



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Uncompahgre HPP Committee

Project Tour: Maverick JSL (Smuggler's Ranch) – Mailbox Park

August 15th, 2022 – 9:00am

Uncompahgre HPP Members Present: Dave Alexander, Livestock Grower; Bobby Gray, Sportsman; Kelly Crane, CPW; Thane Stranathan, BLM; Todd Stewart, Livestock Grower

Guests: Dean Stindt, Jim Keller, Luke Holguin, Jennifer Heidergott, Kara Bergren, Maddie Rehn, Tanya Banulis, Courtney Haynes, Rachel Sralla, Mark Caddy

The committee and guests toured the Maverick JSL/Smuggler's Ranch property to look at multiple hydroax, rollerchop, seeding, and water developments:

FY16: Rollerchop & Seed

- 320 acres mechanically treated
- HPP cost **\$22,500.00**; landowner cost \$22,925.00 = total cost **\$45,425.00**
- The project area is located in winter and transitional range for elk, and experiences year-round use by deer. The quality of forage in the sagebrush parks has been diminished by invading PJ, which has resulted in reduced big game use during the winter. Deer and elk currently use the area for cover, and go to the nearby irrigated fields to browse. 200 acres of sagebrush will be treated with a hydroax to remove encroaching PJ, as well as reduce 30-50% of the existing sagebrush to a height of 8-10". Additionally, 120 acres of PJ will be roller chopped to create openings in the dense areas. These treatments will increase forage production and quality in the project areas, which will help with big game distribution and use of the area, and reduce game damage.
-

FY17: Seed Project

- 140 acres seeded
- HPP cost **\$4,879.00**; landowner cost \$4,879.00 = total cost **\$9,758.00**
- The vegetation is dominated by pinyon juniper and offers little forage availability. Agricultural operations in the area with irrigated fields frequently experience crop damage from big game that use the project area for cover, and as a travel corridor from public lands onto the fields. 140

acres will be aerially seeded with a mix of native forage species. The seeding will increase forage availability and quality for big game, which will help to hold deer and elk on the property and reduce pressure on nearby irrigated fields.

FY17: Water Project

- 1 water development (guzzler)
- HPP cost **\$4,000.00**; landowner cost \$6,300.00 = total cost **\$10,300.00**
- Lack of water storage in the area results in big game utilizing nearby irrigated pastures and hay fields for forage and water, which creates conflict with livestock and landowners. A water catchment apron will be constructed to capture and direct rainfall and snowmelt into a 3,000 gallon storage tank. The water will then be supplied to a wildlife drinker, which will increase water availability for wildlife in the project area. This will reduce the impact of big game on nearby agricultural lands

FY18: Water Project

- 4 water developments (guzzlers)
- HPP cost **\$3,980.00**; landowner cost \$4,000.00 = total cost **\$7,980.00**
- 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. Four 500-gallon guzzlers will be installed with 8x10 catchment aprons. The water will flow into the guzzlers where it will be available for big game use. This will result in better big game distribution across the project area; increased wildlife utilization of recent habitat improvements in the area; and reduced conflicts with livestock and agricultural operations.

FY18: Hydroax & Seed

- ~198 acres mechanically treated, ~130 acres seeded
- HPP + SC cost **\$30,843.90**; landowner + WRWC cost \$47,929.82 = total cost **\$78,773.72**
- The area is dominated by pinyon-juniper and overgrown sagebrush, which significantly reduces the quality and availability of forage for big game. Lack of forage growth causes big game to utilize nearby private agricultural areas, resulting in game damage issues to fences and fields, and competition with livestock. Hydroaxing of dense stands of sagebrush and pinyon-juniper and then reseeding will increase the quality and availability of forage for big game, while still leaving sufficient cover. Improving this habitat will increase big game utilization of the area, and reduce pressure and game damage on nearby agricultural operations.

FY21: Water Project

- 1 water development (guzzler)
- HPP cost **\$5,000.00**; landowner cost \$6,415.00 = total cost **\$11,415.00**

- 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. One 1500-gallon guzzler will be installed with a catchment apron. An exclusionary fence will protect the apron from livestock or wildlife damage. The water will flow into the guzzler where it will be available for big game use. This will result in better big game distribution across the project area; increased wildlife utilization of recent habitat improvements in the area; and reduced conflicts with livestock and agricultural operations.

FY22: Water Project

- 1 water development (guzzler)
- HPP cost **\$6,625.00**; landowner cost \$6,625.00 = total cost **\$13,250.00**
- An 80 x 80 collection apron will be installed to collect water and flow into a 1500-gallon tank with a drinker for wildlife use. The apron will be fenced to prevent damage from livestock or wildlife. This will improve big game distribution across the project area, increase wildlife utilization of recent habitat improvements in the area, and reduce conflicts with livestock and agricultural operations.