



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is HPP?** - HPP, the acronym for the Habitat Partnership Program, is a wildlife conflict resolution program administered by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, overseen by a State Council and implemented locally in much of Colorado by local committees.
2. **What does HPP do?** According to the state law authorizing HPP, the purpose is “to reduce wildlife conflicts, especially those associated with fence and forage, and to help the Division meet game management objectives through duties deemed appropriate by the Director.”

The specific orientation of HPP is to focus on those conflicts caused by deer, elk, pronghorn and moose to agricultural operators by implementing both short term fixes and longer term solutions.

3. **Why did the DOW need HPP?** After the hard winter of 1983/84, there were many landowner concerns about the size of deer/elk herds, their impacts to private property and how the DOW was addressing those concerns. Secondly, state law makes the DOW liable for fence and forage losses caused by deer and elk but the system to prove damages and to get compensated for them didn't work and took too long when it did. With the possibility of deteriorating landowner relations, increasing game damage liability and ultimately smaller big game herds, HPP was created to address these problems in a non-traditional way. HPP's first purpose in 1990 was limited to fence and forage problems and in 2002 the purpose was expanded as described in #2.
4. **Who pays for HPP?** Sportsmen do. HPP gets 5% of big game license fees sold in the areas that have HPP committees. In FY2010 (July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010) that amounted to \$2,317,416 while in FY2011 (July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011) the amount was \$2,061,455.

Although sportsmen provide HPP funding, this money is leveraged and matched with other agencies, organizations and private funds several times over to do projects.

5. **Since sportsmen pay for HPP through their license dollars, what do they get from HPP?** HPP works hard to address problems that deer and elk cause private landowners, who provide much of the habitat these animals depend on. When we are successful, this maintains or increases their tolerance for wildlife on their property, which directly translates into the size of big game herds we are able to have today. HPP also works with the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to improve wildlife habitat and overall range conditions on public lands which provides better hunting opportunities. Without HPP and the other private land programs the DOW has, we would likely have significant landowner and political pressure to reduce the herds to a level far below what we have now. This would result in fewer licenses able to be issued and less overall opportunities for sportsmen to hunt.

6. **What do the other participants gain from HPP?** All participants get a faster, less “governmental” way to resolve conflicts, improvement of both private and public lands, leveraging of scarce money to share the costs and accomplish more and, perhaps most importantly, the development of critical dialogue and relationships between everyone involved to solve the problems.
7. **So, do other people contribute to HPP?** Yes, one of the founding strengths of HPP is the partnership aspect. People who bring projects to the local committees are expected to provide a “match”, or contribution to the project. This may be money, equipment or their time depending on the project and other circumstances. There are also other entities and agencies that provide money and help to lower everyone’s cost. Generally, local committees prefer to have a 50/50 match between HPP and the project applicants and other entities but this can vary among committee, applicants and projects.
8. **Who are on the local committees?** There are 3 people representing livestock growers, 1 person representing sportsmen, 1 person from each of the federal land managing agencies in the committee area and 1 DOW representative.
9. **What kind of projects can I request help with?** First, committees welcome any projects that may help you out with your local problems with big game. The projects must relate directly to the purposes of the program – see #2 above. Typical projects include habitat improvement (reseeding, water developments, shrub/tree cutting) as well as fencing projects and game damage projects.
10. **Where are projects done?** Projects can be done on private or public lands, or both, wherever the problem and/or solution exist.
11. **Surely there are some rules or guidelines committees have to follow?** Yes, committees have an operating plan approved by the Colorado Wildlife Commission that defines their area, the conflicts and the potential types of projects that the committee may participate in. These plans are general by nature to provide the committee with the maximum flexibility they need to resolve local problems quickly. These plans authorize the committees to approve and fund project proposals.
12. **Do I have to allow hunting on my property in order to work with HPP?** In most committees, hunting is not a requirement for a project to be considered. However, committees may request and work with your for some hunting access in order to gain some additional harvest in these problem areas. Also, remember these 2 points: Hunters buying licenses is what keeps HPP and the Division of Wildlife operating. General tax money from the state is not provided to the DOW and 2) a little hunting pressure may move the animals off of your property where they are causing trouble and into areas where they are tolerated better or where more hunting pressure occurs which could result in fewer animals causing problems.
13. **How do I do a HPP project?** First, contact one of the local committee members and discuss your situation. Check out the HPP web page to get some more information. If, after doing this you think

your project is appropriate for HPP, get a project application from your DOW officer or download it directly from the HPP web page, get on the agenda for the next meeting and make your pitch!

- 14. Will HPP pay me up front for doing the work?** No, HPP operates on a reimbursable basis, meaning that the work has to be done and then HPP will pay the agreed upon amount.
- 15. Assuming I get approved for my project, when can I start?** Check with your committee but HPP strives to be quick. Depending on the amount of money involved in your project, additional steps may be needed before you can start. Don't start unless you've checked!
- 16. What happens if my project changes before completion?** Get back in touch with your committee. Committees realize situations may change and are willing to work with you but do not assume you may spend more than you were approved for or do less than you agreed to without their authorization. If you do, you may have to pay the extra costs that you incurred without their approval.
- 17. What permits do I need for my project?** HPP is a funding program, not a permitting authority and we don't know what might be needed. Approval by HPP committees does not relieve you of the obligation to get the necessary permits for your project if they are required. For instance, water developments may need review and/or approvals by your local county or the Division of Water Resources at the state level.
- 18. Does HPP have a say in elk population numbers?** Yes. One of the purposes of HPP is to make sure private landowner issues are considered when the DOW is setting herd numbers. When the DOW is setting numbers, HPP committees are solicited and respond with their opinions about the new proposal. Since HPP committees have a variety of members on them and are in the business to resolve conflicts, their opinion matters in the final decision made by the Wildlife Commission.
- 19. Do we really have too many elk?** Obviously, this answer depends on whether you're a sportsman, landowner, outfitter, businessman or some other interested party, the specific location you're talking about and even the time of year it is. That wasn't always the case but the DOW has been aggressively working to lower the overall numbers of elk in the state and now most believe the overall number is just about right, with the 2010 estimate being approx. 280,000 animals. Regardless, most current conflicts are the result of distribution problems, not population size.
- 20. How come you needed HPP - doesn't the Division already have a game damage program?** The game damage program is an integral part of the Division's overall commitment to landowners experiencing damage issues. It provides payment for damages incurred and some prevention efforts, primarily temporary panels, permanent stack yards and apiary fencing.

However, HPP started because the regulations involving fence and forage damage claims didn't work for either the landowner or the Division. There was too much disagreement over the amount of damage, whether deer or elk caused it, and what the value of the damages was for anyone to feel good about the outcome. HPP took a new approach to either fix the problem immediately (fence

repairs, fertilizer or re-seeding) or to find longer term solutions such as habitat treatments or assisting with conservation easements. This positive approach has provided a well received alternative.

- 21. In addition to the game damage program, doesn't the DOW have other programs to help landowners?** Yes, we do – and plenty of them. Most wildlife depends on private lands at some time during the year and everyone owes the landowners who provide these areas a great deal of thanks. There simply wouldn't be as many species or the abundance of species that we have today if it weren't for private landowners. People interested in our other landowner programs should check out the web page, www.wildlife.state.co.us/landwater/privatelands or contact the Division's private land program specialist at (303) 291-7404.
- 22. Is HPP working?** By all accounts, the answer is "YES"! HPP enjoys strong local acceptance by landowners and agency people as a fast and easy way to help with local problems that in the past simply weren't dealt with effectively. This acceptance also translates into DOW and political support for a positive program that is working.
- 23. Where do I get more information?** First, contact your local DOW office or officer. They can talk to you about your local HPP. Look on the DOW website for information about HPP. Talk to your friends and neighbors – many of them may have already been involved. Check with your local agricultural groups; they likely have a member on the local HPP committee.

Much information about HPP, including project applications, committee memberships and annual reports, can be found at www.wildlife.state.co.us/landwater/privatelands .