



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Uncompahgre HPP Committee

Zoom Video Conference

February 10th, 2020

6:30 p.m.

Uncompahgre HPP Members Present: Kelly Crane, CPW; Bobby Gray, Sportsman; Loren Paulson, USFS; Todd Stewart, Livestock Grower; Thane Stranathan, BLM; Bob Black, Livestock Grower

Guests: Mark Caddy, CPW; Rachel Sralla, CPW; Pat Tucker, CPW; Dean Stindt, Roy Karo, Randy Kramer, Paul Warner, Tony Abel, Dave Alexander

Introductions: Committee members and guests were introduced. The remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$50,773.46.

New Business:

1. Roy Karo and Randy Kramer introduced themselves to solicit State Council nominations from the committee for the livestock grower representative position. Committee members asked questions of both candidates, and approved both nominations.
2. Fence repair projects from the Garvey Brothers Cattle Company and Marla Fritzlen were reviewed. These are small repair projects that the Garveys submit every year, and the committee feels that repairing fences damaged by big game helps prevent big game entrapment or death, as well as increasing landowner tolerance for big game in important winter range. The projects were approved for \$500.00 (Garveys) + 1 roll of white wire, and \$250.00 (Fritzlen).
3. The committee resumed discussion on the Cowboy Cave fence project. Approximately 2.25 miles of fencing is in severe disrepair, with some sections exceeding 6 feet in height with 6-7 strands. The project involves removing all of the old fencing and replacing it with new wildlife-friendly fence to HPP specs. The quotes had been revised since the November meeting, with most of the materials being sourced from Game Damage. The project was approved for \$17,718.60 + 10 rolls of white wire.
4. Dean Stindt presented a water development proposal for Maverick Ranch. The project area is located in winter and transitional range for elk, and experiences year-round use by deer. The area is very dry, which limits the ability of big game to utilize recent habitat improvement projects and results in deer and elk using nearby agricultural operations for water. The project involves installing a guzzler near an existing catchment apron to increase water storage and availability in the area. Livestock is

generally not present in the area when the water is on, which leaves most of the water available for deer and elk. The project was approved for \$5,000.

5. The committee reviewed a fencing proposal from Shannon Clark. The property is located in big game winter and transitional range, and is adjacent to BLM. The existing fence is degraded and does not properly contain livestock, and presents entanglement risks to deer and elk. The project involves removing the old fence and replacing it with new wildlife-friendly fencing to HPP specs. The committee was supportive of the project; however there were concerns about the fence line along the BLM boundary given some recent survey work that was completed in the area. The project was tabled until the survey results could be confirmed.
6. Paul Warner presented a weed control project. The property is located on the east side of Cerro Summit in a heavy migration corridor, and is infested with weeds particularly along the irrigation ditch. Some previous aerial treatment has been successful, but the ditch is a primary source of new weed infestations. The project involves purchasing herbicide for the landowner to apply with equipment that he already owns. The committee is supportive of weed control efforts, however there were some concerns about the large amount of HPP funding that the landowner has already received in recent years, in addition to fertilizer this year. The ditch is also likely to be piped in the next several years, and the committee felt that it would be more beneficial to begin weed control efforts after that source has been eliminated. The committee recommended that the landowner seek partnership funding through the county and attempt some initial weed control work, and then resubmit the application after the ditch is piped. The project was denied.
7. Tony Abel presented a large weed treatment project to reduce brush and weed infestations, and promote forage rejuvenation. Brush has taken over much of the area, which reduces the amount of forage available for big game and livestock. The long term goal of the project is to reduce and thin the brush component to encourage forage production; however with these types of projects the weeds often reestablish first and outcompete native forage species. Some initial weed control must occur first before the brush management can take place. NRCS funds are pending to assist with weed control costs. Future habitat improvement work may be planned if weeds and brush are able to be controlled. The committee supported the project, however the proposal was tabled until the NRCS funds could be confirmed and contractor quotes could be obtained. The committee is willing to provide a letter of support if needed to gain NRCS funding.
8. The committee reviewed fertilizer project proposals. There were 22 applicants this year for a total of 3862 acres. The available budget was \$32,400.00, and the committee approved \$8.38 per acre with a \$5,000 cap on individual recipients.

Other Business:

1. The committee discussed 'hemp reclamation' projects. The State Council guidance on hemp projects explains that HPP will not participate in hemp-related projects such as fencing, fertilizer, water developments, etc. However, there has been some interest in the committee area in utilizing HPP funding to reclaim previous hemp operations. The committee agreed that they would not be willing to fund projects that involved converting hemp operations into other agricultural products. There may be some opportunity for HPP funding if the project involves returning the field into true native habitat, including grasses, forbes, and shrub/bush components.

2. The committee reviewed fencing project guidance and reiterated that they are not willing to fund interior fences on private lands, or allotment fences on public lands.
3. The committee nominated Dave Alexander for the livestock grower representative vacancy.

Next Meeting: May 6 @ 6:30pm