



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Gunnison Basin HPP Committee

Gunnison CPW Office - 300 W. New York Ave

May 23, 2022

11:00am

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

Guests: Clayton BonDurant, CPW; Debbie Maurer Baca, Aiden Downey, Curtis Allen

Introductions & Budget: Committee members and guests were introduced. The remaining budget at the beginning of the meeting was \$70,499.50. The FY23 draft budget was approved including voucher allocations as shown on attached appendix.

New Business:

1. Debbie Maurer Baca presented a fencing proposal for Big Blue Ranch. Approximately 2.2 miles of boundary fence is in severe disrepair, and consists of old dilapidated sheep and lamb fence which does not prevent neighboring cattle trespass from Butte Rock Ranch. The property is under a conservation easement, and the landowners run a sheep operation with short duration grazing. While the southwestern portion of the property experiences use by bighorn, the domestic sheep are kept away from that area with herders. The project involves removing the old fence and replacing it with wildlife-friendly fence to HPP specs, including high visibility topwire and pole crossings at high traffic points. Both ranches have agreed to cost share the project. The project was approved for 33% of costs up to \$16,785.00.
2. Curtis Allen presented an updated fencing proposal. 9,000-feet of allotment boundary fence is in disrepair, and does not properly contain livestock on separate allotments, which prevents proper grazing rotation. The project consists of replacing the existing fence with wildlife-friendly fence. The fence specs were discussed at length due to concerns about the high visibility topwire, which can be electrified. Lightning strikes have occurred several times on the existing fence, and there is concern about strikes on the electric fence. The committee may be able to provide non-electric white wire, which would satisfy the high visibility requirement for both big game and sage grouse. Permittees on both sides of fence would maintain and manage the fence, and USFS will provide materials. The committee noted that this is a high priority area, and

properly functioning fencing is critical for USFS to meet grazing standards for range management. The project was approved for \$51,594.00.

Admin note: the committee did not have sufficient rolls of wire in inventory, resulting in a separate purchase from Kencove to provide 12 rolls of high visibility wire for this project.

3. Clayton BonDurant presented a fencing proposal for Sapinero and Centennial SWAs. The SWAs total approximately 8,000 acres of important winter range for big game. Some of the fences are in disrepair and do not properly contain livestock. Cattle trespass from adjacent private lands negatively impact habitat and forage quality for big game. The project includes repairing or reconstructing up to 5 miles of fence where necessary to maintain effective boundaries. Reducing cattle use of the SWA will improve forage quantity and availability for wintering big game. The project was approved for \$5,000.00 for materials.

4. The committee reviewed two annual weed control projects from the USFS. 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 Alkali Basin experiences heavy use by elk, and previous weed treatments have resulted in much smaller infestations. Alkali Basin was approved for \$5,000.00 and Soap Creek was approved for \$6,000.00, both for contractor labor in FY23.

Roundtable:

1. The committee discussed the ongoing joint effort to hire a Gunnison County weed/cheatgrass coordinator.

Next meeting: TBD

APPENDIX

Gunnsion Basin HPP FY23 Voucher Programs:

- All vouchers are on a reimbursement basis.
- Voucher programs are approved at the beginning of the fiscal year and are available to landowners throughout the year, i.e. in between meetings/as needed via DWMs.
- All vouchers must be submitted for payment no later than June 10th.
- Hunting access is required if voucher is utilized on private land.
 - o 'Friends and family only' is allowed – does not have to be public access

Fence Voucher:

- Minimum 40 acres
- Leased acres qualify
- Not allowable on allotment fences
- \$200 increments, distributed by DWM
 - o Up to 3 vouchers per landowner annually if approved by DWM
- 1 roll of white wire per voucher may be distributed per voucher
- Restrictions on allowed materials: posts, barbed/barbless wire, electric braid, stays, staples, etc
 - o No woven wire or hog panels, no tools, no chargers, etc

Herbicide Voucher:

- Minimum 40 acres
- Leased acres qualify
- Allowable on allotments
- \$200 increments, distributed by DWM
- Up to 2 vouchers per landowner annually, if DWM determines need is greater than \$200

Pond Cleanout Voucher:

- No minimum acres
- For use on allotments only unless DWM pre-approves pond on private land
 - o Ponds must receive significant wildlife use
- \$1000 increments for **two** ponds cleaned with heavy equipment
 - o Based on \$100/hr up to 10 hours
- Up to 5 vouchers annually
- Before-and-after photos and GPS locations required before payment