



WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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May 25, 2021

WER 14659.00
U.S. Forest Service
Torrey Rim Prescribed Fire Project
Scoping Notice
Fremont County

Joseph Flower
U.S. Forest Service
Washakie Ranger District
333 East Main Street
Lander, WY 82520
Joseph.flower@usda.gov

Dear Mr. Flower,

The staff of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Department) has reviewed the proposed Torrey Rim Prescribed Fire Project located in Fremont County. We offer the following comments for your consideration.

The Department supports the Torrey Rim Prescribed Fire Project. This burn is listed as a high priority project in the 2019 Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Management Plan, which resulted from a collaborative process in which the Shoshone National Forest was a major stakeholder.

Conifer encroachment has altered many areas of Whiskey Mountain that were once open and dominated by grasses and forbs and were likely important foraging areas or seasonal movement areas for bighorn sheep. This project is proposed for the express purpose of addressing habitat lost to vegetative succession from open grassland to coniferous forest. The Department applauds the efforts of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in working to get this important habitat work moving forward for the benefit of the Whiskey Mountain bighorn sheep.

The USFS, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Department recognize the importance of this sheep population. All three entities are members of the Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Technical Committee and work collectively to manage habitats that are crucial for this sheep population. All members of the inter-agency technical committee agree that a burn above Torrey Rim designed to open up more timbered areas within the Glacier Addition of the Fitzpatrick Wilderness will benefit the Whiskey Mountain sheep herd. The committee believes burning timbered areas on Whiskey Mountain will provide additional movement pathways for sheep, as well as additional foraging and loafing areas.

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Some potential exists for invasive species to invade following a prescribed burn in this area. We look forward to working with the Shoshone National Forest to develop and implement an invasive species monitoring and treatment plan to quickly address invasive species that may occur following the application of fire to the landscape.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Greg Anderson, Lander Region Wildlife Biologist, or Amy Anderson, Lander Region Terrestrial Habitat Biologist, at 307-332-2688. Lander Region personnel, in coordination with the Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Technical Committee, are available to assist in any way necessary to help bring this project to fruition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Losch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent than the last.

Amanda Losch
Habitat Protection Supervisor

AL/mf/ct

cc: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Greg Anderson, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Amy Anderson, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Daryl Lutz, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Chris Wichmann, Wyoming Department of Agriculture