



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Grand Mesa HPP Committee

Battlement Mesa Fire Station - 0124 Stone Quarry Rd

April 28th, 2022 - 1:00 p.m.

Grand Mesa HPP Members Present: Kirk Oldham, CPW; Harley Metz, Sportsperson; John Walter, Livestock Grower; Eric Bruton, Livestock Grower; Heidi Plank, USFS; Sylvia Ringer, BLM

Guests: Kyle Wilson, CPW; Bob Morris, CPW; Michael Blanck, CPW; Scott Hoyer, CPW; Don & Beth Fulton; Carl Metcalf, Tom and Cindy Ferguson; Chuck Nichols; Robert Lapsley; Joe Fazzi; Forrie Towns

Introduction: Committee members and guests were introduced. Don Fulton's retirement was announced and Don received an elk statue in commemoration of his service. The remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$17,131.63.

New Business:

1. The committee reviewed a seed project from Lance Woodyard. The project area is located in big game transitional and winter range. A 10-acre pasture provides forage for big game and livestock but production has been decreasing. Additional forage is needed. The project involves seeding the 10-acre pasture with native grass and forage species. The project was approved for \$398.00.
2. Tom and Cindy Ferguson presented a fencing proposal. The property is located in important big game habitat and experiences year round use by elk and deer, with seasonal use by moose. The fencing is in disrepair and needs improvements and repairs to properly contain livestock, and remove hazardous sections. The project consists of repairing .5 miles of fencing and making it wildlife-friendly where possible. Better livestock containment and management of the available pasture will increase the amount of forage left for big game. The project was approved for \$4,700.00 and the committee will provide 2 rolls of white wire.
3. Carl Metcalf presented a seeding project. The property is located in an important migration corridor between summer range and important winter range along the river bottom that has become increasingly difficult to traverse due to several decades of residential development. The area helps hold big game off of nearby agricultural and residential properties, reducing game damage and urban conflicts; increases hunting opportunity; and offers space for fawning and calving. While the area typically has sufficient cover and water and few invasive weeds, there is a lack of forage after previous habitat improvement efforts. With an anticipated increase in residential development in the near future, it is important to improve habitat and forage availability to help offset habitat losses. The project consists of seeding 110

acres that were previously involved in brush and weed control efforts will be seeded with native species. Improving forage quantity and availability throughout the area will help hold greater numbers of big game for longer periods of time, especially when adjacent lands are developed and become less available for deer and elk use. The project was approved for \$15,000 for seed costs.

4. John Walter presented a water development project. The project area experiences year round use by deer, and heavy transitional use by elk during migration. Portions of the ranch are significantly grazed by deer and elk. The existing irrigation system is an open ditch with aged infrastructure, and currently water is diverted into ditches with rocks and other ad hoc structures. This results in poor or inadequate water diversion amongst landowners and decreased forage production. The project involves retrofitting existing open ditches with diversion boxes. Improving water efficacy will prevent losses and allow landowner to produce more forage for both livestock and wildlife. The project was approved for \$2,000.00.
5. Chuck Nichols presented a seeding proposal. The property is located in important transitional and winter range for elk, and experiences year-round use by deer. Currently a 113-acre field is producing poorly due to soil degradation and overgrazing. Lack of forage for big game increases competition with livestock, and also increases grazing and damage on adjacent properties that are less tolerant of wildlife. The project consists of reseeding the field with alfalfa and clover to improve forage quantity and quality. These species will also improve soil conditions due to natural nitrogen injection, and support increased production throughout the following years. Increasing forage for big game will help reduce competition with livestock and damage to nearby agricultural operations. The project was approved for \$11,000.00 for FY23.
6. Robert Lapsley presented an irrigation project. The project area is located in important big game habitat and experiences year-round use by deer, elk, and moose. The current ditch is extremely old and wide, and water typically moves down with too much force to properly irrigate fields. The infrastructure is antiquated and could be improved to distribute water more slowly at multiple locations. Slowing the water and increasing the network infrastructure for distribution will produce more forage for both wildlife and livestock. The project involves installing multiple headgates and one new diversion box along the length of the ditch through the property. Improving infrastructure for more effective water distribution will allow for more efficient use of water and increased forage production. The project was approved for \$18,150.00 for materials in FY23.

Other Business:

1. The committee interviewed Joe Fazzi and Forrest Towns for the livestock grower representative. Joe was nominated for the vacancy.
2. Michael Blanck briefly updated the committee on the legislative update.

Next meeting: February 18th @ 1:00pm