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GIA Form

1 message

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Fri, May 1, 2020 at 8:57 AM

To: info@wyomingwildsheep.org, skilpatrick@wyomingwildsheep.org, joni@wyomingwildsheep.org

Project Details:

Project Title: Torrey Rim Prescribed Fire

Project Type: Habitat Improvement

Affiliate: Wyoming Game and Fish Dept, Shoshone National Forest

Project Location: Dubois, Wyoming, Whiskey Basin WHMA

Project Description: The US Forest Service and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) are planning a joint habitat enhancement project to benefit the Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Herd. This project includes 435 acres of broadcast burning on the eastern flank of Whiskey Mountain on the Shoshone National Forest and up to 1,198 acres of broadcast burning on the Whiskey Basin Wildlife Habitat Management Area (see attached project maps). The purpose of this project is address a legacy of past fire suppression efforts by reducing the extent of conifer colonization in the Whiskey Mountain / Torrey Rim area. This project is expected to benefit the Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Herd by opening migration routes that are currently colonized by conifers, enhance forage and loafing habitat, and promote habitat conditions that more closely resemble historical conditions. Funding requested from the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation (\$10,000) would be used to finance contract invasive species and archaeological clearance surveys on the Whiskey Basin WHMA. Surveys are needed before implementation of the burn can occur and will help the agencies manage risk from potential cheat grass invasion of bighorn winter range on Torrey Rim. The US Forest Service has committed to funding surveys for the National Forest portion of this project in the amount of \$9,000 (~\$2,500 for invasive surveys and ~\$6,500 for archaeological survey; see cost breakdown below).

Project Problem: As early as 1979, sheep habitat in the vicinity north of Torrey Creek, Torrey Rim, and Whiskey Mountain was identified as having restricted bighorn travel routes that were in need of improvement. Dense forested areas limit sight distances and movement for bighorn sheep and provide lower quality forage and loafing opportunities as compared to more open habitat. The Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Comprehensive Management Plan identifies this problem and calls for collaborative action to address it: "Over 50 years of fire suppression has allowed the development of many areas of dense or over mature trees which effectively block bighorn movements and use of some suitable winter range. Judicious, properly planned, and well-managed use of prescribed fire for habitat and migration corridor management holds the greatest potential for addressing this problem."

Problem Solution: The Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Technical Committee co-developed this project and has endorsed the use of prescribed fire to enhance bighorn sheep migration corridors, increase protected loafing areas, and improve winter range conditions in the Torrey Rim and Whiskey Mountain area. More than 40 years have elapsed since the Technical Committee first noted that dense forests negatively affect bighorn sheep habitat and identified prescribed fire as the best tool for addressing the problem. Currently, limited sheep use in unburned habitats of Torrey Rim, coupled with depressed demographic performance of the Whiskey Mountain herd and recent changes in winter range distribution, have imparted a sense of urgency in the committee to advance management actions that benefit the sheep.

Biography Of Applicant:

Name: Amy Anderson (WGFD Habitat Biologist) and Joe Flower (USFS Wildlife Biologist)

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Current Member: No

Cost To Be Funded

| | | |
|--------------------------|----|---------|
| Equipment..... | \$ | |
| Services.....10,000..... | | \$12000 |
| Publishing..... | \$ | |
| Monitoring..... | \$ | |
| Supplies..... | \$ | |
| Other..... | \$ | |
| Totals \$.....10000..... | | \$12000 |

Other Organizations:

Organization 1: WGFD- \$3000

Organization 2: USFS- \$9000

Organization 3:

Organization 4:

Media Contacts:

Media 1: Rene Schell- WGFD Information & Education Specialist

Media 2: Kristie Salzmann, Public Affairs Specialist, Shoshone National Forest, kristie.l.salzmann@usda.gov

Media 3: Dubois Frontier

Media 4: Lander Journal

3 attachments



Torrey_Rim_Rx_WGFD_Units_JPF_ortho.pdf

1437K



Torrey_Rim_Rx_WGFD_Units_JPF_topo.pdf

1525K



WMBSTC Torrey Weed Survey Support 2020.docx

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