



## HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

### Gunnison Basin HPP Committee

Zoom Meeting

May 20, 2021

11:00am

**Gunnison Basin HPP Members Present:** Nick Gallowich, CPW; Dayle Funka, USFS; Kathy Brodhead, BLM; Paul Mowery, Livestock Grower; Navid Navidi, Sportsman

**Guests:** Pat Tucker, CPW; Brooke Vasquez, NRCS; Burt Guerrieri

**Introductions & Budget:** Committee members and guests were introduced. The remaining budget at the beginning of the meeting was \$114,727.74.

**Old Business:** Brook Vasquez updated the committee on the status of the Virtual Fencing project from FY18. This is a pilot study to test the technology in the US and specifically in the mountainous topography around Gunnison. 78 collars have been deployed in the Jacks Cabin area, and several more may be deployed this summer. Deployment in the Flat Tops area is planned for next year. The cows are currently being trained to respond to the collars at this time, and initial results seem promising.

#### **New Business:**

1. Dayle Funka and Burt Guerrieri presented a pond cleanout project on the Price Creek and Castle USFS allotments. The allotments are located in big game summer and transitional range. Water may be a limiting factor in the area for deer and elk. Stock ponds in the area have not been cleaned in several decades, and they have become silted in such that they do not efficiently hold water. This results in poor livestock and big game distribution around the remaining water sources, and competition for water. Holding more water on the landscape for longer periods of time will improve big game distribution and reduce competition with livestock.

The proposal consists of cleaning and repairing 11 ponds to improve water storage capacity. Each pond will require approximately 3 hours of labor, and 3 additional hours of mobilization between ponds. The contractor estimate is \$130 - \$165 per hour depending on the type of machinery that is required. The project was approved for \$5,000 for labor, and the permittee was encouraged to reapply for additional funding after July 1<sup>st</sup>. The committee also noted that future applications on allotments should include match from the USFS, and requested that Dayle and Burt look into securing additional USFS funding for this project - for example paying for fuel costs.

2. Dayle presented two annual weed control projects from the USFS for FY2022. The projects will target knapweed, yellow toadflax, and Canada thistle infestations in Soap Creek and Alkali Basin. The area provides big game winter range, and experiences year-round use by deer. Soap Creek is highly utilized by hunters and horse traffic, which results in large weed dispersal. The USFS has decommissioned several roads in the area to try to prevent this spread, however user-created trails have made this control method ineffective. The Alkali Basin experiences heavy use by elk, and previous weed treatments have resulted in much smaller infestations. Both projects were approved for \$5,000.00 each for contractor labor in FY22.
3. The committee approved voucher programs for FY22 as follows:
  - a. Fence vouchers: \$10,000.00 (50 vouchers)
    - i. Minimum 40 acres
    - ii. Leased acres qualify
    - iii. Not allowable on allotment fences
    - iv. \$200 increments
    - v. Up to 3 vouchers per landowner annually distributed by DWMs
    - vi. 1 roll of white wire per voucher may be distributed if landowner requests it
    - vii. Restrictions on allowed materials: posts, barbed/barbless wire, electric braid, stays, staples, etc. No woven wire or hog panels, tools, chargers, etc.
  - b. Herbicide Vouchers: \$4,000.00 (20 vouchers)
    - i. Minimum 35 acres
    - ii. Leased acres qualify
    - iii. \$200 increments
    - iv. Up to 2 vouchers per landowner annually distributed by DWMs
  - c. FY22 Pond Vouchers were tabled for clarification on BLM allotment rules.

**Next meeting: TBD**