committee approved the request for 1 8ft tire tank and 1 ramp.**

HPP requires an escape mechanism in all tanks for smaller animals that have fallen in.

**Remaining committee business/other discussion**

Kim Woodruff let the committee know that they are preparing to start some habitat projects next year, and they will need Tom Grette's services to help map, flag, and supervise crews in order to get the habitat work done. The committee will put this on their next agenda to discuss funding for Tom Grette's services and the inmate hand-thinning crews for the 2021 fiscal year.

**The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 AM**

**Next meeting: June 9th at 10:00 AM via video conference.**

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