

Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Habitat Partnership Program  
Northwest Colorado



## DISTRIBUTION MANAGEMENT PLAN



Approved - Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission: November 15, 2019  
This plan is valid for 10 years from approval date.

**2019-2029**

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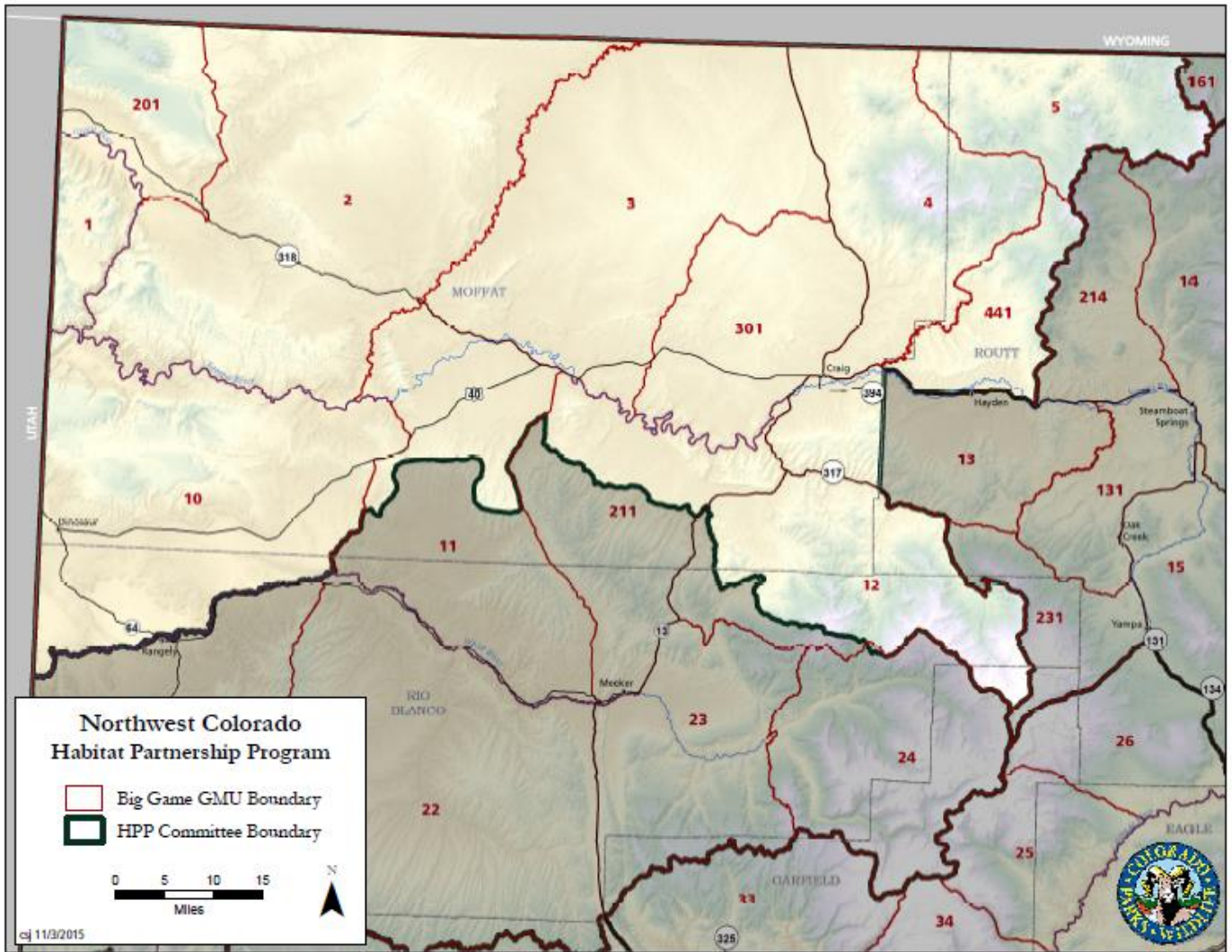
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NWHPP Committee vision is to work cooperatively with landowners and local, state and federal agencies to establish strategies to resolve immediate fence, water and forage conflicts caused by big game; and to develop and implement long-term strategies that resolve conflicts while maintaining healthy sustainable rangelands. In addition to resolving wildlife conflicts, HPP is also statutorily directed to "assist the division in meeting game management objectives..."

The NWHPP feels strongly in the idea of working as a partnership with other entities and landowners. Our Committee would also like to encourage people to leverage the monies available in order to implement as many projects as possible. For that reason, our Committee will generally partner on all approved projects on a 50/50 basis including in-kind, non-monetary, contributions. We also require each participating landowner or agency to submit a completed application prior to considering proposed projects.

The success of the management plan will depend heavily on the Committee's ability to foster cooperation between the landowners and the hunting public, since a major tool for moving the animals from the conflict areas, and decreasing the numbers will be the public hunters. The committee will encourage landowners to utilize the hunting public as a tool to disperse game preventing refuge areas and achieving management goals. Fence damage was identified as a chronic problem and the Committee plans to continue to take a proactive role in seeking out new fencing methods, such as the utilization of colored vinyl top wire, which could provide relief.

# NORTHWEST CO HPP AREA



# COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We currently have seven committee members: three representing local livestock growers, one representing the U.S. Forest Service, one representing the Bureau of Land Management, one representing Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and one representing sportspersons of Colorado. The NWHPP committee is also fortunate to have three members who have served seven years or more: Gary Visintainer (Chairperson and livestock grower representative), Chad Green (livestock grower representative) and DWM Evan Jones (Colorado Parks and Wildlife Representative). A fourth member, Toni Toelle (Bureau of Land Management representative), has spent several years in different roles on both the White River HPP committee and the NWHPP committee. We believe this is an indication of the dedication of our members.

## MEMBERS

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Gary Visintainer, livestock grower rep. /chair | Started HPP Term: 07/1991 |
| 2. Chad Green, livestock grower representative    | Started HPP Term: 02/2006 |
| 3. Sean Durham, livestock grower representative   | Started HPP Term: 08/2017 |
| 4. Gary Nichols, sportspersons representative     | Started HPP Term: 09/2014 |
| 5. DWM Evan Jones, CPW representative             | Started HPP Term: 04/2012 |
| 6. Curtis Keetch, USFS representative             | Started HPP Term: 11/2016 |
| 7. Toni Toelle, BLM representative                | Started HPP Term: 02/2019 |

# INTRODUCTION

The Northwest Colorado Habitat Partnership Program Committee (NWHPP) was started in 1991 to address big game rangeland forage and fence conflicts occurring in Northwest Colorado.

The area within the Northwest HPP committee boundary includes the two largest elk herds in Colorado (White River herd and Bear's Ears herd). The conflicts identified for elk involve several different components. First, early movement toward summer ranges in the spring result in premature forage depletion causing delays of livestock pasture usage. Secondly, premature migration from National Forest lands onto adjoining private property is resulting in significant loss of livestock forage available for fall use. Thirdly, early and sustained migration has also begun to cause significant impacts to critical big game winter range. Lastly, elk distributions and concentrations during the winter have caused conflicts with livestock winter feeding grounds.

The success of the management plan will depend heavily on the Committee's ability to foster cooperation between the landowners and the hunting public, since a major tool for moving the animals from the conflict areas, and decreasing the numbers will be the public hunters. Landowners have been reluctant in the past to open their private lands to the general public, for reasons ranging from protection of their property to attempts to manage the property for hunting income.

## HPP ORIENTATION

HPP was initially started to resolve fence and forage conflicts caused to agricultural operators by deer, elk, pronghorn and moose. While the law governing HPP was broadened in 2002 ("...reduce wildlife conflicts... game management objectives") in 2017 the State Council and the NW Region Manager reaffirmed the intent and focus of HPP.

This direction provides for HPP participation, whether by local committees or the State Council, to be limited to those conflict resolution projects or game management objective projects that involve deer, elk, pronghorn and moose.

## HPP STATUTE - (C.R.S. 33-1-110)

(8) (a) The habitat partnership program is hereby created to assist the division of parks and wildlife by working with private land managers, public land management agencies, sports persons, and other interested parties to reduce wildlife conflicts, particularly those associated with forage and fence issues, and to assist the division of parks and wildlife in meeting game management objectives through duties as deemed appropriate by the director.

(b) The director, with the approval of the commission, shall have the authority to appoint a "habitat partnership committee", referred to in this section as a "committee", in any area of the state where conflicts between wildlife and private land owners and managers engaged in the management of public and private land exist.

(c) A committee shall consist of the following members: One sports person who purchases big game licenses on a regular basis in Colorado; three persons representing livestock growers in the area of the state in which the committee is being established; one person from each of the federal agencies that has land management responsibilities in such area of the state; and one person from the Colorado division of parks and wildlife. All persons on any such committee shall be residents of the state of Colorado.

(d) The duties of a committee are the following:

(I) To develop big game distribution management plans to resolve rangeland forage, growing hay crop, harvested crop aftermath grazing, and fence conflicts subject to commission approval;

(II) To monitor program effectiveness and to propose to the council changes in guidelines and land acquisition planning and review as appropriate;

(III) To request for the committee, on an annual basis, funds from the council consistent with the distribution management plan developed by any such committee;

(IV) To expend funds allocated by the council or acquired from other sources as necessary to implement distribution management plans;

(V) To make an annual report of expenditures and accomplishments of the committee to the council by August 15 of each year;

(VI) To nominate a person to act as a representative of agricultural livestock growers or crop producers to the habitat partnership council for the area of the state where such committee is organized;

(VII) To reduce wildlife and land management conflicts as the conflicts relate to big game forage and fence issues and other management objectives.

(e) The committee shall be authorized to procure from land owners, land managers, or other providers, materials or services necessary for carrying out activities identified in the distribution management plans pursuant to subparagraph (IV) of paragraph (d) of this subsection (8); except that all such procurements shall be certified as within the scope of the activities and funding levels authorized in such distribution management plans before any such procurement may be authorized.

# COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

- **GOAL 1:** TO WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH PRIVATE, LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES TO IMPROVE HABITAT CONDITIONS AND TO REDUCE CONFLICTS WITH FENCING, FORAGE AND BIG GAME.
- **GOAL 2:** TO IMPROVE BIG GAME DISTRIBUTION AND HARVEST TO MINIMIZE CONFLICTS WITH LOCAL LANDOWNERS AND TO PROVIDE A QUALITY HUNTING EXPERIENCE.
- **GOAL 3:** TO IMPROVE HABITAT CONDITIONS TO ENSURE HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE RANGELANDS.
- **GOAL 4:** TO MITIGATE LANDOWNER FENCE CONFLICTS DUE TO DAMAGE CAUSED BY BIG GAME.
- **GOAL 5:** TO EVALUATE OR MONITOR ALL PROJECTS TO DETERMINE EFFECTIVENESS.
- **GOAL 6:** TO DEVELOP AN INFORMATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE HPP PROGRAM.
- **GOAL 7:** TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO PROJECTS THAT REDUCE FENCE AND FORAGE CONFLICTS AND ALSO POSITIVELY AFFECT OTHER SPECIES OF WILDLIFE.
- **GOAL 8:** TO PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE OF HABITAT CONDITIONS AND FACILITATE HEALTHY RANGELANDS.
- **GOAL 9:** TO HELP CPW ACHIEVE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND TO ASSIST IN RESEARCH EFFORTS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND BIG GAME POPULATIONS TO INFLUENCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS.

**GOAL 1:** TO WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH PRIVATE, LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES TO IMPROVE HABITAT CONDITIONS AND TO REDUCE CONFLICTS WITH FENCING, FORAGE AND BIG GAME.

## Objectives:

1. Conduct habitat management projects, utilizing a landscape scale type approach, to attract and hold wildlife in preferred areas.
2. Conduct habitat management projects to control timing of migration to and from winter range.
3. Implement grazing management strategies to sustain livestock grazing and wildlife use.
4. Alternative fence design that is wildlife friendly and reduces potential future projects.
5. Disperse excessive concentrations of animals to reduce conflicts.
6. Cooperate to reduce noxious weeds.

## Strategies:

- A. Utilize distribution management hunts primarily to move animals away from conflict areas.
- B. Fertilization and seeding to improve forage quality and quantity.
- C. Develop grazing systems through associated projects such as water development, fence construction, Etc.



- D. Burning, mechanical, chemical, and silvicultural treatments to control noxious weeds and shrubs, increase forage, and enhance wildlife habitat.
- E. High-tensile fence.
- F. Lay down fence.
- G. Reduced wire height and increased spacing.
- H. Remove fencing impeding migration routes.
- I. Standing forage purchases will be a low priority and will be entered into by the Committee when other management strategies are deemed ineffective or when purchasing standing forage in connection with other management strategies is necessary to resolve a conflict.
- J. Attend community meetings and engage agency personnel to highlight the HPP program and the assistance is available.

**GOAL 2: TO IMPROVE BIG GAME DISTRIBUTION AND HARVEST TO MINIMIZE CONFLICTS WITH LOCAL LANDOWNERS AND TO PROVIDE A QUALITY HUNTING EXPERIENCE.**

Objectives:

- 1. Develop and maintain quality big game herds in Northwest Colorado through dispersal of concentrated herds and change in season structure.
- 2. Travel management/controlled access to distribute big game.
- 3. Reduce big game conflicts with winter livestock feeding grounds.
- 4. Timely responses to landowners who are suffering immediate big game conflicts.
- 5. Provide input to Colorado Parks and Wildlife on big game harvest strategies

Strategies:

- A. Utilize Distribution Management Hunts (DMH) to target specific game damage concerns when they arise utilizing pre-approved damage licenses thus eliminating lag time from the time damage is detected and damage licenses are issued. DMH will be used to move animals away from conflict areas. As these hunts are designed to provide conflict resolution, participating ranches will be considered only if they **do not charge a fee of any kind to hunters** with these special licenses. This also includes guides or outfitters or any other representative of the property owner.
- B. Work with the appropriate land management agency or private land owner to manage critical big game winter range to the appropriate level of use.
- C. Make recommendations to CPW about possible harvest strategies including season structure, antlerless harvest limits, PLO hunts, harvest strategies, and review and comment on land use activities.
- D. Establish lists of landowners for hunters to be referred to. These lists have and will continue to be kept by local District Wildlife Managers during their conversations about game damage issues with landowners during their normal duties.
- E. Work with landowners that harbor elk during hunting season.
- F. Work with Ranching for Wildlife entities to increase overall harvest both outside and during the regular big game seasons recognizing that RFW properties are often large in scale and have in the past shown the propensity to harvest additional big game when needed to achieve management objectives as identified by CPW.
- G. Encourage management of motor vehicles to maintain big game population on public lands.

H. Hold special meetings or discussions to respond timely to immediate big game conflicts.

**GOAL 3: TO IMPROVE HABITAT CONDITIONS TO ENSURE HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE RANGELANDS.**

Objectives:

1. Conduct habitat management projects, utilizing a landscape scale type approach, to attract and hold wildlife in preferred areas.
2. Conduct habitat management projects to control timing of migration to and from winter range by identifying big game transitional range and focusing efforts in these areas to prolong utilization.
3. Educate landowners in new or updated principles of grazing management and develop strategies that can sustain both livestock grazing and wildlife use.
4. Identify and develop partnerships with user groups that currently deal with wildlife habitat issues or groups that may not know issues exist.
5. Focus on long-term protection of critical wildlife habitats.
6. Effective and efficient water distribution in big game habitats.

Strategies:

- A. Fertilization and seeding to improve forage quality and quantity.
- B. Develop rotational grazing systems through associated projects such as water development, fence construction, etc.
- C. Burning, mechanical, chemical, and silvicultural treatments to control shrubs and weeds, increase forage and enhance wildlife habitat.
- D. Work with user groups on joint projects to improve habitat.
- E. Support appropriate conservation easements on critical wildlife habitats.
- F. Baiting efforts to re-distribute big-game populations from areas with a high degree of sustained damage where other solutions have been utilized with limited success.
- G. Develop and support projects that enhance critical mule deer habitat i.e. seeding, brush management, and water developments.
- H. Enhance and develop available water for wildlife and domestic grazing animals by distributing water resources over a larger landscape.
  - I. Utilize current collar data, if available, to better identify project needs, locations and to monitor use.
  - J. Problem resolution will consist of varying daily winter feeding times of livestock, early hazing of problem elk, and dispersal hunts. Other ideas include lay down fencing in areas that do not contain livestock in the winter, habitat manipulation on adjacent public or private land that favors winter elk use, and possibly compensation to landowners that leave their last cut of hay for wintering elk.

**GOAL 4: TO MITIGATE LANDOWNER FENCE CONFLICTS DUE TO DAMAGE CAUSED BY BIG GAME.**

Objectives:

1. Alternative fence design that is wildlife friendly and reduces potential future projects.
2. Reduce annual maintenance costs.

### Strategies:

- A. High-tensile fence.
- B. Gate Options.
- C. Wildlife Crossings (overpasses and underpasses).
- D. Lay down fence.
- E. Reduced wire height and increased spacing.
- F. Provide damaged fence repair materials.
- G. Hire fence contractors for repair.
- H. High visibility top wire.
- I. Provide information on low maintenance fence design.

### **GOAL 5: TO EVALUATE OR MONITOR ALL PROJECTS TO DETERMINE EFFECTIVENESS.**

#### Objectives:

1. Maintain the cost effectiveness of all projects.
2. Record project locations and completion of projects in Tracker.
3. Hire contractors/consultants to monitor select large scale projects.
4. Utilize available big game collar data to identify project usage.

#### Strategies:

- A. Review how monies are spent.
- B. Send required completion and evaluation form to project participants to evaluate project effectiveness and final cooperator contributions.
- C. Request or utilize photos to record project completion.
- D. Complete annual reports
- E. If the need develops, explore the utilization of a consultant to monitor projects for efficacy.

### **GOAL 6: TO DEVELOP AN INFORMATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE HPP PROGRAM.**

#### Objectives:

1. Keep community and land managers informed about the Habitat Partnership Program.

#### Strategies:

- A. Sponsor workshops to assist landowners and land managers and to inform the community about land use issues.
- B. Develop brochures, newsletters, demonstrations, and tours to further understanding about livestock/big game needs and interactions, and land health issues.
- C. Maintain an email notification list of all landowners that have applied for HPP assistance which informs them of upcoming meetings and project proposal deadlines.
- D. District Wildlife Managers will continue to speak to landowners about HPP during their normal day to day duties and more importantly during game damage investigations.
- E. Inform landowners on application process and appropriate in-kind contribution options.

**GOAL 7: TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO PROJECTS THAT REDUCE FENCE AND FORAGE CONFLICTS AND ALSO POSITIVELY AFFECT OTHER SPECIES OF WILDLIFE.**

Objectives:

1. Encourage cooperators to assist in the conservation of species of wildlife that are of special concern.

Strategies:

- A. Work to build/replace existing fences that are wildlife friendly.
- B. Water projects with guzzlers for wildlife species.
- C. Habitat treatments to increase critical winter forage for all wildlife.
- D. Design projects that maintain adequate habitat for other species.

**GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE OF HABITAT CONDITIONS AND FACILITATE HEALTHY RANGELANDS.**

Objectives:

1. Provide educational opportunities to promote understanding of wildlife habitat needs and facilitate healthy rangelands.

Strategies:

- A. Sponsor workshops and cooperatively fund educational training for landowners, as examples: range management, fence design, etc.

**GOAL 9: TO HELP CPW ACHIEVE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND TO ASSIST IN RESEARCH EFFORTS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND BIG GAME POPULATIONS TO INFLUENCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS.**

Objective:

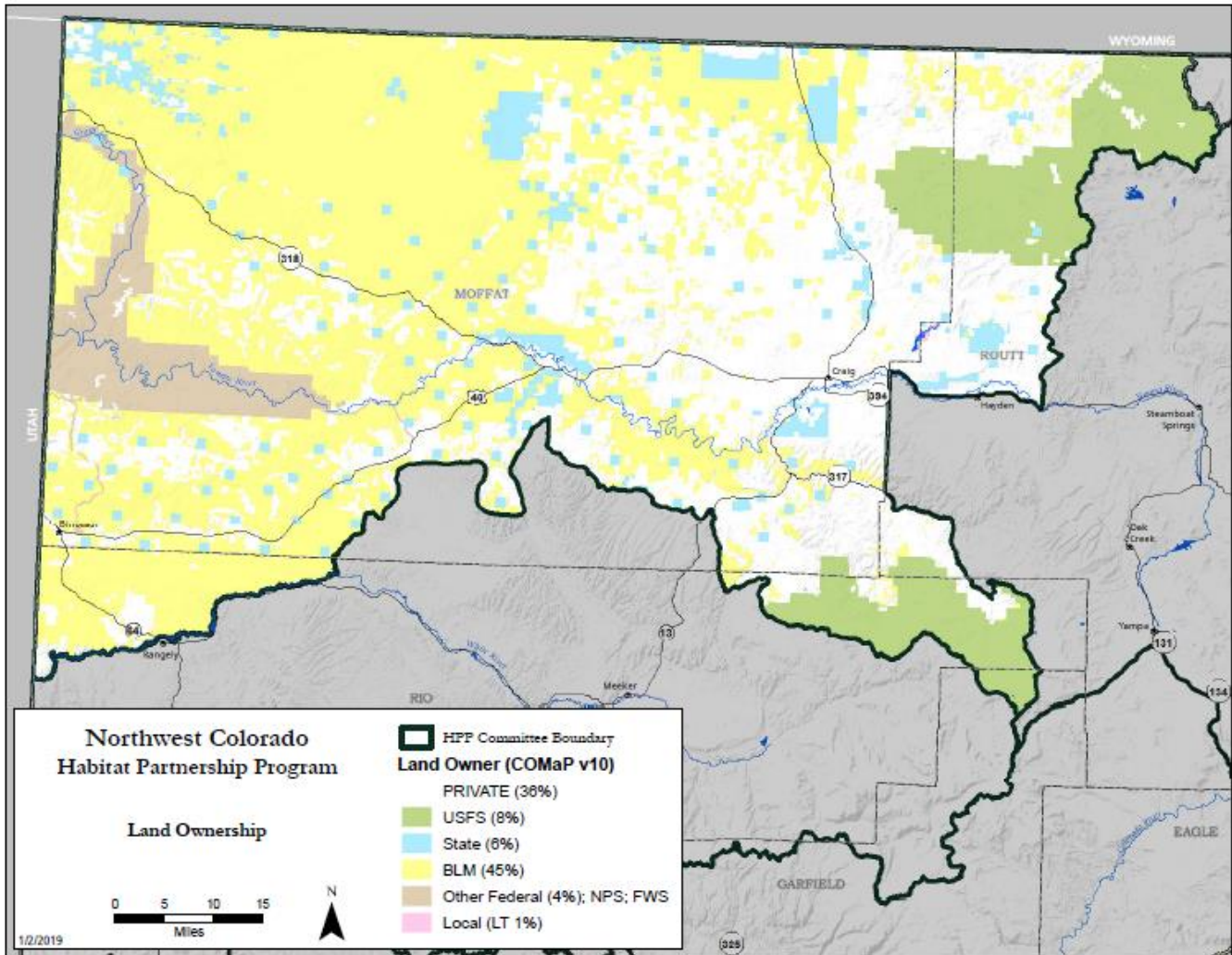
1. Provide recommendations and funding to big game research and objectives that will maintain healthy herds but help reduce conflicts.
2. Utilize the hunter resource as a big game management tool.

Strategies:

- A. Provide input to Parks & Wildlife Commission regarding season structure.
- B. Work with local landowners for access onto private property.
- C. Encourage hunting at specific times and places to reduce big game conflicts through dispersal and game damage hunts, as well as regular big game season hunts.
- D. Assist CPW in researching big game populations and behaviors by helping fund projects.

# AREA DESCRIPTION

The Northwest CO HPP area encompasses 3,522,982 acres, or 5,507.6 square miles. The area also includes game management units 1, 2, 201, 3, 301, 4, 441, 5, 10, and the Northern portions of units 11, 211 and 12 and western portion of unit 13. The majority of the NWHPP area falls within Moffat County but also includes small portions of Routt, Rio Blanco and Garfield Counties. The area is a checkerboard of private and public ownership, with National Forest, BLM and State lands making up a substantial portion. The area has large herds of elk, deer and antelope, and a human population of less than 25,000.



# HABITAT DESCRIPTION

The land types within this area range from mountain aspen and spruce/fir to high country desert, with large amounts of pasture and wheat land in between. A significant portion of the wheat cropland has been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This vegetation change has altered the winter distribution of elk in game management units 3, 301, 4, and 441 from more traditional winter habitat to the established grassland types.

# BIG GAME POPULATION SUMMARY

Each individual herd (deer, elk, pronghorn and moose) is grouped into a Data Analysis Unit (DAU). The DAU boundaries are drawn so that they approximate an individual herd unit where most of the animals are born, live, and die with as little egress or ingress from other herds as possible. The unit contains the entire habitat necessary for wildlife to breed, rear young, migrate, and forage.

Below are the proposed management objectives for all the DAUs within the scope of the NWHPP. The NWHPP committee will assist CPW meeting herd management objectives associated with the committee's area through the establishment of private land access, recommending special hunts (i.e. youth, disabled, veterans, etc.) and continued preservation and improvement of habitat. Lastly, the committee will provide input for Herd Management Plans (HMPs).

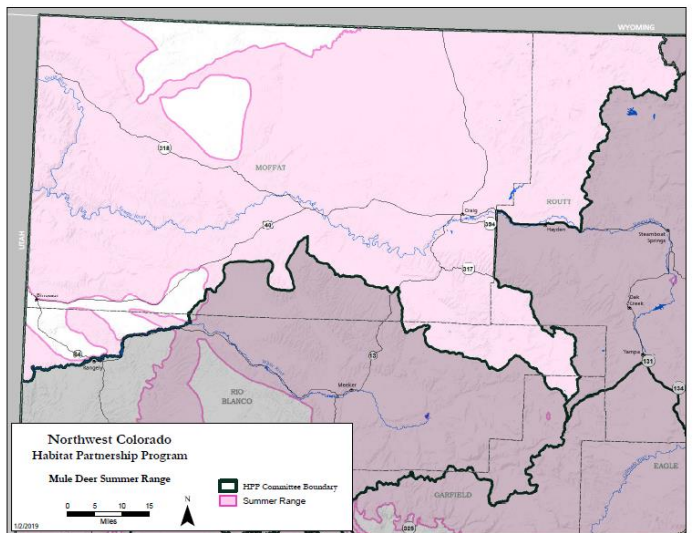
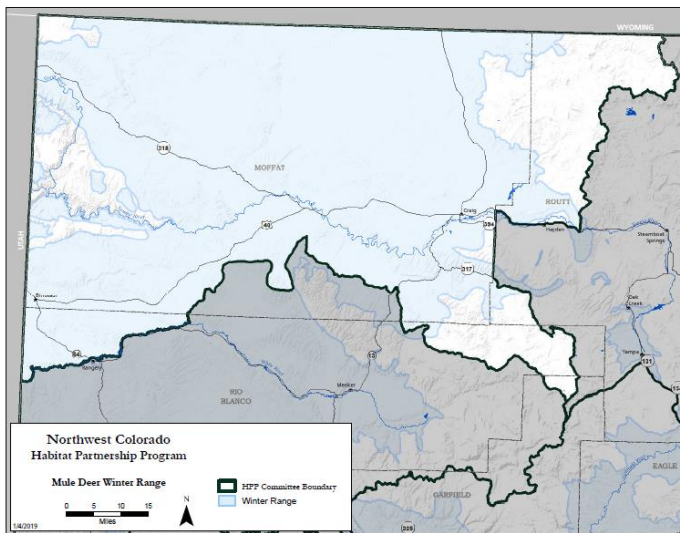
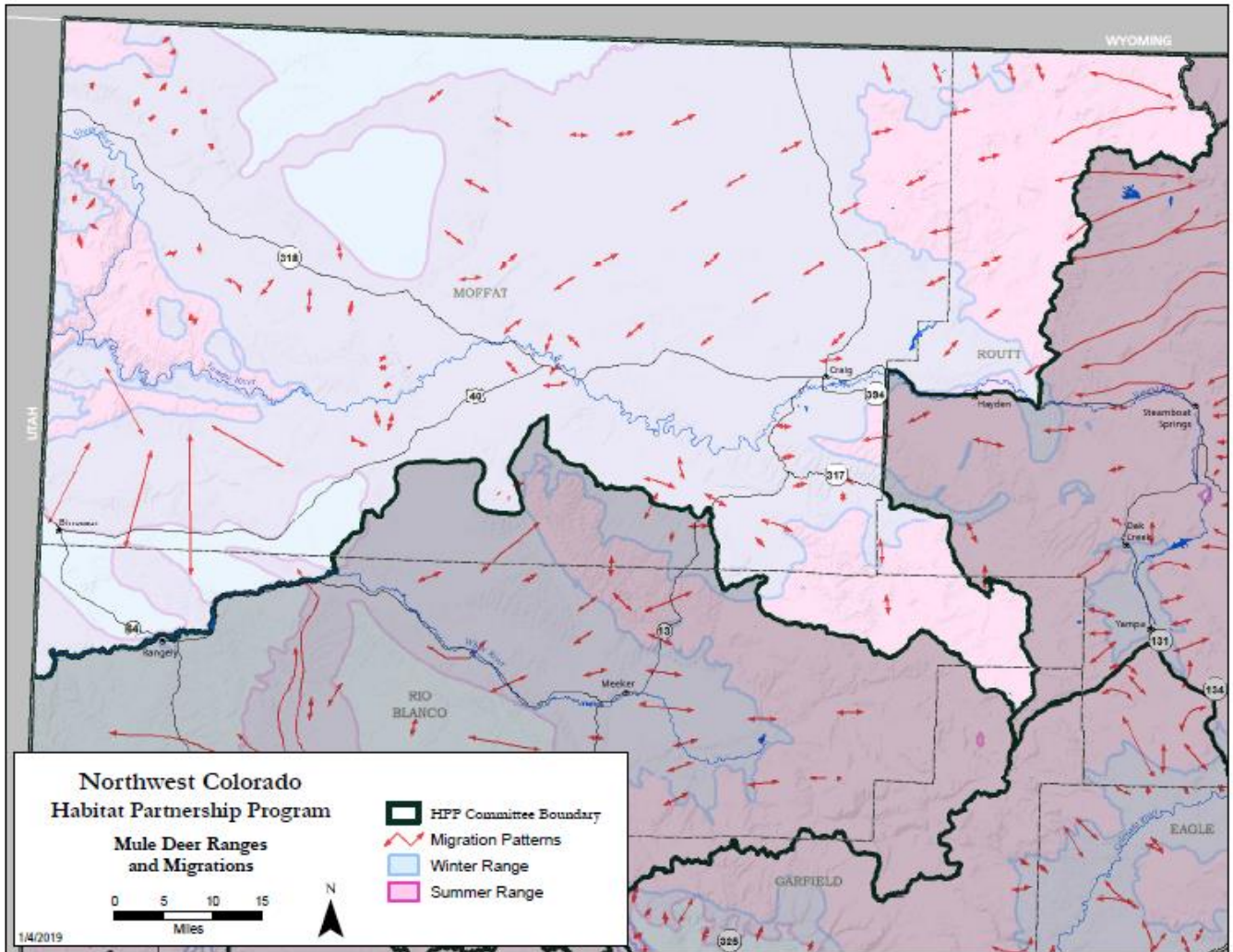
**Table 1. Data Analysis Unit Summary for Northwest CO HPP Area**

<b>Management Herd (*DAU plan in the renewal process)</b>	<b>1990s Population Avg.</b>	<b>2000s Population Avg.</b>	<b>2010 - 2018 Population Avg.</b>	<b>Current Pop.Mngt. Objective</b>
Mule Deer - Cold Springs (D-1)	3,000	1,000	1,400	No Plan
<i>Game Management Units: 1, 2 &amp; 201</i>				
Mule Deer - Bears Ears (D-2)	37,000	33,000	36,000	37,800
<i>Game Management Units: 3, 301, 4, 441, 14 &amp; 214</i>				
Mule Deer - Rangely (D-6)	7,000	1,300	1,000	No Plan
<i>Game Management Unit: 10</i>				
Mule Deer - Flattops- White River (D-7)	61,000	52,000	34,000	67,500
<i>Game Management Unit: 11, 211, 22, 23, 24, 12, 13, 131 &amp; 231</i>				
Elk - Cold Springs (E-1)	2,500	3,000	1,700	700-1700
<i>Game Management Units: 2 &amp; 201</i>				
Elk - Bear's Ears (E-2)	34,000	30,000	26,000	15,000-18,000
<i>Game Management Unit: 3, 4, 5, 14, 214, 301 &amp; 441</i>				
Elk - White River (E-6)	53,000	52,000	41,000	36,000-39,000
<i>Game Management Units: 11, 12, 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 33, 34, 131, 211 &amp; 231</i>				

Management Herd (*DAU plan in the renewal process)	1990s Population Avg.	2000s Population Avg.	2010 - 2018 Population Avg.	Current Pop.Mngt. Objective
Elk - Rangely (E-21)	2,500	2,500	1,800	No Plan
<i>Game Management Units: 10</i>				
Elk - Green River (E-47)	100	150	100	No Plan
<i>Game Management Units: 1</i>				
Pronghorn - Bears Ears (A-9)	14,000	11,000	15,000	15,800
<i>Game Management Units: 3, 301, 4, 441, 5, 13, 14 &amp; 214</i>				
Pronghorn - Maybell (A-10)	2,500	2,000	1,000	No Plan
<i>Game Management Units: 11</i>				
Pronghorn - Sandwash (A-11)	3,000	1,200	1,000	No Plan
<i>Game Management Units: 2 &amp; 201</i>				
Pronghorn - Rangely (A-21)	500	300	150	No Plan
<i>Game Management Units: 10</i>				
Pronghorn - Axial Basin (A-34)	500	300	150	No Plan
<i>Game Management Units: 12, 23 &amp; 211</i>				
Moose - (M-6)	0	20	75	No plan
<i>Game Management Units: 13, 131, 12, 231, 23, 24, 25, 26, 33, 34 &amp; 35</i>				
Moose - (M-9)	0	30	90	Not yet determined
<i>Game Management Units: 4, 5, 441, 214 &amp; 14</i>				
Moose - Cold Springs (M-10)	0	5	10	No Plan
<i>Game Management Units: 201</i>				

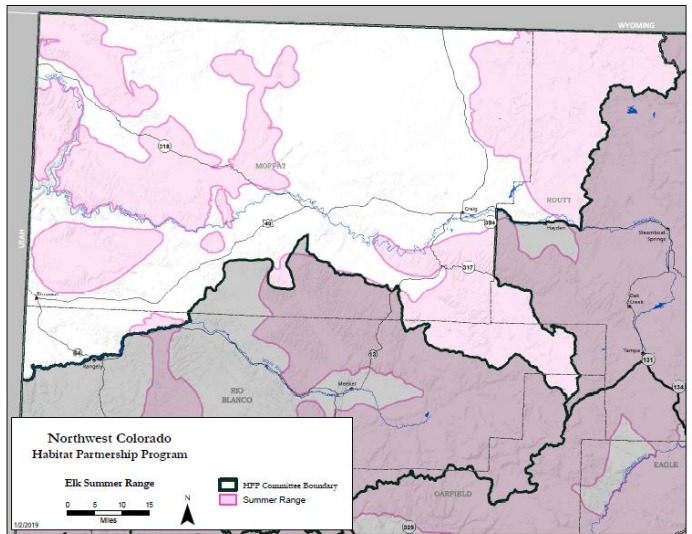
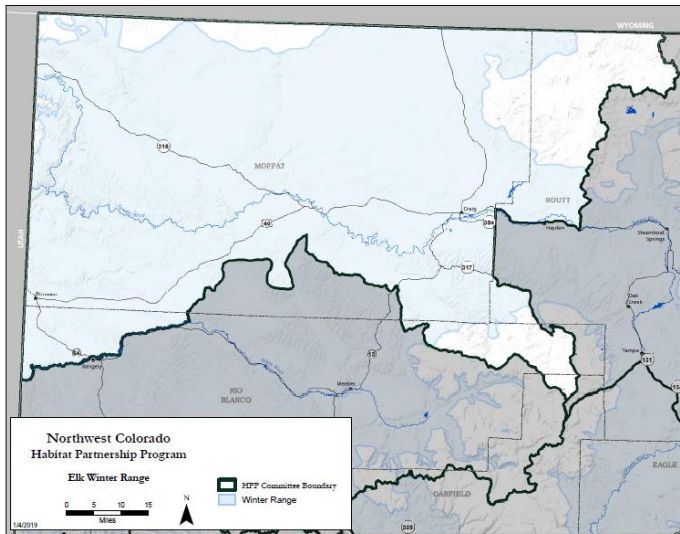
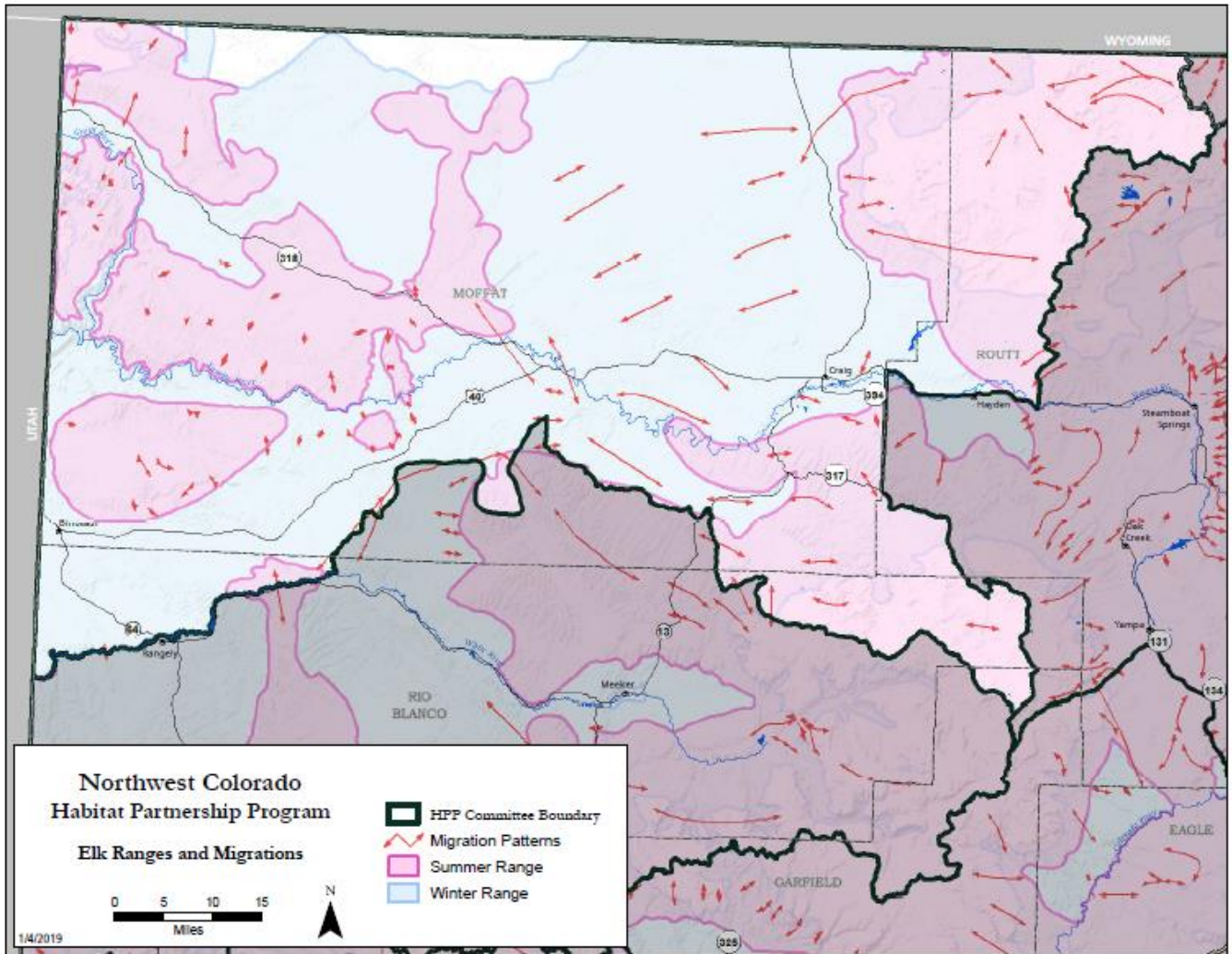
# BIG GAME RANGES & MIGRATIONS

## MULE DEER

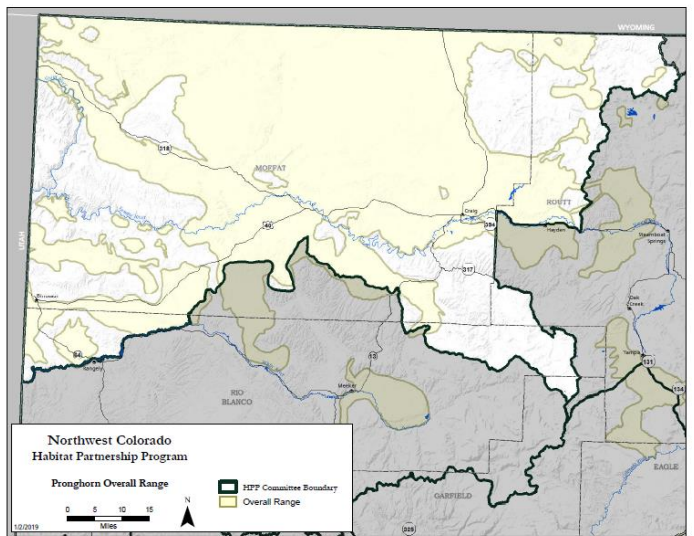
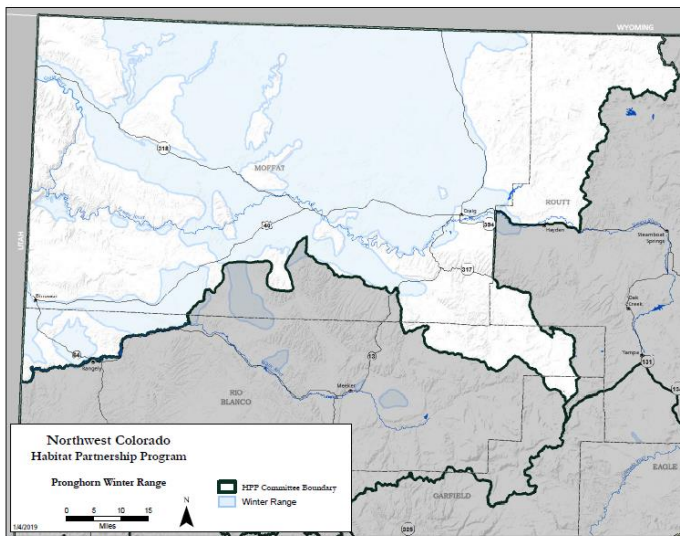
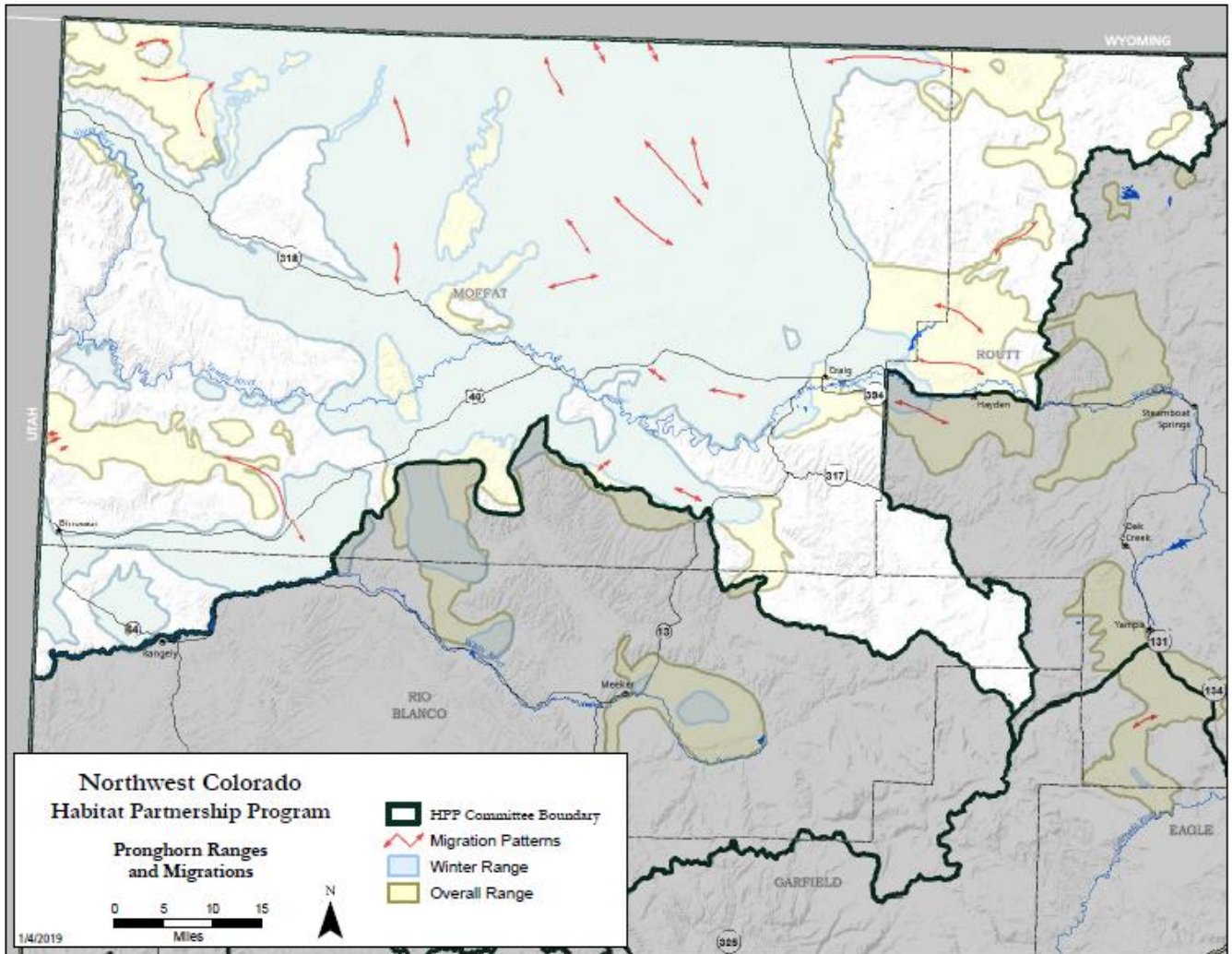




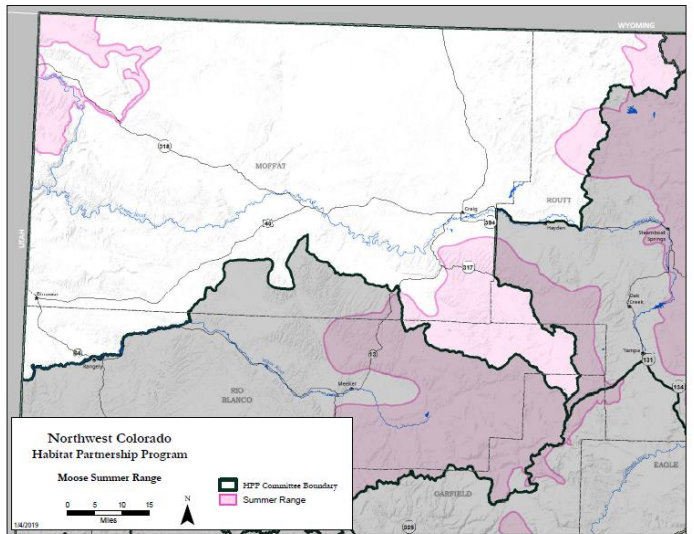
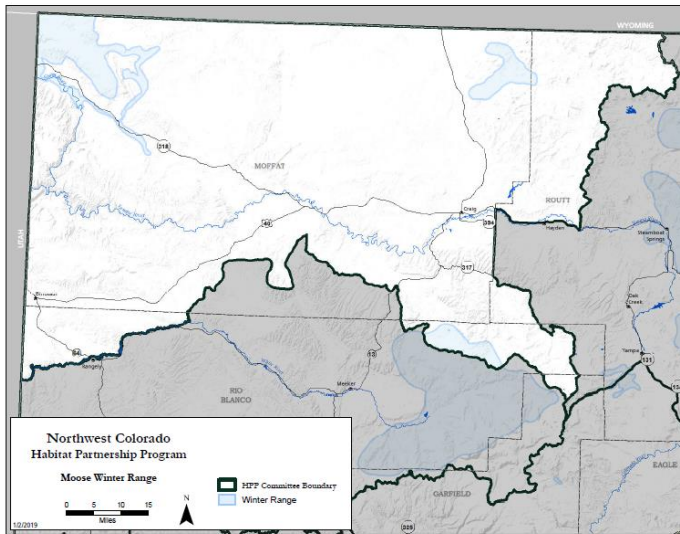
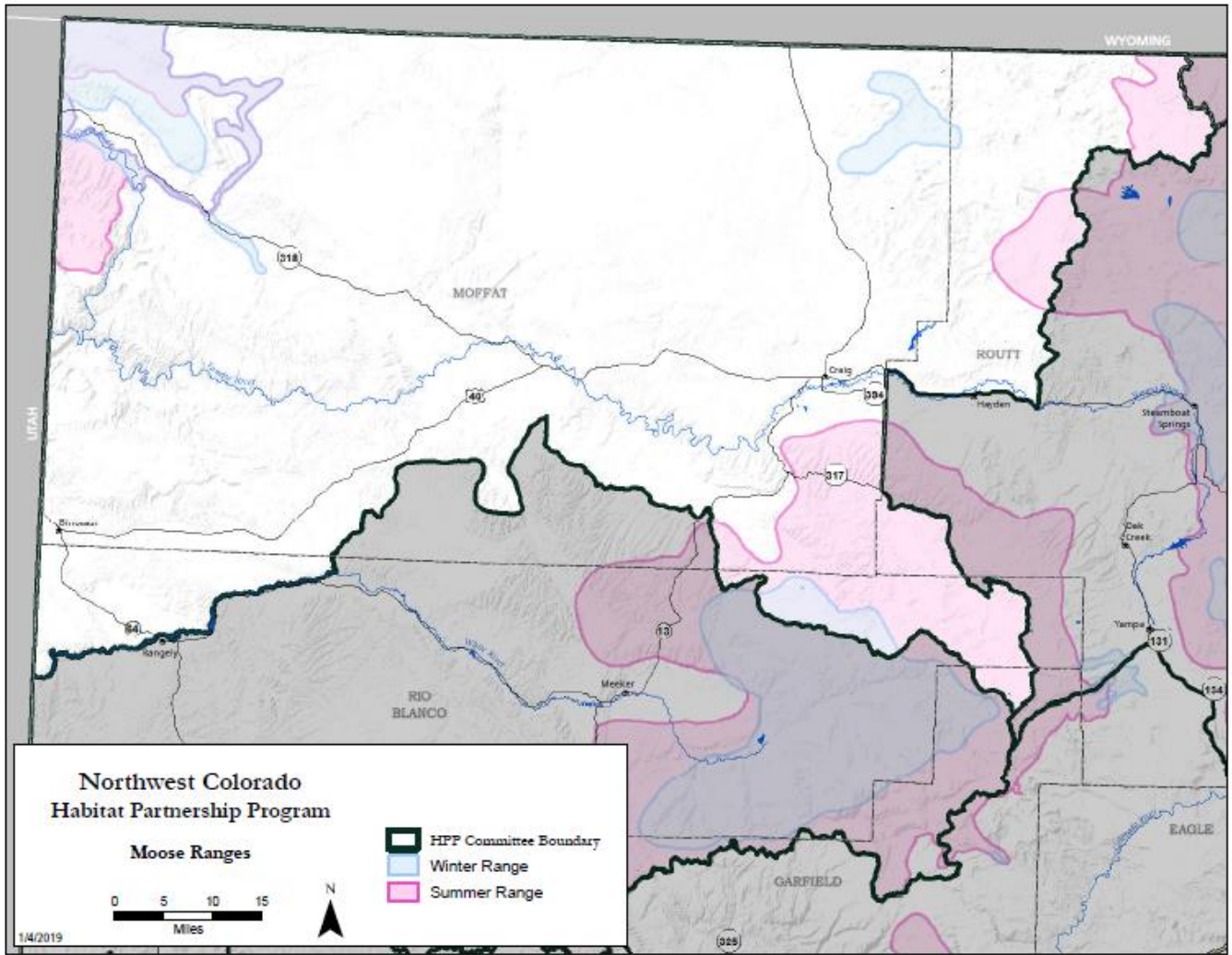
# ELK



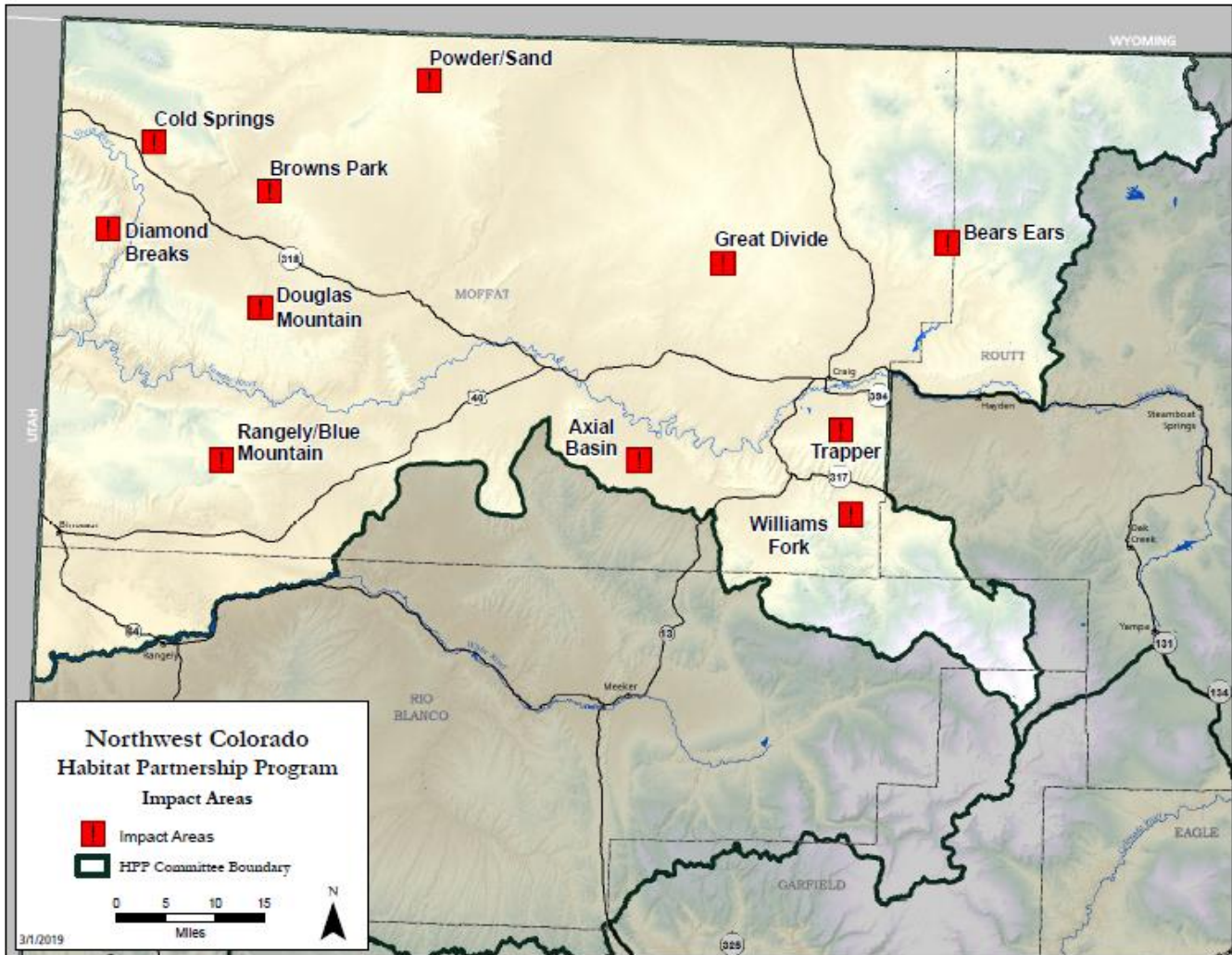
# PRONGHORN



# MOOSE



# IMPACT AREAS & DESCRIPTION



## BEAR'S EARS:

Game Management Units (GMU): 4, 5, 441

Districts: 429, 491

Bear's Ears Elk Herd (E-2 DAU), Bear's Ears Deer Herd (D-2 DAU), Great Divide Pronghorn Herd (A-9 DAU)

**Elk:** The known problems concerning elk within the conflict area involve significant fence and forage conflicts. Both forms of damage are identified as being most significant during the spring and fall migration periods on private lands while elk are transitioning between summer and winter ranges.

This elk herd exhibits strong migratory patterns leaving high elevation summer ranges for winter ranges to the south and west. Winter range within the southern portion of the conflict area is comprised predominantly of private land, consisting of large agricultural fields/pastureland, and CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) fields. Within the western portion of the conflict area winter range consists of a mixture of rolling sagebrush and CRP habitats.

The apparent cause of most rangeland forage problems on private land appears to be early movement from public land (high elevation summer range - Routt National Forest) to private land (transitional range) both during the fall and upon early return to these same impacted private lands during the spring. Forage conflict resolution will center on programs aimed at keeping elk on public land later in the fall and on winter/transitional range habitats later in the spring. Limiting archery and muzzleloading licenses in this area has caused a significant improvement to harvesting more elk during the later regular rifle seasons and to holding elk on public land for longer periods during the fall.

Most fence damage is caused by elk movement during the fall migration period. As large herds of elk appear in open areas south and west of the Routt National Forest, they become extremely visible to the vast numbers of hunters in the area. As these herds are pursued, the elk cause significant damage to the many pasture and boundary fences found in the area. Wildlife-friendly fence design, modification, and implementation will significantly reduce damage on impacted ranches.

Deer: The known conflicts concerning deer within the conflict area involve both forage and fence damage. Damage to rangeland forage continues to be caused by both resident and migrating herds of deer. Concerns of potential habitat degradation as a result of extensive winter use by deer in the Fourmile Basin area are still valid by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Damage to pasture and boundary fences is caused primarily during spring and fall migration periods. Resolution strategies will center on wildlife -friendly fence design, modification, and implementation, as well as varied emphasis on dispersal strategies.

Pronghorn: The known conflicts concerning pronghorn within the conflict area involve spring/fall rangeland forage damage and limited fence damage. Although the conflict area supports substantial overall range for pronghorn, winter range and winter concentration areas are extremely limited to both the extreme northern portion (Little Snake River basin) and extreme southern portion (Yampa River basin). Resolution programs will center on wildlife-friendly fence design, modification, and implementation, as well as more focused harvest and varied emphasis on dispersal strategies.

## **GREAT DIVIDE:**

Game Management Units (GMU): 3, 301

Districts: 429,422

Bear's Ears Elk Herd (E-2 DAU), Bear's Ears Deer Herd (D-2 DAU), Great Divide Pronghorn Herd (A-9 DAU)

Elk: The conflict area is used primarily as winter range by elk migrating from high elevation summer ranges (Routt National Forest found to the east). A recent study conducted by the CPW has shown that elk from the White River Elk Herd (E-6 DAU), in addition to elk from the Bear's Ears Elk Herd (E-2 DAU), are wintering together within the conflict area. This winter range is primarily comprised of rolling sagebrush and juniper habitats, with large tracts of CRP grass types interspersed.

Large wintering concentrations of elk are generally found on CRP areas in the eastern portion of the conflict area and in the western vicinity near Godiva Rim and Bald Mountain. A small resident herd of elk can also be found year-round within the conflict area, primarily along the Little Snake River drainage. This herd overall is causing damage to growing crops, rangeland forage, and critical big game winter range.

The known problems concerning elk within the conflict area involve fence and forage conflicts. Primary fence damage occurs during the spring and fall migration periods, and also during late hunting seasons (mid-November through February). Most reported forage conflicts occur on sheep ranges in the Godiva Rim/Bald Mountain areas during winter months and on sheep/cattle ranges throughout the conflict Area during the spring. Spring and summer conflicts are starting to become more prevalent to growing crops in areas occupied by year-round elk.

Problem resolution will center on wildlife-friendly fence design, modification, and implementation, rangeland/habitat improvement/modification, as well as varied emphasis on dispersal strategies. In addition to regular hunting season pressure, coordinated dispersal hunts will be utilized in this conflict area to help distribute animals away from high conflict areas.

Deer: The known conflicts concerning deer within the conflict area involve both forage and fence damage. Occasional reports of limited damage to rangeland forage within the conflict area continue to be caused by both resident and migrating herds of deer. Most forage loss occurs during the spring/summer/fall periods, while fence damage primarily occurs during the fall/spring migration periods.

Pronghorn: The overall pronghorn population within the conflict area has been reduced in the last several years, resulting in a reduction of conflicts that historically occurred. However, identified conflicts of forage problems associated with year-round antelope use are reported on a limited basis. Poor distribution within available ranges appears to be the cause of most problems rather than excessive population numbers. Limited fence damage was also identified. Limited Damage to growing crops was also reported across the conflict area. Conflict resolution will focus on greater harvest on private land, as well as varied emphasis on dispersal strategies.

## **DOUGLAS MOUNTAIN:**

Game Management Units (GMU):2

Districts: 422

Cold Springs Elk Herd (E-1 DAU), Little Snake Deer Herd (D-1 DAU), Sand Wash Pronghorn Herd (A-11 DAU)

Elk: The Douglas Mountain elk herd is managed as a quality elk herd. All elk licenses are limited and bull license numbers are set to provide hunters an opportunity for a quality hunt with low hunter density. The unit borders Dinosaur National Monument. Identified conflicts are spring/summer/fall forage conflicts and fence damage. Some of the fence damage occurs as elk move toward the Monument boundary prior to hunting season. This movement also removes those animals from the hunted population, making population control more difficult. Other ranches report generalized fence damage and winter forage conflicts in Conway Draw, spring forage conflicts in the Jack Springs area and summer forage conflicts on top of Douglas Mountain. Fence

design modifications will be used to correct perennial fence damage problems. Habitat improvement, particularly on public lands, and hunter access improvement will be used to reduce the forage conflict by creating habitat and reducing elk numbers. Distribution management hunts will be used to correct spot problems.

## **BROWNS PARK:**

Game Management Units (GMU):2, 201

Districts: 422

Cold Springs Elk Herd (E-1 DAU), Little Snake Deer Herd (D-1 DAU), Sand Wash Pronghorn Herd (A-11 DAU)

Deer: Deer populations in this area have been reduced and many of the historical conflicts have subsided. Browns Park provides winter habitat for a large deer herd. The basin floor is covered with sagebrush and saltbrush communities. Many of these habitat types have been reduced due to drought related impacts. Deer winter use varies greatly with the weather, but most years see a concentration of deer along the Green River. The area south of the river has sustained heavy browse usage over the years. Identified conflicts are excessive deer use of certain browse stands, creating a long-term habitat loss. There is no direct conflict with livestock in this DCA, but landowners have expressed concern over deteriorating browse stand condition. Habitat improvement will be looked at on public lands to rejuvenate selected browse stands and provide better long-term habitat. Distribution Management hunts will be available as a last resort if browse usage becomes excessive.

## **DIAMOND BREAKS:**

Game Management Units (GMU):1

Districts: 424

Green River Elk Herd (E-47 DAU), Little Snake Deer Herd (D-1 DAU), Sand Wash Pronghorn Herd (A-11 DAU)

Elk: The Diamond Breaks elk herd is managed as a quality elk herd. All elk licenses are limited and bull license numbers are set to provide hunters an opportunity for a quality hunt with low hunter density. The unit borders Dinosaur National Monument and Utah. Identified conflicts are spring/fall forage conflicts and fence damage. Some of the fence damage occurs as elk move south and west to lower elevations during the winter. Movement also occurs into Dinosaur NM prior to and during hunting season. Fence design modifications will be used to correct perennial fence damage problems. Habitat improvement, particularly on public lands, and hunter access improvement will be used to reduce the forage conflict by creating habitat and reducing elk numbers. Distribution management hunts will be used to correct spot problems.

## **POWDER WASH/SAND WASH:**

Game Management Units (GMU):2

Districts: 422

Cold Springs Elk Herd (E-1 DAU), Little Snake Deer Herd (D-1 DAU), Sand Wash Pronghorn Herd (A-11 DAU)

Antelope: The antelope herd in this area has significantly declined. The unit is far below objective. The reduction in population numbers has eliminated forage conflicts in this area. Antelope in this area are managed for a quality hunt and licenses are in high demand with a license taking about twenty years to draw. No doe antelope licenses are valid in this area (GMU 2). This area supports a small resident herd of antelope, but also provides important critical winter range for several thousand more animals from Wyoming. These animals move south during hard winters, which tend to occur several times each decade. Problems are created when large numbers of these animals remain after those heavy winters. Winter/spring forage conflicts with domestic sheep and some cattle occur in Powder Wash, Sand Wash and Dry Creek Basin. Most of this problem, particularly in Sand Wash, occurs within the first few years after a hard winter. Water development in these desert areas has also changed annual antelope distribution, keeping antelope year-round in areas formerly reserved for winter range. Close cooperation with Wyoming will be essential to managing this antelope herd more closely.

Habitat improvement, largely through water development, will be considered to solve some of the more perennial distribution problems.

Elk: Growing elk numbers are causing conflicts between cattle and horse allotments. Most of these conflicts occur during the winter when these allotments are being utilized and elk have already utilized available forage. (See above for problem solutions.)

## **COLD SPRINGS/WEST BEARS EARS:**

Game Management Units (GMU):2, 201

Districts: 422

Cold Springs Elk Herd (E-1 DAU), Little Snake Deer Herd (D-1 DAU), Sand Wash Pronghorn Herd (A-11 DAU)

Elk: Elk in the Cold Springs area are managed for quality bulls and quality hunting experiences. Licenses are highly sought after with a 23 year wait for a license a common occurrence. The Cold Springs area is bounded by Utah and Wyoming, and elk move freely between the three states. Many elk from Cold Springs winter in the Little Bears Ears area. During exceptionally hard winters, elk will move to the Browns Park area along the Green River. Identified conflicts include spring/fall forage conflicts on Cold Springs, and winter forage competition in the Bears Ears area. The Cold Springs problems revolve primarily around a bottleneck that occurs as elk and cattle move from winter to summer and summer to winter range. Habitat improvement projects on public lands will be considered to create additional forage for the critical periods. Rangeland use alternatives, including altered grazing systems, will be reviewed to try to alleviate the Cold Springs bottleneck. Close coordination of hunting seasons between the three states will be pursued to accomplish the needed herd reduction. Maintained and improved hunter access will also be important in achieving this goal, particularly since much of the Cold Springs area consists of private land and State Land Board lands. Opening private and State Land Board Lands through leases by the Colorado Division of Wildlife has significantly helped to increase antlerless elk harvest. Public use alternatives, such as vehicle management, will also be considered to reduce early movements to winter range and improve female harvest. Distribution Management Hunts will also be considered to slow movements to winter range.



Antelope: GMU 201 supports a large part of the resident antelope population in GMUs 2 and 201. Antelope will spend spring/summer/fall in the unit with the majority of them in Beaver Basin and surrounding areas such as on top of Cold Springs Mountain, Diamond Peak, Johnson Draw and Whiskey Flats. Antelope will stay in these areas until weather pushes them out to the east along the border of GMUs 2 and 201 near Gee Flats, Sugar Loaf and Irish Canyon. At this time there are no conflicts with the local landowners and Unit 201 is the only unit with doe licenses available.

## **TRAPPER MINE:**

Game Management Units (GMU): 13, 211

Districts: 428

White River Elk Herd (E-6 DAU), White River Deer Herd (D-7 DAU), Great Divide Pronghorn Herd (A-9 DAU), Axial Basin Pronghorn Herd (A-34 DAU)

Elk: The Trapper Mine and surrounding areas have historically been used as a winter range for elk migrating from the Upper Williams Fork Drainage. Large herds of elk in the winter had once congregated on the mine in groups of 1,000 elk or more during the winter months, though this trend has declined over recent years (2010 - Present).

Identified conflicts include both fence and forage damage types in the County Road 35 area as well as the Yampa River bottom north of Trapper Mine along County Road 394. Fence damage occurs during the spring and fall migration periods and also during late cow hunting seasons in December. Most forage conflicts occur on unprotected hay and alfalfa used for livestock feeding in the winter. Conflicts also occur in winter on livestock feeding areas when livestock and elk compete for feed put out by operators.

These elk generally migrate west across highway 13 and into GMU 211 and 3. Conflict issues have arisen west of Trapper Mine in the Big Bottom area and Moffat County Road 30 where many small acreage parcels exist. Large elk herds also migrate back through the area in the spring and feed on early growth in hay and alfalfa fields. Elk that do not move west from the County Road 35/Knez divide area early in the winter tend to become “stuck” in the area with potential conflicts arising after.

Problem resolution will consist of a combined effort of protecting livestock feed in the winter especially in the subdivisions of County Road 35, County Road 30, and Knez Divide, varying daily winter feeding times of livestock, early hazing of problem elk, and dispersal hunts.

Other ideas include lay down fencing in areas that do not contain livestock in the winter, habitat manipulation on adjacent public or private land that favors winter elk use, and possibly compensation to landowners that leave their last cut of hay for wintering elk (Remove Sentence).

Deer: The area also serves as a migration area for deer. Some deer are also year round residents of the area. Deer have not been of major concern to residents in the area, but conflicts may increase with the increased amount of development and severity of winters and timing of snow events.

Pronghorn: Pronghorn conflicts are minimal in the Trapper Mine area.

## **WILLIAMS FORK:**

Game Management Units (GMU): 12, 13, 211

Districts: 428,491

White River Elk Herd (E-6 DAU), White River Deer Herd (D-7 DAU), Great Divide Pronghorn Herd (A-9 DAU), Axial Basin Pronghorn Herd (A-34 DAU)

Elk: This area is primarily used by elk as a winter range and also as a fall and spring migration corridor. Identified conflicts include both fence and forage damage types. Fence damage occurs during the spring and fall migration periods. Most forage conflicts occur on early hay and alfalfa growth in the fields in spring as elk return up the Williams Fork to their summering and calving grounds. Conflicts also occur in winter on livestock feeding areas when livestock and elk compete for feed put out by operators.

Both deer and antelope conflicts are minimal in the Williams Fork.

## **RANGELY/BLUE MOUNTAIN:**

Game Management Units (GMU):10

Districts: 421,424

Rangely - Blue Mountain Elk Herd (E-21 DAU), Rangely Deer Herd (D-6 DAU)

Elk: The Rangely / Blue Mountain elk herd (E-21) is managed as a quality elk herd. All elk licenses are limited and bull license numbers are set to provide hunters with a unique opportunity to harvest a “quality” bull. The unit borders Dinosaur National Monument on the north and the Utah state line on the west. Elk hunting is prohibited in Dinosaur National Monument, thus providing elk a refuge from hunting pressure and providing challenges to wildlife managers attempting to reach population objectives. Current elk management practices in areas of Utah directly adjacent to E-21 contrast with elk management practices in E-21. While E-21 is managed for “quality” with reduced hunting opportunity for bull elk, neighboring areas of Utah are managed for significant opportunity over “quality.” The result is significant hunting pressure along the Utah state line during Utah’s hunting seasons.

Seasonal migrations occur within and between Dinosaur National Monument properties, Bureau of Land Management properties and private lands in the unit. Wildlife managers have attempted to find a balance in hunting opportunity for cow elk, which promotes harvest rates necessary to meet management objectives while discouraging the excessive use of private lands and Dinosaur National Monument properties as a refuge. Efforts by wildlife managers have included a variety of early and late public land hunting opportunities, private-land-only licenses valid from August 15 through January 15, and landowner programs that promote additional cow elk harvest from private lands within the unit. Despite these efforts, elk numbers remain above objective and seasonal conflicts with livestock producers and landowners occur.

Conflicts identified by wildlife managers in E-21 include fence damage and forage conflicts. Seasonal migrations of elk in the unit contribute to fence damage across the northern portions of the unit from Buckwater Draw and Moosehead Mountain, north to Dinosaur National Monument, east towards Bear Valley, and south into the Wolf Creek basin. Additional fence damage may occur

as elk move towards Dinosaur National Monument, seeking refuge during hunting seasons. Winter forage conflicts occur as elk move to winter range along the Utah state line east of Dinosaur. Occasional winter forage conflicts also occur when elk move towards lower elevations near the Skull Creek, Massadona, and Wolf Creek areas. The majority of spring/fall forage conflicts involving E-21 elk occur along the White River east of Rangely. The White River is the boundary between E-21 and E-10. Conflicts originate from E-21 elk utilizing hay and grass pastures on both the north (E-21) and south (E-10) sides of the White River. Distribution management hunts have been used to address this problem during fall and winter periods.

## **AXIAL BASIN:**

Game Management Units (GMU):12,211

Districts: 426,428

White River Elk Herd (E-6 DAU), White River Deer Herd (D-7 DAU), Axial Basin Pronghorn Herd (A-34 DAU), Maybell Pronghorn Herd (A-10 DAU)

Axial Basin lies in both deer and elk migration routes and conflicts arise primarily when the elk move through the area and destroy fences. Wildlife-friendly fence design, modification, and implementation will significantly reduce damage on impacted ranches.

Another potential wildlife livestock conflict in the Axial Basin area is the limited amount of water. Sheep and cattle are both present throughout the year in Axial Basin. Deer and pronghorn can be found in the Basin year round and elk will begin to move into the Basin in late fall/early winter and will leave in the spring. With little water available in Axial Basin and around Juniper Mountain, future water projects could be done to decrease the competition between wildlife and livestock for the use of water. Water projects would also allow wildlife and livestock to be spread out and utilize more of the Basin.

## **GAME MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

In addition to resolving wildlife conflicts, HPP is also statutorily directed to "assist the division in meeting game management objectives..." This assistance will be directed towards a) maintaining/increasing the population in a given area primarily by habitat manipulation projects; b) maintaining/decreasing the population in a given area primarily by pursuing hunting opportunities and c) participating in research activities aimed at habitat, population, disease and/or movement factors that influence big game populations.

# PROJECT TYPES & PRIORITIES

## PROJECT TYPES (TO INCLUDE, BUT NOT LIMITED TO):

### Habitat Manipulation:

- Prescribed burning
- Water developments
- Weed control, including herbicide vouchers
- Fertilization
- Seeding
- Hand thinning
- Mechanical (chaining, roller chopping, hydro axing, etc.)

### Fencing Projects:

- Fence vouchers for fence repair materials
- Construction of new fences (usually > ¼ mile in length)
- Landowner reimbursement for purchased fencing materials
- Prototype or experimental fence designs
- Wildlife crossings or retrofitting fences to be more wildlife-friendly

### Game Damage Projects:

- Stackyards- materials and/or labor
- Distribution hunts
- Hunt coordinators for distribution hunts, youth hunts, etc.
- Forage purchases
- Baiting

### Information/Education Projects:

- Seminars
- Workshops
- Brochures
- Electronic media: websites, etc.
- Comment letters
- Travel management (signage, temporary fencing, etc.)

### Research/Monitoring Projects:

- Habitat
- Population
- Inventory
- Movement

Conservation Easements (transaction costs only)

Archaeological Clearances (and other NEPA required clearances; Agency Preferred)

HPP projects may be undertaken on public lands, private lands or a combination of both as needed wherever the local committee believes the project has the best chance to effectively reduce, minimize or eliminate the big game/livestock conflict and/or improve, protect, enhance habitats. Higher consideration will be given to projects proposed in/near past project areas.

## PRIORITY AREAS

This plan does not prioritize conflict areas in which to expend allocated resources. No conflict area within the plan boundary has a higher priority over another.

The committee will consider all projects that meet the HPP goals within the area. Our plan provides for implementation of the identified management strategies over a broad geographic area based on meeting the objectives of the defined goals. This will be accomplished by implementing the identified management strategies throughout the NWHPP area as specific issues or conflicts are identified and brought to the attention of the Committee.

However, emphasis and priority will be given to areas that the Committee feels will lead to long-term solutions.

## OPERATING GUIDELINES

Step 1: The need for the proposed project is clearly described and includes a discussion of the conflict and the effects of the proposed project on big-game distribution (i.e. completed application form).

Step 2: The NWHPP Committee sets priority for the proposed project based on the following criteria:

- A. Will the proposed project distribute the conflicting animals to preferred areas?
- B. Will the proposed project enhance/improve habitat conditions on preferred areas and effectively address the conflict over the long run by attracting conflicting animals to a preferred area?
- C. Does the proposed project address a recurring conflict that involves a herd unit or a significant number of animals?
- D. Will the proposed project benefit the landowners, agencies, big game, and the public? (i.e. is constructing a tall fence at a known big-game crossing point asking for failure?)
- E. Have non-structural solutions been tried, such as distribution hunts, propane cannons, management changes, new seasons, etc.?
- F. Does the proposed project replace or maintain an existing fence? If so, what is the age and condition of the existing fence? Is the fence design wildlife friendly? Does the project identify and address a recurring maintenance conflict? Did the existing fence lack basic maintenance over its lifetime? Who shares the fence boundary? Is the fence an internal fence or a property boundary fence?
- G. If the proposed project is a water project is its origin a spring development or well? Is the well a proven well (note: the Committee has not funded dry wells). Are there multiple tanks, pipelines, overflows etc.? Can the water be manipulated in such a way as to distribute both big game and livestock without the need for additional fencing?

H. Does the applicant/landowner allow low-fee or no-fee public hunting such as PLO (private land only) licenses, big game distribution hunts, or general public access?

I. Is the landowner willing to participate financially (direct funds and/or labor) in the project? Has the applicant searched for additional project partners to reduce costs both to the Committee and the landowner?

J. Is the proposed project experimental?

K. Is the project and its design cost effective?

L. Is the applicant willing to assist in monitoring efforts of the proposed project? Project participants must agree to maintain the project for a minimum of 10 years and provide reports to the Committee. Is the applicant willing to host HPP field trips to project locations and/or allow committee member presence to monitor projects?

M. Fence projects are required to follow and implement the recommendations by Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the NWHPP committee.

N. Projects on Ranching for Wildlife properties will be considered on a case by case basis.

O. Stackyards may be considered by the committee.

P. The committee will not participate in projects that are underway or that have already been completed without committee input, review or approval.

Q. Does the project tie in with other projects nearby? (i.e. landscape scale approach)

In an effort to be consistent and fair to all applicants, the committee has established operating guidelines that detail priorities, eligibility requirements, project rules and limits, and other policies. The committee retains the authority to review and update these guidelines as necessary to meet the changing needs of the area; however, these standard rules should apply to most HPP projects and will be enforced by the committee with few exceptions.

Monitoring projects are critical for the long term sustainability of the HPP program. To provide documentation, determine treatment effectiveness, and be able to convey results, monitoring will be done on all projects. Specific monitoring methodology shall be matched to the treatment. Monitoring data will be submitted to the HPP local committee and administrative assistants.

# MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Management strategies were developed to achieve the committee's objectives. Strategies primarily involve resolving big game conflicts through habitat manipulation, fencing, and game damage projects; or achieving big game management objectives through information and education, research and monitoring, or conservation easements. Most HPP projects will fall into one of the following management strategy categories.

1. **HABITAT MANIPULATION:** Improving habitat on private, public, and tribal lands draws big game away from impact areas; improves big game distribution; holds big game for longer periods of time on public lands; or improves forage abundance, availability, or palatability such that it reduces competition between big game and livestock.
2. **FENCING PROJECTS:** Repair of existing fences and/or construction of new fences help alleviate ongoing big game damage, and offset the financial burden to landowners. Fences will be wildlife-friendly to HPP specifications. Maintenance of fences will be the responsibility of the landowner.
3. **GAME DAMAGE PROJECTS:** Providing stackyards for landowners otherwise ineligible for them and using hunt coordinators and forage purchases address pending damage problems that CPW may be financially liable for.
4. **INFORMATION/EDUCATION PROJECTS:** Producing and distributing informative materials helps public land agencies and private land managers educate the public and provides information about the programs, agencies, conflicts and user responsibilities. Travel management may include signage or education on closures or activities that will benefit big game.
5. **RESEARCH & MONITORING:** Projects will include, but not be limited to, those focusing on habitat condition, populations, inventory and movement patterns. While these types of projects may be funded, the committee's primary focus will be on conflict resolution between big game and livestock.
6. **CONSERVATION EASEMENTS:** Conservation easements help to protect a property's conservation values, particularly agricultural productivity, wildlife habitat, and hunting access.

# BUDGET GUIDELINES

The base-operating budget for the State HPP program is based on 5% of total annual revenues for big game license sales for those areas that have HPP committees. The Statewide HPP Council then allocates funding to the individual HPP committees. The Northwest CO HPP budget was developed to best meet the goals and objectives outlined earlier in the plan, while maintaining the flexibility to deal with emergencies and take advantage of opportunities.

Within certain parameters, the statewide HPP financial system allows local HPP committees to carry specific project dollars over from year to year if the project is ongoing or the funds have been committed. This allows us to better address long-term management and larger, more complicated projects as well as giving us the flexibility to more efficiently prioritize our projects.

Additional funds are also available through the HPP State Council for special projects or unforeseen opportunities outside of the capacity of the committee. These dollars supplement our existing budget and allow us to take on special projects from time to time.

The Northwest CO HPP Committee has developed a budget allocation in line with our vision, which allows for short-term strategies to deal with immediate fence and forage conflicts caused by big game, but concentrates on adaptive, long-term management strategies leading to the establishment of healthy and sustainable rangelands. Our budget for the ten-year period has been broken down as follows:

## **BASE BUDGET ALLOCATION:**

Habitat Manipulation	60%
Fence Construction & Repairs	10%
Game Damage (Stackyards, etc.)	10%
Information & Education	5%
Conservation Easements & NEPA Related Activities	0%
Monitoring	10%
Administration	5%

**TOTAL ALLOCATION:** 100%

It is important to acknowledge that the budget allocation is based on past projects, future projects that are likely to be proposed as well as committee emphasis in funding certain project types. While these are desired and/or likely allocations, the committee retains the ability to shift funds as needed between categories as projects and opportunities arise or as situations dictate.



# **CURRENT & FORESEEABLE ISSUES**

## **AGRICULTURAL CHANGES**

A slow shift from sheep production to cattle production has been observed in the Northwest corner of the state. Understanding the effects from a shift and/or reduction in historical agricultural practices and how it relates to conflict assistance and mitigation should be undertaken by the committee.

## **HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

Although new development has been slow to come in Northwest Colorado some subtle sprawl has been observed in the area immediately surrounding Craig. During the more severe winter events both elk and deer conflicts do arise in the smaller acreage parcels. Displacement of wintering big game herds that historically utilized these areas can also arise focusing damage concerns elsewhere. Habitat conversions resulting in a reduction of the browse component is often observed with these developments. These small farms/ranches in recent years have shown the need for increased awareness by the landowner to protect stackyards and livestock feeding areas. DWMs working with these landowners can usually solve the issues with minimal game damage material assistance and a more educational based approach.

## **RECREATION**

The NWHPP committee understands that outdoor recreation is an integral component to both the quality of life and the local economy. Technological advancements in recreation have opened the doors to different types of outdoor recreation never before seen. More often people are accessing areas once deemed inaccessible with modes of transportation such as electric bicycles, fat tire bicycles, and UTV's. In addition to these advancements, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and antler shed collecting are all forms of outdoor recreation common to the committee area. Staying attuned to the different types of recreation as they arise/develop as well as identifying areas where a potential shift in big game populations due to the disturbance created by recreation could aid in conflict mitigation both pre and post the conflict event.

## **ENERGY DEVELOPMENT**

As development occurs, preemptively engaging in conversations with local landowners over potential damage mitigation by displaced wildlife should be at the fore front and something the NWHPP can address.

## **GREATER SAGE GROUSE**

With the recent focus on greater sage grouse habitats throughout the west, the committee must evaluate each project for potential impacts to the sagebrush steppe. Some projects may meet the committee's primary goals for big game and livestock and at the same time, enhance habitat for sage grouse. Other projects, although good for big game, may have negative impacts to the sagebrush in priority grouse habitat. Additional steps will be taken when any manipulation in the sagebrush steppe is proposed to ensure that significant impacts to greater sage grouse habitat are taken into consideration.

## **CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE**

The committee will take into consideration the division's developing strategies regarding CWD in NWCO and participate in implementation.

## **WILD HORSES**

The committee acknowledges the fact that wild horses exist within the Northwest CO HPP boundary area. The BLM is tasked with managing wild horses on public lands within the Sand Wash Basin Herd Management Area. The range health within Sand Wash Basin is in poor condition and elk searching for severe winter range could be displaced by the presence of wild horses in the area.

## **WOLVES**

Concerns exist about the potential impact that gray wolves could have to the long-term health, survival and sustainability of mule deer, elk, pronghorn and moose populations if wolf numbers increase in the future either through wolves naturally migrating into Colorado or through any potential wolf reintroductions in the future.