



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Gunnison Basin HPP Committee

Zoom Meeting

February 3, 2021

11:00am

Gunnison Basin HPP Members Present: Nick Gallowich, CPW; Matt Vasquez, USFS; Kathy Brodhead, BLM; Shane Cox, Livestock Grower; Paul Mowery, Livestock Grower; Navid Navidi, Sportsman

Guests: Brandon Diamond, CPW; Pat Tucker, CPW; Ray Aberle, CPW; Dayle Funka, USFS

Introductions & Budget:

1. Committee members and guests were introduced. Dayle Funka will replace Matt Vasquez as the USFS representative. The budget increase for FY21 was reviewed, and the remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$114,727.74.

Old Business:

1. Dayle updated the committee on the status of the Gunnison Ranger District Burn project. A spring burn window is anticipated.

New Business:

1. The committee considered introducing voucher programs for fence repairs, herbicide purchases, and pond cleanouts. Fence vouchers are intended for small repair projects on private lands, and may be given out to landowners as needed by DWMs or committee members. Vouchers are \$200 and landowners may receive up to 3 per year. Herbicide vouchers are intended to treat weeds on private lands; vouchers are \$200 and landowners may receive 2 per year. Pond vouchers should be used to clean out ponds on allotments, or on private lands with prior DWM approval. Ponds should receive significant wildlife use. Vouchers are \$750 for two ponds, and an individual can receive up to 6 vouchers per fiscal year. If a project needs additional funding, applicants may still submit a regular project proposal to the committee. The committee felt that voucher programs would be an efficient project method in the future and will revisit the idea in the new fiscal year.

Roundtable:

1. Dayle discussed future water development projects with the committee, specifically well drilling projects. The landscape is in need of water developments, but costs can be prohibitive for landowners and land managers to implement without partnerships. One key difficulty in drilling wells on allotments is that the permittee does not own the well, but the BLM and USFS cannot fund that type of development on allotments. In these situations the permittees may be willing to take on some of the cost, but since permits are not guaranteed from year to year, it is still cost-prohibitive without additional funding. Other HPP committee areas help fund well drilling and will still cost share on dry holes, which enables more landowners and permittees to implement water projects.

The committee noted that strategic water development placement improves livestock and big game distribution and were generally supportive of well projects. However, the committee also wanted to ensure that any wells that produced water would still be operational and leave water available for big game after livestock were taken off the allotment. The committee additionally identified the concern that if the allotment was vacant, maintenance would still need to be performed for the well so that it continued to function for wildlife.

2. Nick and Brandon gave CPW updates, and briefly discussed a fertilization project on the Gunnison SWA. The property is an extremely important wintering area for big game, and helps alleviate conflicts on private lands in the area by providing forage for deer and elk. CPW also produces hay on the property. The committee discussed fertilizer as an HPP project, and were tentatively supportive; however there are concerns about setting a precedent for fertilizer assistance, and then being overrun with requests in the future.
3. Committee members checked in and discussed future projects. No committee members had changes to their status or availability.

Next Meeting: TBD