



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

North Fork HPP Committee

Maloney House, Delta County Fairgrounds

October 21st, 2021

6:30 p.m.

North Fork HPP Members Present: Ken Holsinger, BLM; Steve Kossler, Livestock Grower; Tyler McCarrel, USFS; Jess Campbell, Livestock Grower; Andrew Taylor for Cody Purcell, CPW

Guests: Valerie Horncastle, USFS; Robbie LeValley

Introduction: Committee members and guests were introduced. The remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$26,707.00.

New Business:

1. The committee reviewed FY22 voucher programs and approved annual voucher allocations as follows: Fence vouchers - \$2,000 (10 vouchers @ \$200 each); pond cleanout vouchers - \$5,000 (5 vouchers @ \$1000 each); herbicide vouchers - \$2,000 (10 vouchers @ \$200 each). The committee noted that distributing rolls of white high visibility wire (1 per \$200 fence voucher) was approved. Adding high vis wire to continually-damaged sections of fence will help to prevent future damages and extend the life of the fence/HPP investment.
2. Robbie LeValley presented the annual proposal for the Delta County Weed Control project that has been implemented in conjunction with HPP for the past several years. Other partners include CDOT, CDA, and Montrose County. Each year the program treats hundreds of acres of public and private lands within Delta and Montrose counties utilizing multiple contractors. While some infestations are being maintained at or below current levels, weather conditions can vary annually and may result in different weed flushes in new locations. The project was approved for \$20,000.
3. Valerie Horncastle presented an aspen treatment project for USFS. The project areas are located in important transitional and winter ranges for deer and elk, and also include habitat zones immediately adjacent to private lands where livestock conflicts with agriculture exist. The existing habitat is in poor condition due to Sudden Aspen Decline (SAD), which reduces the quality of forage offered by the understory. Limited forage throughout the area reduces the amount of time deer and elk spend in the area, resulting in heavier use of nearby private lands and increased conflicts with agricultural operations. The project consists of mechanically

treating mature aspen to remove decadent/SAD stands. This treatment will trigger root suckering and regeneration of young aspen, with secondary effects of reinvigorating the forage vegetation in the understory. Improving forage quality and quantity will improve big game distribution and utilization of the area, helping to meet management objectives as well as reducing pressure and damage on private agricultural lands. The project was approved for \$10,000, and the committee supports the project going to the State Council for additional funds.

Roundtable:

1. Andrew Taylor updated the committee on high fence removal projects. In conjunction with West Slope Conservation Center, BHA, CPW, and other volunteers, multiple fence removal projects have taken place near the mine and on several private properties. Removing these fences helps big game cross highways more effectively without becoming trapped on roadways, and improves connectivity and migration corridors. This work will continue in the future and may request funds from HPP.

Next Meeting: TBD