



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES

"Locally driven resource issue resolution focusing on integrated agricultural and wildlife land stewardship".

These Guidelines have evolved with the program since its inception in 1990. They are written by the Statewide Council, reviewed by the committees, and formally approved by the Wildlife Commission on May 3, 2002. This revision is based on the Ten-Year Analysis of the Habitat Partnership Program completed in September 2000 and the new legislation (Senate Bill 01-06) passed in 2001 and Senate Bill 07-82 passed in 2007. This bill sunsets July 1, 2015 and will be updated and extended upon legislative review and approval.

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(Italics indicate statutory language).

I. OBJECTIVES. [33-1-110 (8) (a)] *The habitat partnership program is hereby created to assist the division of wildlife by working with private land managers, public land management agencies, sportspersons, and other interested parties to reduce wildlife conflicts, particularly those associated with forage and fence issues, and to assist the division of wildlife in meeting game management objectives through duties as deemed appropriate by the director.*

A. The Habitat Partnership Program is designed to meet the Division of Wildlife's and the Wildlife Commission's commitment to Colorado's agricultural community to effectively address fence and forage conflicts and habitat issues between big game (deer, elk, antelope and moose), other wildlife species, and livestock. General Program objectives are:

1. To develop partnerships between wildlife managers, wildlife resource stakeholders, and those who manage public and private rangeland habitats.
2. To establish local Committees having appropriate hunter, landowner and agency representation to identify, prioritize, recommend and implement solutions to rangeland, habitat, fencing and other wildlife/livestock conflicts.
3. To allocate sufficient funding to meet Program goals and objectives.
4. To ensure that both private and public land habitat issues are considered in the Division of Wildlife's big game herd Data Analysis Unit (DAU) management plans.
5. To focus big game harvest on animals causing conflicts, with primary emphasis on harvesting female animals, and to aid in the distribution of problem big game animals.
6. To integrate wildlife management into the current uses and the availability of habitat.
7. Encourage a holistic, large-scale habitat approach to wildlife/agriculture conflict resolution by promoting the long term protection, maintenance and enhancement of rangeland habitats.

II. GLOSSARY -ACRONYMS.

- A. CDOW – Colorado Division of Wildlife.
- B. DAU - Data Analysis Unit (Big Game) Population Management Plans.
- C. DMH – Distribution Management Hunt.
- D. HE - Habitat Evaluation Report.
- E. HMP – Habitat Management Plan (previously called the Distribution Management Plan).
- F. HPP - Habitat Partnership Program.

III. HPP STATEWIDE COUNCIL.

- A. [33-1-110(7)(a)] *The Director of the Division of Wildlife, with approval of the Wildlife Commission, will appoint a Committee of nine persons to act as the "Habitat Partnership*

Council," hereinafter referred to as the "Council." [33-1-110(7)(b)(II)] The Director, from persons nominated by the local Committees, shall appoint members of the Council who represent livestock growers and agricultural crop producers. The Director shall also appoint government agency members from their respective agency's recommendations and members representing the hunting public from nominations by the local committees and the public at large.

1. The Council has statewide responsibility and authority.
2. The Council consists of the following members: **[33-1-110(7)(b)(I)]**.
 - a. Two members representing the hunting public who purchase Colorado big game licenses on a regular basis.
 - b. Two members representing livestock growers in Colorado.
 - c. One member representing agricultural crop producers.
 - d. One member representing the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.
 - e. One member representing the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management.
 - f. One member representing Colorado State University Range Extension Program/Rangeland Ecosystem Science Department.
 - g. One member representing the Colorado Division of Wildlife.
3. All persons on the Council shall be residents of the State of Colorado.
4. For the purposes of assisting the Program Coordinator (refer to Section V) and promoting program effectiveness, the Council may elect from its membership, a chair and vice-chair for one year terms beginning with the first meeting of each fiscal year.
5. The terms of the Council members are as follows: **[33-1-110(7)(b)(III)]**
 - a. All terms of the members representing hunters, crop producers and livestock growers will be four years.
 - b. The term lengths for the members representing the various agencies will be at the discretion of the respective agency.
 - c. There will be no limit on the number of terms a member may serve.

B. Duties of the Statewide Council: [33-1-110(7)(c)] and Council/Committee amendments.

1. Advise local HPP Committees regarding issues that may be viewed differently from a statewide perspective.
2. Assist in the dissemination of information pertaining to the Habitat Partnership Program and facilitate communication between local Committees.
3. Review and comment on draft DAU and HMP plans for compliance with program guidelines/objectives prior to Wildlife Commission approval.

4. Monitor program effectiveness and propose to the Commission changes in the guidelines, game damage regulations, land acquisition planning and review as appropriate. This includes working with the Coordinator in the development and implementation of a formalized assessment process that corresponds with the expiration of individual Committee HMP's.
5. Insure committees expend funds in accordance with approved HMPs. Review committee budget requests and make recommendations to the Director regarding budget allocations that meet the goals and objectives of the Habitat Partnership Program. Track moneys and services expended and partnered into the Program.
6. Coordinate/Administer the development of an effective and efficient HE Process that integrates habitat use and capability into the Data Analysis Unit Plans (big game population objectives). Integrate habitat capability of public and private lands in the development of big game population and other wildlife management objectives.
7. Submit an annual report to the Director of the Division of Wildlife, the Wildlife Commission, the Senate and House Agricultural Committees, the Executive Director of the Department of Natural Resources, and the General Assembly specifically stating the items for which it has expended moneys from the fund and the purpose of such items by September 30 of each year.

IV. HPP LOCAL COMMITTEES.

- A. **[33-1-110(8)(a)]** *The director, with the approval of the commission, shall have the authority to appoint a "Habitat Partnership Committee", referred to as a "committee," in any area of the State where conflicts between wildlife and rangeland managers exist.*
 1. Committees consist of the following members: **[33-1-110 (8)(b)]**.
 - a. One member representing the local hunting public.
 - b. Three members representing local livestock growers and/or agricultural crop producers.
 - c. One member from each of the federal agencies that has significant land and resource management responsibilities in such area of the State.
 - d. One person from the Colorado Division of Wildlife.
 2. Terms will be four years with no limit to the number of terms a member can serve. Committee members should be re-appointed by the Director at the end of their terms.
 3. Committees are encouraged to recommend replacement of members who are not committed to resolving conflicts. Committee membership should be reviewed annually to assess member participation and actions. Committee members who do not regularly attend meetings or whose actions are contrary to the HPP mission should be replaced.
 4. Annual chair and vice chair elections and periodic leadership changes are encouraged.
 5. All persons on the Committee will be residents of the State of Colorado.
 6. Nominations will be obtained in the following manner:
 - a. Nominations for livestock growers and/or agricultural producers will be sought from agricultural groups active in the area.

- b. Nominations from the hunting public will be sought from interested wildlife stakeholder groups in the area.
 - c. Individual volunteers will also be considered for these positions.
 - d. Federal agency and Division of Wildlife representatives will be selected by their respective agencies with final appointment by the Director and approval of the Wildlife Commission.
 - e. The Director will appoint individuals committed to pro-actively resolving wildlife/livestock conflicts.
- B. The duties of the local Committees are the following: [33-1-110(8)(c)] and council/committee amendments.
1. Develop big game and other wildlife Habitat Management Plans to resolve rangeland forage, growing hay crop, harvested crop aftermath grazing, and fence conflicts subject to Commission approval.
 - a. The HMP must address big game populations from a landscape level of habitat and synchronize with the DAU big game population management process.
 - b. Committees will actively participate with the CDOW in the development of an integrated HE that synchronizes with the DAU big game population management process. The HE should provide the necessary information for planning, implementing and monitoring projects that meet HPP goals and objectives.
 - c. Review the DAU plans developed for their area and comment on their content.
 2. Monitor program effectiveness and to propose to the Council changes in guidelines, game damage regulations, and land acquisition planning as appropriate.
 - a. Annually review and monitor objectives, successes/failures followed by a more intensive process of evaluating Committee effectiveness that corresponds with the expiration of the HMP. This includes the monitoring of big game tolerance levels of landowners and agencies. Refer to Section IX-F for additional information and guidance.
 - b. Monitor individual projects to determine their effectiveness in meeting Committee goals and objectives.
 3. Annually request funding for projects consistent with the committee's HMP.
 - a. Budget requests should be based on Committee needs as directed by the HMP. Requests shall be prioritized and provide background support.
 - b. Individual Committee budget requests may exceed annual allocations but shall properly document and support the goals and objectives of their HMP.
 4. Expend funds allocated by the Director, or acquired from other sources, as necessary to implement their HMP.
 5. Submit an annual report of expenditures and accomplishments to the Council by August 15 of each year.

6. Nominate, for the Statewide Council, a representative for agricultural livestock growers or crop producers when a vacancy occurs.
 7. Develop management strategies and make recommendations for reducing, resolving and mitigating wildlife, agricultural, and land management conflicts as they relate to big game forage and fence issues, big game distribution, wildlife habitat use and other wildlife management objectives.
 8. Appoint liaison, special unit and/or technical advisory teams or subcommittees to help the Committees in meeting Program goals and objectives.
 9. Use contract administrative/clerical services to promote more effective and efficient use of member's time to plan and implement projects.
- C. **[33-1-110 (6.7)]***The director shall certify to the state controller that commitment or payment vouchers submitted by local habitat partnership committees are consistent with distribution management plans and guidelines approved by the wildlife commission. Such certification shall be the only requirement necessary to authorize the state controller to disburse funds from the habitat partnership cash fund*

V. HPP COORDINATOR.

- A. In order to facilitate the functions of the Committees and Council, a person will be hired to act as an overall administrator and coordinator for the program. Such person shall be an employee of the Division of Wildlife. The duties of the coordinator include but are not limited to:
1. Advise and provide information to the Statewide Council and to local Committees and to serve as a liaison between the two.
 2. Assist in the dissemination of information concerning the Habitat Partnership Program for both external and internal publics.
 3. Review of HMP plans for compliance with program guidelines and present the draft and final HMP to the Statewide Council and to the Wildlife Commission for their review and approval.
 4. Assist the Council in monitoring program effectiveness and making recommendations for changes.
 5. Review and submit for approval, payment vouchers submitted by Committees that are consistent with their HMP's.
 6. Work with the Committees in the development and review of their annual expenditure and accomplishment reports to the Council.
 7. Serve as administrator for the Council and set up meetings, field trips, seminars, etc. for both the Committees and the Council.
 8. Periodically attend Committee meetings and facilitate Council meetings.
 9. Present to the Wildlife Commission, for their approval, nominations for committee and council appointments by the Director.

10. Work within State and CDOW fiscal rules and procedures to facilitate the expenditure of funds that meet Program goals and objectives.
11. Update the Program Handbook in coordination with the Committees and the Council.

VI. PROCESSES FOR HMP/HE DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION INTO DAU PLANS.

- A. Committees must work to integrate the development of their **Habitat Management Plan** with the **Data Analysis Unit Plan(s)** within their geographic boundary and with the big game species addressed in their HMP.
 1. The Division of Wildlife develops DAU plans in a structured ten-year cycle. These plans include herd population goals and objectives – sex ratio; production; and numbers. The process is designed to evaluate public desires and biological herd capabilities to determine an appropriate herd size. The DAU plan collects and organizes most of the important management data for a particular herd into one planning document; determines issues through a public scoping process; and identifies alternative solutions to the issues.
 - a. The Division of Wildlife will recommend a preferred population objective from those alternatives identified during the planning process. This choice will be based on analysis of population dynamics data, habitat resource information, public input, and recommendations from land management agencies, private landowners, sportsmen and other stakeholders. The recommended alternative will be described in a draft DAU plan.
 - b. The Division will strive to select a herd size objective that is consistent with maintaining productive range resources, considers the objectives of affected public and private land managers and meets the needs of sportsmen and local communities. The herd size objective may not be totally acceptable to all interests but efforts must be made to obtain substantial agreement of affected parties to work with the objective for the ten-year period covered by the DAU Plan.
 2. In conjunction with the development of DAU plans, Committees are required to produce a five-year **Habitat Management Plan**. This plan will address and prioritize management strategies and recommendations for reducing, resolving and mitigating wildlife, agricultural, and land management conflicts as they relate to big game fence and forage, big game distribution, wildlife habitat use and other wildlife management objectives. Short-term solutions are considered necessary but prioritizing longer-term solutions involving the integrated management of rangelands on both public and private lands is the preferred management strategy.
 - a. The Habitat Management Plan shall include a **Habitat Evaluation (HE)** Section that outlines the best available range and habitat resource information, and outlines specific issues and conflicts and management strategies for their resolution.
 - b. The Council shall oversee the development of a formalized **Statewide** Habitat Evaluation process, by working with Colorado State University, the Committees, the Division of Wildlife and all stakeholders interested in this process.
 - c. HMP development involves the following steps:
 - (1) In consultation with landowners, land management agencies, sportsmen, resource management specialists and any other interested stakeholders, Committees will

identify, map and prioritize issues and conflicts between big game, other wildlife species and agriculture.

- (2) Committees will ask public land management agencies to document their Management Plan objectives and identify agricultural/wildlife issues and conflicts that restrict their ability in meeting these objectives.
- (3) Committees will hold public meetings to identify additional conflicts. This information will be used to develop a plan that identifies tactical processes for rapid, flexible responses to conflicts as well as larger scale projects that provide long term, effective and efficient returns on resolving conflicts.
- (4) Locations showing locations and seasons of big game and other wildlife use will be mapped. Security areas and conflict areas will be designated for project planning, prioritization and implementation.
- (5) The plan will include strategies designed at eliminating, mitigating or reducing identified conflicts.

d. Habitat Management Plans should follow this general outline:

- (1) Title Page – Designed by the Committee.
- (2) Table of Contents.
- (3) Map of HPP Area – provided by Coordinator.
- (4) List of Committee Membership and whom they represent.
- (5) Specific Committee Goals and Objectives. Election and terms of officers.
- (6) Introduction – Historical information. When, why and how committee started.
- (7) HPP area description. Use maps in appendix.
 - (a) Size of geographic area.
 - (b) Elevations. Maximum and minimum.
 - (c) General Habitat Types.
 - (d) % Land Ownership.
 - (e) Habitat loss, degradation, and explanation.
- (8) Habitat Evaluations. Committees will continue to develop a Habitat Evaluation for their area for big game and other wildlife species identified in their HMP. The structured process for the HE is currently under development and will be made available to Committees when completed. The HE is a dynamic document that can be continually updated, as new information becomes available. In the meantime, committees should continue to acquire available data and information necessary for their planning purposes in the following manner:

- (a) Maps – Wildlife Habitat Use (WRIS, NDIS, etc.), Conflict Areas, Security Areas, Habitat Enhancement Areas, Soils, etc. Refer to Definitions of Habitat Conflict and Security Areas in Section VIII.
 - (b) Assessment of current habitat conditions. Agency reports. Studies. Committee assessments etc.
 - (c) Identification and documentation of damaged and lost habitats.
 - (d) Develop a summary of available information on current rangeland habitat condition, potential capabilities, and desired future conditions. Committees can contract with outside sources to gather the information.
 - (e) Committees will also consider information that has been gained through field trips, personal observation, etc. for inclusion into the HE.
- (9) Scope – Goals and Objectives.
- (a) Bulleted list of Committee goals and objectives.
 - (b) Prioritization for projects that are partnered, leverage additional monies, integrate into other projects (grouse working groups, agency burn plans, NRCS projects etc.
 - (c) Committee processes for project approval. Qualification and eligibility parameters for projects (i.e. minimum private acreage's, hunting, game damage eligibility etc.).
 - (d) Management Strategies. Refer to Section IX.
- (10) Budget Guidelines.
- (a) Prioritization of where committee will spend budgets. Project types. Identification of priority areas.
 - (b) The plan will include strategies designed at eliminating or reducing identified conflicts.
- (11) Wildlife Population Summaries.
- (a) Brief description of population status, by species (deer, elk, antelope, moose), and any other prioritized wildlife species as related to habitat and habitat quality.
 - (b) Committee comments on DAU plans or other Species Management Plans.
 - 1) Upon reviewing a draft DAU plan, the Committee will use their HMP and HE (see below) to determine whether or not they are in concurrence with the preferred alternative outlined in the DAU plan.
 - 2) The Committee will make recommendations on their preferred alternative and identify management strategies to reduce and/or resolve big game conflicts at that population level. If conflict resolution is not feasible, the Committee will recommend that the Division of Wildlife revise its preferred alternatives or that additional work should be done with the Committee to reach agreement.

(12) Committee project evaluation summaries.

(a) Annual surveys of program stakeholders and projects by Committee.

(b) Council will administer formal five-year evaluation.

e. The draft HMP will be presented to the Wildlife Commission for their comment. After considering Commission and public comments, the Council shall submit the HMP to the Wildlife Commission for final approval at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

VII. CONFLICT, HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND SECURITY AREAS.

A. Conflict Area:

1. On private lands, a conflict area is an area where a landowner documents that an excessive concentration of big game or other wildlife species is causing a problem in the management of his/her lands with respect to use, forage, growing hay crops, harvest crop aftermath grazing and/or fences. This problem must be described in writing or as a verbal statement made to the Committee.
2. On public lands, a conflict area is an area where the management agency makes a finding that the level of wildlife use, or the combination of wildlife and livestock use is inconsistent with the long term ecological objectives of approved Land or Resource Management Plans.
3. Conservation Reserve Program lands or any lands similarly leased for conservation purposes or subject to conservation easements may be included in conflict areas for distribution management hunts, leases, range improvement projects. etc.
4. A conflict area can also be an area on public or private lands where the restriction of hunting results in a significant harvest reduction and a corresponding concentration of big game animals causing significant forage and/or fence conflicts prior to, during or after the hunting seasons. The affected private landowner or public agency will describe the problem in a written or verbal statement to the Committee.

B. Habitat Enhancement Areas:

1. Habitat enhancement area are locations where there are opportunities to improve/protect/enhance habitats to reduce, eliminate, or mitigate issues or conflicts occurring there or in other areas.
2. Habitat enhancement areas can occur on public or private lands where projects can be implemented to improve vegetative conditions for wildlife and agriculture. These projects include, but are not limited to, grazing management strategies, improvement of hunting access, water developments, and restrictions on recreational activities etc.

C. Security Areas:

1. The Committee, upon discussion and agreement of the appropriate landowners (public and private), designates security areas as locations where use and concentration of wildlife species is tolerated.
2. Specific management strategies will be planned and implemented accordingly to mitigate or compensate for any resource management impacts that occur due to this tolerance.

VIII. HMP MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES.

A. Distribution Management Hunts (DMH).

1. Preferred quick hit strategy to deal with perennial fall and early winter big game concentration problems that cannot be resolved using regular season hunts. While these hunts are generally for re-distribution of concentrated big game animals causing private land conflicts, they can also be used as a strategy to supplement harvest of specific problem big game populations.
2. Approval for a DMH will follow the format outlined by CDOW Commission Regulation #271-B-1 upon recommendation of a specific Habitat Partnership Committee and signature approval of the Area Wildlife Manager (AWM) in the geographic area where the hunt is to take place. Licenses will be issued according to processes developed by the CDOW Total Licensing Project.
3. A DMH must be consistent with the Committees HMP and can occur on private land where a private land hunt is recommended by the Committee and approved by the AWM.
4. Time Period:
 - a. DMH may take place on private lands, or as otherwise authorized by the Wildlife Commission, when it is feasible to harvest does and cows (deer, elk, antelope, moose) between August 15 and February 28 as approved by CDOW Commission Regulations, Article XII, #271, B, 1. They should be structured to maximize the opportunity to re-distribute and harvest big game animals at the time and place they are causing problems.
 - (1) A DMH will not be held during regular rifle hunting seasons unless approved by the Wildlife Commission.
 - (2) The Commission may approve different time periods for a particular DMH.
5. Licenses:
 - a. Upon DMH approval, qualified landowners will be given special application forms each year that allow issuance of a license(s) by the CDOW and accompanied by the appropriate license fee from an eligible hunter.
 - b. Qualified landowners will submit one application form for each licensed hunter.
 - c. Licenses should be issued for does and cows to maximize opportunity to manage numbers and distribution. The Director of the Division may approve the taking of bucks and bulls, but only under special circumstances when necessary to alleviate a specific damage problem.
 - d. Licenses are valid in designated areas only, to ensure that harvest is focused on specific problem animals.

- e. Numbers of distribution management licenses at any one time will not exceed 10 percent of the number of animals actually present in the conflict area.
 - f. In the event that a landowner cannot provide a sufficient number of hunters, the Division or its designee (e.g. a hunt coordinator) will solicit for and manage a list of hunters to be contacted as needed during the course of the hunts.
 - (1) The Division and/or the Hunt Coordinator will use a fair and equitable process to solicit hunters (phone call, newspaper articles etc.).
 - (2) Hunters who cannot participate at the time called will have their name removed from or moved to the bottom of the list.
 - g. These licenses are considered "List C" licenses.
6. Fees. Landowners may not charge fees for distribution management hunts. Landowners who unreasonably restrict hunting or hunting access, or charge more than \$100 per hunter per season during the regular big game seasons are not eligible for distribution management hunts. However, documented extenuating circumstances that convince the Committee and the AWM that a hunt is necessary for the overall management of the big game species involved can be used to approve such a hunt.
7. Hunt coordinators can be contracted through HPP to allow landowners and hunters to coordinate antlerless harvest at a time and place convenient for both parties and to direct harvest where it is needed. The hunt coordinator is the primary contact between the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the local HPP Committee, the private landowner, and the hunting public. Duties and responsibilities of the coordinator should follow this general outline:
- a. Attend an annual training/briefing session prior to the beginning of the hunting activities, under the guidance of the Committee and the CDOW (AWM/DWM) on how to organize, administer, and maximize the safety and effectiveness of the Distribution Management Hunts.
 - b. Coordinate the use of private lands requesting/permitting harvest with licensed distribution management hunters. This includes dates and times of permitted hunts on specific land parcels, designation of no hunting areas, and conditions of vehicle and road use.
 - c. Supply hunters with a property map and ensure hunters are accessing the property in the correct locations and hunting within the designated boundaries.
 - d. Coordinate with ranch owners and hunters to prevent damage to ranch property or livestock as a result of hunting activity.
 - e. Be on site during the hunts to coordinate hunting pressure and location to maximize the effectiveness of the hunt. Except during special circumstances, personally accompany hunters in the field.

- f. Maintain a daily logbook with information regarding hunter identification, observed big game numbers and location, antlerless harvest and any positive or negative aspects of the hunting activity. This will be used for a final report to the Committee and the landowner at the end of the hunts.
- g. Ensure harvested big game animals are removed from the ranch in a manner that does not cause resource damage. Field dressing, quartering, processing, skinning, transporting etc. of harvested animals remain the legal and ethical responsibility of the hunter.
- h. Hunters participating in DMH will pay no fees to the hunt coordinator. The Hunt Coordinator is not responsible for providing equipment, room and board or any other services for the hunters.

B. Investments in the Range Resource. Landscape management approaches are encouraged. Projects in this category may include:

1. Seeding of desirable forage plants.
2. Fertilization – cropland, rangeland, pasture etc.
3. Weed management.
4. Brush manipulation.
5. Silvicultural treatments
6. Implementation of grazing management systems (including pasture fencing, water developments, plan costs, riders etc.).
7. Use of attractants including salting, baiting etc. to obtain desired big game distribution but not for the purpose of harvest.
8. Water developments.
9. Any project designed to increase abundance, availability, or palatability of forage for livestock and wildlife to meet planned resource objectives.
10. Purchases of rangeland manipulation equipment given the committees address responsibilities for maintenance, availability of trained and competent personnel for operation, and cost effectiveness compared to hiring for services from the private sector.

C. Fence, gates, or permanent stackyard projects.

1. New fences may be constructed in areas where big game are causing conflicts with existing fences or in areas where they can be utilized to implement grazing management systems. Efforts should be made to incorporate effective, longer life products and designs (hi-tensile, electric, wildlife friendly, etc.).
2. Fences may be repaired in those areas where big game animals are causing conflicts. When fences are repaired, every effort should be made to incorporate materials and designs that will reduce or eliminate the conflict.

3. Fence design improvement at major big game crossing points that reduce long-term maintenance and damage costs should be done. For instance, improving the visibility of the top wire has been shown to reduce conflicts. Special fence designs, including gates, lay down fencing, white-vinyl top-wire designs, etc. and solid pole sections, should be incorporated into the fence where significant movement of big game animals occurs.
4. Exclusionary fences are considered a last resort and should be submitted to the Council for their review and submission to the Wildlife Commission for approval.
5. Providing materials for and/or construction of permanent stackyards may be implemented when necessary to meet the goals and objectives of Committee HMPs.
6. Committees can develop and implement methods for streamlining payment of eligible small damage claims and will outline these methods in their HMP.

D. Direct Payments:

1. Direct monetary payments can be made to landowners to replace forage used by concentration of big game animals on private lands.
2. This strategy is to be used as a last resort as a short term measure where it is not feasible to utilize distribution management hunts, habitat improvement approaches, or other approved techniques to mitigate the big game impacts.
3. Direct payments should not be made to landowners who unreasonably restrict hunting, or who charge a fee in excess of the statutory limit for the same area or any other area involving clearly the same group of big game animals except as provided in 5 below.
4. Local Committees will develop specific guidelines to assure that direct payments do not become a disproportionate share of the HPP allocated funds.
5. Committee dollars may be made to lease property and/or reimburse for projects designed to keep big game animals or other wildlife species on a particular area rather than allowing them to come in conflict in a different location.

E. Additional strategies which can be considered in the development of the Habitat Management Plan.

1. Landowner referral programs that bring hunters and landowners together to allow private land hunting to reduce conflicts.
2. Informational and educational programs to inform all interested stakeholders involved in the management of the state's wildlife and agricultural resources.
 - a. Brochures can be developed and made available to provide information for sportsmen and landowners and the general public on various issues such as respect for property, fence construction and design, project summaries, HPP Committee information etc.
 - b. Resource Management seminars can be held to help landowners and land managers to make informed decisions using the best available information.
 - c. Newsletters/news releases can be sent out to the partnership stakeholders (cooperators in the partnership areas) and the general public to keep them better informed.

- d. Efforts to integrate HPP other landowner programs and information sources should be made whenever possible.
3. Hunting access projects can be used to reduce conflicts and to increase hunting and harvest opportunities.

F. Monitoring:

1. Committees/council shall fund/partner the collection and analysis of habitat data on forage conditions and habitat capabilities on public and/or private lands where additional information is required to address and resolve habitat issues and conflict between agriculture and wildlife.
 2. Committees/council shall incorporate an annual monitoring process to document the successes or failures of their projects using methodology acceptable to the Committee.
 3. A formal evaluation process will take place in FY 2006/07 for each Committee to provide information to the legislature at the end of the five-year sunset of Senate Bill 6. After this date, formal evaluations will take place the year prior to the expiration of the HMP to be used in the development of the new HMP.
- G. Committees and/or the Council may fund the implementation of wildlife population or habitat research and management projects that promote meeting Commission approved HMP or overall HPP goals and objectives. This includes funding/partnering management or research projects involving trapping, transplanting, hazing, herding, feeding, baiting and determining body condition of elk, deer, moose and antelope provided that such projects are consistent with existing statutes, regulations and/or policies promulgated by the legislature, Wildlife Commission and/or the Division of Wildlife.
- H. Committees are encouraged to form partnerships with other groups to enhance and maintain open space concepts that provide both wildlife and agricultural benefits (conservation easements, trusts etc.)
- I. Any other strategies developed by the local HPP Committee consistent with the objectives of the program will be considered after providing opportunity for public comment and subject to Wildlife Commission approval.
- J. The CDOW Game Damage Program and the Habitat Partnership Program is being coordinated and integrated to provide increased cost/benefits, efficiency and effectiveness for both Programs. This includes the purchasing of damage materials, integrating the tracking of individual landowner projects, and using the CDOW damage materials delivery system.
- K. Larger scale, holistic habitat projects are strongly encouraged to maximize the benefits to the state's wildlife and agricultural resources.
- L. All information resulting from the development of the HMP, including the Habitat Evaluation process should be made available to all stakeholders involved in resource management processes for that particular geographic area. This includes but is not limited to County government, public land management agencies, private landowners and private sector businesses etc. and other entities involved in land use and management planning processes.

IX. ELIGIBILITY.

- A. Committees can be formed anywhere in the state where there is a mutual interest from landowners, sportsmen, the CDOW, and other resource agencies, to address and resolve wildlife/agricultural/land use issues and conflicts.
- B. Restrictions on eligibility for any part of this program may be developed by local Committees to respond to local needs and to ensure the most efficient use of available resources. Eligibility restrictions should be documented in the Committees HMP. (Refer to Section D and E below).
- C. Eligibility restrictions or projects desired by local Committees that are in conflict with these Guidelines, may be considered only after providing opportunity for public review and comment, and subject to Wildlife Commission approval.
- D. Hunting and hunting access does not have to be considered a pre-requisite for the implementation of projects on private lands. However, hunting should be promoted as a management strategy in all areas where it will aid in meeting overall population management objectives.
- E. Eligibility for game damage does not have to be considered a pre-requisite for the implementation of projects on private lands. Where landowners are eligible for game damage payments or materials, the game damage program should be used as a priority over HPP funds. HPP funds can be integrated with Game Damage funds as in using the game damage program for providing fence materials and HPP funds for the fence construction. HPP Committees are encouraged to procure fence materials from the game damage materials delivery program as a means to cut project costs.

X. FISCAL PROCEDURES.

- A. Habitat Partnership Program costs will be paid for out of the Habitat Partnership Cash Fund created by **CRS [33-1-112(8)(a)]**. *There is hereby created in the state treasury the habitat partnership cash fund. The moneys in the habitat partnership cash fund shall consist of those moneys annually transferred from the wildlife cash fund in accordance with paragraph (e) of this subsection (8) for the partnership program and any gifts, grants, donations, and reimbursements made to the program from other sources. The moneys in the fund shall be used in accordance with the duties of the habitat partnership council and Habitat Partnership Committees as specified in section 33-1-110 (7) and (8), including, but not limited to, reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by council and committee members in the fulfillment of their duties, as approved by the director. All interest derived from the investment of moneys in the habitat partnership cash fund shall be credited to the fund. Any balance remaining in the fund at the end of any fiscal year shall remain in the fund subject to the limitations provided in paragraph (e) of this subsection (8).*
- B. The fund consists of those monies annually appropriated by the Colorado General Assembly to the CDOW for the Habitat Partnership Program. As defined in **[33-1-112(8)(e) (II)]**, moneys in the Habitat Partnership cash fund will be continuously appropriated as provided by statute from July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2015. **Senate Bill 07-82, outlining statutory language and funding for the Program, sunsets July 1, 2015 and will be updated and extended upon legislative review and approval.**
- C. As defined in **33-1-112(8)(e)(III)**, during the period of July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2015, unexpended balances in the fund at fiscal year-end will remain in the Habitat Partnership Cash

Fund. The balance at the end of any one year shall not exceed the total amount of wildlife cash funds transferred to the Program at the beginning of that fiscal year.

- D. As defined in **CRS 33-1-112(8)(e)(I)**, during the period of July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2015, the amount to be transferred from the wildlife cash fund to the Habitat Partnership Cash Fund an amount equal to five percent (5%) of the net sales of deer, elk, antelope and moose licenses used in the geographic areas represented by local habitat partnership committees from the previous calendar year. This figure will be determined by the following method:
1. The amount transferred pursuant to statute from the wildlife cash fund to the HPP fund annually on July 1 will be calculated by multiplying the number (CDOW calculated) of resident and nonresident hunters (deer, elk, antelope, and moose) who hunted in GMU's within each committee boundary by the net license costs for these species. The summation of these figures will be regarded as the total amount to be transferred to the HPP Fund. The amount so transferred, plus any balance remaining in the fund as of June 30, 2003, less any amounts transferred back to the wildlife cash fund exceeding the previous years allocation, will be regarded as the total Habitat Partnership Program budget.
- E. The Council will refer to the Commission approved HMP's when reviewing committee budget requests and when making budget recommendations to the Director.
- F. Gifts, donations, and reimbursements made to the program from other sources may also be placed in a separate fund not subject to the caps set by Senate Bill 01-6. Additional funding from federal agency cost-sharing and private wildlife interest groups will be sought but is not a prerequisite to spend appropriated funds as approved by HPP Committees and the Council.
- G. The moneys in the fund will be used in accordance with CRS 33-1-110 and 33-1-11, and these guidelines. Expenditures can be made for reasonable and necessary expenses including vehicle mileage, meals, and lodging, incurred by Council/Committee members and the Statewide Coordinator in attending Habitat Partnership Council/Committee meetings. Funds can also be expended by the Council to assist in the implementation and administration of the program.
- H. Budget Process. For the time period outlined by Senate Bill 07-82, budget planning will be made in the following manner:
1. The Council regards the 5% calculation as the annual Program budget allocation.
 2. The Council will recommend individual committee budgets for the Director's approval based on their budget requests, past spending history, and requests for special projects.
 3. Unless otherwise agreed, no HPP Committee with a Commission approved HMP will have an annual budget of less than \$70,000.
 4. First year budgets for new committees, prior their approved Habitat Management Plan will not exceed \$25,000.
 5. Statewide Council budget will include:
 - a. Administrative funding for Council expenses – travel, food, lodging etc.
 - b. Expenses for the Statewide HPP Coordination Meeting.

- c. Unexpended and uncommitted Committee funds at the end of a fiscal year.
- d. Contingency fund to cover emergency project expenditures in an amount not to exceed the previous year's 5% allocation.
- e. Competitive funds for special project proposals submitted by individual Committees using the following guidelines:
 - (1) Up to two project proposals per committee per year – Prioritized. \$10,000 to \$100,000.
 - (2) Project proposals must identify multi-stakeholder benefits, objectives, project need, multiple species benefits, links to habitat objectives, time frame, monitoring plan, monies leveraged etc.
- f. Committees will submit annual base budget requests for the next fiscal year for Council review. The Coordinator will enter budgets into Stage 1 of the Division's budget process. Committee Budgets will be approved by the Director at the completion of Stage 4.
- g. All interest derived from the investment of moneys in the fund by the state will be credited to the fund.
- h. If any Committee ceases to exist, spending authority for that Committee ends.
- i. If the Council ceases to exist, all moneys in the Habitat Partnership Cash Fund will revert to the Wildlife Cash Fund.
- j. All Committees will expend their allocations to implement strategies approved in the HMP and in accordance with these guidelines.
- k. Upon Director approval, the budgets for each committee will become a component of each respective committee's Commission approved Habitat Management Plan.

Note: Statutes authorizing the Habitat Partnership Program as defined by SENATE BILL 07-82, include a sunset date of June 30, 2015. Legislative renewal of these statutes will be based on the overall effectiveness meeting the goals and objectives of the Habitat Partnership Program.

SUBMITTED BY THE STATEWIDE HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM COUNCIL TO THE WILDLIFE COMMISSION FOR THEIR REVIEW AND APPROVAL. COMMISSION APPROVED ON JANUARY 10, 2008.

COUNCIL MEMBERS: TERRY EVERHART, GARY VISINTAINER, JOHN HARDWICK, ROBBIE LeVALLEY, GREG JUNGMAN, HUNTER SEIM, PAUL CRESPIAN, MARK SMITH, DAVE FREDDY.

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