



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Lower Colorado River HPP Committee Meeting

April 10, 2024, 1:00 p.m.

Eagle County Government Building - Eagle, CO

Committee Members Present:

- Darren Chacon - CPW
- Loyd Gerard - Livestock Grower
- Pat Luark - Livestock Grower
- Mike Gosha - Livestock Grower
- Rick Bumgardner - Sportsperson
- Nick Jaramillo - BLM
- Phil Nyland - USFS

Administrative Assistant Present:

Kimberly Berscheid

Attendees Present:

Michael Blanck - CPW
Matt Yamashita - CPW
Jake Stanton - CPW
Layton Stutsman - CPW
Becca Ryan - CPW
Samantha Canetti - CPW
Seth Schwolert - CPW (Virtual)
Kristy Wallner - BLM
Jason Sewell - Applicant
Richard Marshall - Applicant
Emma Geverd - NRCS

Introductions

Committee members and attendees were introduced.

Budget Report

The budget balance at the start of the meeting was \$44,038.68.

Old Business

The February 7, 2024, meeting minutes were approved as written.

New Business

Damage Vouchers Discussion:

The committee discussed using damage vouchers as an additional last-resort tool to assist landowners. Seth Schwolert, DWM, joined the meeting to present how the vouchers have been utilized in the NW Region. The committee agreed that the damage vouchers would be beneficial for the area.

Anderson Fence Project-

Doug Anderson presented a fence project to replace 2 miles of fencing on his ranch in Garfield County. The existing fence dates back to the 1900s and sustains frequent damage from elk crossings. It is unrepairable due to structural damage and ineffective in containing livestock. A wildlife-friendly fence will be constructed to reduce further damage and entanglement hazards for big game. Doug will contribute in-kind labor,

equipment, and materials to construct the fence. **The project was approved for \$13,200 for materials to build 2 miles of wildlife-friendly fence.**

Sunfire Ranch Cross Fence-

Jason Sewell presented a 0.75-mile fencing project on the Sunfire Ranch in Pitkin County. A new wildlife-friendly fence is needed to keep livestock off critical riparian areas and increase the property's rotational grazing and livestock distribution capabilities. The Sunfire Ranch will contribute in-kind labor, materials, and equipment to construct the fence. **The project was approved for \$5,000 for materials to construct .75 miles of wildlife-friendly fence.**

Sunfire Rance Mastication-

Jason Sewell presented a 16-acre mastication project on the Sunfire Ranch in Pitkin County. The project aims to reduce the dense stands of pinon, juniper, and sage to increase forage opportunities for livestock and big game and reduce fire hazards. Mastication will be done in a mosaic pattern, reducing the density by 30-40%, focusing on a diameter of pinon-juniper 3" –12". The Sunfire Ranch will contribute in-kind labor and equipment to the project. **The project was approved for \$5,000 for the mastication of 16 acres.**

Summit 47 Mastication-

Richard Marshall presented a mastication project on the Summit 47 Ranch in Routt County. This is a multiple-year project with Summit 47 Ranch, BLM, and the Routt County Weed Board (Taylor Grazing Funds Award) to masticate 166 acres of moderate to high-density pinon and juniper. The project aims to restore 666 acres of sagebrush parks, benefitting big game, livestock, soil health, and erosion and reducing wildlife fuels on private and public lands. Summit 47 Investments will contribute the equipment (maintenance, fuel, parts, and labor) to complete the mastication project. **The project was approved for \$6,000 for the mastication of 166 acres.**

N. Gypsum & Burns Weed Treatment-

Kristy Wallner presented a 596-acre weed treatment project on N. Gypsum and Burns BLM allotments in Routt and Eagle Counties. The project aims to treat acres associated with prescribed burns, range improvements, maintain mastication projects, and along roads and trails to control and reduce noxious weed infestations on public and private lands. The targeted weeds include several species of thistle, knapweed, and houndstongue, all listed as mandated for control due to the ability to outcompete native vegetation and reduce forage opportunities for livestock and big game. BLM will contribute funding for labor and chemicals, and the Routt County Weed Board (TGA Funds) will contribute funding for the treatment of an additional 158 acres. **The project was approved for \$5,995.76 for labor for weed treatment of 596 acres of noxious weeds on BLM allotments in Routt and Eagle Counties.**

Red Hill & Hardscrabble Weed Treatment-

Kristy Wallner presented a 350-acre weed treatment project on Red Hill and Hardscrabble BLM allotments. The project aims to treat acres associated with prescribed burns, range improvements, maintain mastication projects, and along

roads and trails to control and reduce noxious weed infestations on public and private lands. The targeted weeds include several species of thistle, knapweed, and houndstongue, all listed as mandated for control due to the ability to outcompete native vegetation and reduce forage opportunities for livestock and big game. BLM will contribute funding for labor and chemicals. **The project was approved for \$3,521 for labor for weed treatment of 350 acres on BLM allotments in Eagle County.**

Horse Creek Weed Treatment-

Kristy Wallner presented a 200-acre weed treatment on Hack Creek and Horse Mountain BLM allotments in Eagle County. The project aims to treat acres associated with prescribed burns, range improvements, maintain mastication projects, and along roads and trails to control and reduce noxious weed infestations on public and private lands. The targeted weeds include several species of thistle, knapweed, and houndstongue, all listed as mandated for control due to the ability to outcompete native vegetation and reduce forage opportunities for livestock and big game. BLM will contribute funding for labor and chemicals. **The project was approved for \$2,012 for labor for weed treatment of 200 acres on BLM allotments in Eagle County.**

Bear Wallow Allotment Improvement-

Mike Goscha presented a 3.2-mile fence project on the Bear Wallow Allotment in Garfield County. This multi-phase project includes weed treatment, spring repair, and fence installation and maintenance, and it aims to restore and improve big game habitat and livestock grazing management. Repairing and installing wildlife-friendly fencing will provide the infrastructure for rotational grazing on public and private land, improving livestock distribution and overall rangeland health conditions. BLM and the Grazing Advisory Board will contribute materials and labor. **The project was approved for \$4,125 for materials to construct and repair 3.2 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing.**

Project Discussion Items-

BLM Soil Moisture Probes-

Kristy Wallner presented information on soil moisture probes, including a video of the data collected in previous deployments.

BLM Ceres Ranch GPS Tags-

Kristy Wallner presented information on pilot GPS tags for livestock, which can be used to gain information on location and reproduction rates. The tags can be used with or replace traditional virtual fence collars.

Remaining Committee Business

Retirement Recognition-

The committee presented Scot Doderro and Jim Nieslanik with retirement statues to thank them for their years of dedication and service to the Lower Colorado HPP Committee.

Meeting Schedule- The next meeting was scheduled for July 10, 2024, at 1:00 p.m., at the Glenwood Springs CPW Office.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:10 p.m.