



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Mount Blanca HPP Committee Meeting
August 7, 2023 at 12:00 pm
CPW Office - Monte Vista, CO

Committee Members Present:

- Brian Bechaver - CPW
- Roy Oliver - Livestock Grower
- Alvin Kunugi - Livestock Grower
- Shane Lancaster - Livestock Grower
- Mike Maldonado - Sportsperson
- Scott Nilson - BLM
- Vacant - USFS

Administrative Assistant Present:

Kimberly Berscheid

Attendees Present:

William Miedema - CPW
Leon Martinez - CPW
Tyler Cerny - CPW
Luke Mize - Applicant
Richard Broders - Applicant
Kathy Shoup - Applicant
Blue and Jeannie Allen - Applicant
Conrad Albert - CPW (Phone)
Wayne Loomis - Applicant
Doug Ouren - Applicant
Ty Benally - USFWS

Introductions

Committee members and guests were introduced.

Budget Report

The remaining budget balance at the start of the meeting was \$85,000. Michael Blanck approved increasing the budget by \$17,546.09 (08/03/23) to cover projects if the committee approves them.

Old Business

Minutes - The minutes from the February 13, 2023, meeting were approved as written.

New Business

Broder Fence-

Richard asked the committee for \$2,968.68 for materials to replace 0.75 miles of fence on his property. The existing fence has been damaged beyond repair by deer, elk, and pronghorn. Installing a wildlife-friendly fence will reduce future game damage and prevent entanglement hazards for big game. Richard will contribute \$4,767 in materials and labor to install the fence.

The project was approved for up to \$3,000 (the additional amount is to cover the price increase of materials) for materials from the Game Damage Unit to replace 0.75 miles of fence.

Mize Fence-

Luke is asking the committee for \$4,632.42 for materials to replace 0.75 miles of fence on his property. The existing fence has been damaged beyond repair by elk and no longer contains livestock. Installing a wildlife-friendly fence will reduce future game damage and entanglement hazards for big game. Luke will contribute \$1,050 in materials and labor to install the fence.

The project was approved for up to \$4,632.42 for materials to replace 0.75 miles of fence.

Shoup Fence-

Kathy asked the committee for \$1,428.40 for materials to replace 0.25 miles of fence on her property. The existing fence has been damaged beyond repair by heavy big-game crossing and no longer contains livestock adequately. Installing a wildlife-friendly fence will reduce future game damage and prevent entanglement hazards for big game. Kathy will contribute \$800 in materials and labor to install the fence.

The project was approved for up to \$1,428.40 for materials from the Game Damage Unit to replace 0.25 miles of fence.

Allen Fence-

Blue and Jeannie asked the committee for \$2,654.94 for materials to replace 0.5 miles of fence on their property. The existing fence has been damaged beyond repair by elk and deer and no longer contains livestock, presenting a safety risk for motorists on the adjacent county road. Installing a wildlife-friendly fence will reduce game damage and entanglement hazards for big game and ensure cattle are contained. Blue and Jeannie will contribute labor to remove the old fencing and install the new one.

The project was approved for up to \$3,000 (the additional amount is to cover the price increase of materials) for materials to replace 0.5 miles of fence.

Loomis Fence-

Wayne asked the committee for \$2,061.65 for materials to replace 0.5 miles of fence on his property. The existing fence has been damaged beyond repair by elk and no longer contains livestock adequately. Installing a wildlife-friendly fence will reduce game damage and prevent entanglement hazards for big game. Two crossings will be installed to provide clear crossing points for wildlife to prevent further damage. Wayne will contribute the labor to remove the old fence and install the new one.

The project was approved for up to \$3,000 (the additional amount is to cover the price increase of materials) for materials from the Game Damage Unit to replace 0.5 miles of fence.

N. San Luis Elk Dispersal Coordinator-

Leon Martinez, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Parks Service asked the committee for \$25,000 for an Interagency Elk Dispersal and Distribution Liaison - Doug Ouren in N. San Luis Valley. Doug will coordinate efforts on public lands to distribute elk herds across the landscape and reduce game damage conflicts on private property. Doug has worked in the position for the past two years and has successfully

corresponded with all parties to ensure a safe and beneficial operation. Doug will actively be dispersing elk roughly from October to February. A vehicle and housing will be provided during this time. The project includes the Baca National Wildlife Refuge, Great Sand Dunes National Park, and surrounding private lands. Sensitive habitats will be avoided to ensure no further damage occurs. Hunter's success and satisfaction are expected to increase, and increased harvest will reduce conflicts on neighboring agricultural lands. Success will be evaluated using NPS collared elk as an indicator of distribution.

The project was approved for up to \$25,000 to pay Doug Ouren for his services as the Interagency Elk Distribution and Dispersal Liasion for FY24. Based on past performance, the committee agreed to increase the hourly rate to \$30.

Natural Prairie Organic Forage Purchase-

Conrad Albert and Natural Prairie Organic asked the committee for \$30,000 for a forage lease on the property. Elk have historically utilized this property for forage, and the lease would ensure that 18 crop circles are left ungrazed by livestock, providing critical winter forage for big game. The lease would reduce game damage liabilities and conflicts on neighboring private lands. The terms of the agreement would be as follows: The initial payment of \$20,000 secures the designated crop circles for wildlife usage and will not be grazed by livestock. The second payment of \$10,000 will be released by 04/15/2024 if a minimum of 250 elk utilize the property for 30 days or more. The utilization will be monitored and determined by Colorado Parks and Wildlife in conjunction with Natural Prairie's local farm manager.

The project was approved for up to \$30,000 for a forage lease on the Natural Prairie Organic property with the following agreement: The initial payment of \$20,000 secures the designated crop circles for wildlife usage and will not be grazed by livestock. The second payment of \$10,000 will be released by 04/15/2024 if a minimum of 250 elk utilize the property for 30 days or more. Colorado Parks and Wildlife will monitor the utilization with Natural Prairie's local farm manager.

Hunt Coordinator, Franklin Kuhn-

Conrad Albert is asking the committee for \$11,000 to continue the hunt coordinator project that has been funded annually. Franklin Kuhn would continue to be the coordinator in South Costilla County. He has built relationships and established trust with landowners, enabling him to effectively assist Colorado Parks and Wildlife with elk management in the area.

The project was approved for \$11,000, paid at \$25/hr. and mileage at the current State of Colorado reimbursement rate. Fence repairs will be done as needed and billed as described above.

Hunt Coordinator, Andy Espinosa-

Conrad Albert is asking the committee for \$16,000 to continue the hunt coordinator project that has been funded annually. Andy Espinosa would continue to be the coordinator in North Costilla County. He has built relationships and established trust with landowners, enabling him to effectively assist Colorado Parks and Wildlife with elk management in the area.

The project was approved for \$16,000, paid at \$25/hr. and mileage at the current State of Colorado reimbursement rate. Fence repairs will be done as needed and billed as described above.

FY24 Voucher Program Renewal:

Landowner Fence and Materials Reimbursement Vouchers-

The committee wants to continue a fence voucher program for small fence projects. Landowners are eligible for up to \$1,200 for materials to repair damage by big game. DWMs can distribute the vouchers to eligible landowners (Kimberly will send them to DWMs as requested). Landowners will purchase their materials and send the receipt and signed voucher to Kimberly to request reimbursement. Landowners are responsible for unapproved items or any expense over the allowable voucher amount. Total budget allocation for FY24 is \$5,800.

Landowner Fencing Supply Program-

The MBHPP Committee has rolls of white wire to be given out to eligible landowners to make fences more wildlife-friendly. Landowners will receive 2 bags of clips per roll to allow the top wire to be dropped down for wildlife crossing. Landowners who want to receive the white wire should discuss it with their DWMs. DWMs will contact Brian Bechaver with the request, and he will issue the materials.

Materials Order-

The committee approved \$3,000 for FY24 for materials to be purchased and held at the Monte Vista office for distribution.

FY24 Meeting Meals and Committee Operating Expenses-

The committee approved \$500 for working meeting meals and \$250 for operating expenses, including committee member recognition for FY24.

Remaining Committee Business

Meeting Schedule-

The next committee meeting is TBD.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.