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### GIA Form

1 message

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To: info@wyomingwildsheep.org

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**Project Details:**

Project Title: Cabin Creek Conifer Removal

Project Type: Habitat enhancement

Affiliate: Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Project Location: Shoshone National Forest, Park County, Wyoming

Project Description: Conifers will be removed from 600 acres of crucial winter range for bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer and moose in the South Fork of the Shoshone River drainage below Cabin Creek. Conifers, including juniper, limber pine and Douglas fir, will be removed through mechanical means utilizing both tracked machinery with masticating attachments and chainsaw crews. Work will be conducted between November 1st, 2017 and March 31st, 2019 when soil and weather conditions allow for work to be completed with minimal soil disturbance. Additionally, weed control will be conducted for two years post-treatment to address cheatgrass and dalmation toadflax infestations. The purpose of the project is to enhance big game crucial winter range by eliminating conifer encroachment.

Project Problem: The upper South Fork of the Shoshone Valley provides important winter range for bighorn sheep, mule deer, elk and moose. Narrow benches and alluvial fans in the valley bottom support sagebrush/grassland communities that are critical foraging areas for wintering big game. These areas are being threatened with conversion to woodlands by encroaching conifers including juniper, limber pine and Douglas fir. As succession is allowed to progress through lack of disturbances such as fire, conifers slowly outcompete sagebrush and herbaceous species. The result is a reduction in the quantity and quality of forage and diminished capacity to support wintering big game. Additionally, because bighorn sheep prefer open, high visibility foraging areas for predator protection, visual communication and efficient foraging, conifer cover diminishes quality of bighorn sheep habitat. Productive sagebrush/grassland areas in the South Fork valley are limited, and the maintenance of these areas as quality big game habitat is critical. Historically, these areas would have been maintained through wildfire that would eliminate conifers. Because of the presence of dalmation toadflax and cheatgrass, however, prescribed fire cannot be used without increasing these species. Therefore mechanical means of conifer removal will be the chosen method to maintain these areas.

Problem Solution: The proposed action is to remove conifers within a 600-acre treatment area through mechanical methods. The treatment area is located on the north side of the Shoshone River downstream of Cabin Creek. Work would be accomplished utilizing both private contractors with tracked mulching machines and Shoshone Forest chainsaw crews. Small areas of dalmation toadflax and cheatgrass can be found throughout the project area. As project work has the potential to disturb the soil and increase these species, the project will include post-treatment weed control. Weed control will consist of contracted backpack herbicide spraying of infestation areas for two years post-treatment. This project consists of a single phase; however there may be potential in the future to expand the project to adjacent private lands and other areas in the South Fork on the Shoshone National Forest.

**Biography Of Applicant:**

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Current Member: No

**Cost To Be Funded**

Equipment.....0.....	\$0
Services.....25,000.....	\$259,000
Publishing.....0.....	\$0
Monitoring.....0.....	\$1,000
Supplies.....0.....	\$0
Other.....0.....	\$0
Totals \$.....25,000.....	\$260,000

**Other Organizations:**

Organization 1: WWNRT

Organization 2: Shoshone National Forest

Organization 3: Wyoming Game and Fish

Organization 4: RMEF

**Media Contacts:**

Media 1: Cody Enterprise

Media 2: Billings Gazette

Media 3: Tara Hodges, WGFD I&E

Media 4: