Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation GIA Committee,

The Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Technical Committee (WMBSTC) is an inter-agency group comprised of representatives from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), USDA Forest Service (USDA FS), and Wyoming Game & Fish Department (WGFD). The group was chartered in 1969 with the intent of collectively managing lands owned by each of the agencies near Whiskey Mountain for the benefit of bighorn sheep. Lands near Whiskey Mountain owned by the three agencies provide extremely important bighorn sheep habitat. The vast majority of bighorn sheep summer habitat in the northern Wind River Range is populated by sheep that winter on and around Whiskey Mountain. All habitat occupied by bighorn sheep in the northern Wind River Range is classified as core native bighorn sheep habitat by the State of Wyoming. The State places the utmost importance on core native bighorn sheep habitat and is committed to minimizing any actions that will negatively impact bighorn sheep populations in these areas. In the WMBSTC charter the BLM and USDA FS also committed to manage their lands in the Whiskey Mountain area for the maximum benefit of bighorn sheep. Over the past four decades, representatives of all three agencies have been heavily involved in bighorn sheep management issues pertinent throughout the west including disease monitoring, bighorn sheep transplants, habitat enhancements, research, and harvest management. Members of the WMBSTC have seen bighorn sheep flourish in the northern Wind River Mountain range and have also witnessed catastrophic disease outbreaks as well as extended, chronic disease problems in the Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Herd.

As part of this inter-agency cooperative effort, the USFS and WGFD have been planning a prescribed fire on Whiskey Mountain above Torrey Rim with the intent of removing conifer cover along a sheep migration route. This burn is the second phase of a burn initially implemented in 2004 that greatly enhanced winter range forage in the Torrey Rim area and reduced conifer cover on WGFD lands. More recently, noxious weeds have become an increasing concern along Torrey Rim and both agencies believe it is important to inventory/map weed distribution in the area prior to conducting this phase of the burn. Better knowledge of weed presence and distribution will allow the agencies to have a comprehensive strategy for preventing spread following the planned burn. We appreciate your continued support for projects intended to improve wild sheep habitat around the state.

Thank you,

Greg Anderson

Chair, WMBSTC