Mapping and characterizing bighorn sheep seasonal ranges and migration routes across Wyoming

Budget Narrative

We are seeking $85,000.00 to build on past successes of bighorn sheep research efforts across Wyoming and use existing data to address new research objectives that further support bighorn sheep research and conservation. If approved, the WY-WSF funds will be used to cover six months of salary for Dr. Blake Lowrey and a total of six months of salary for additional University of Wyoming data analysts to help support the effort. Dr. Lowrey is broadly collaborative and has a strong track record conducting bighorn sheep research throughout Wyoming. Depending on the funding amounts from WY-WSF, we also plan to seek additional funds from the Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition.

This project does not have partner money included in the current proposal but builds from past efforts totaling over 2 million dollars. Partner money included in the broad bighorn sheep research efforts across Wyoming was obtained from WGFD, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, National Park Service, Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, U.S. Forest Service, Montana State University, University of Wyoming, Wyoming Wildlife Foundation, Cannon, Yellowstone Park Foundation, International Order of Rocky Mountain Goats, Shikar Safari Club, Kevin Hurley Wild Sheep Biology Award, and Jack Creek Preserve.

This proposal is only possible because of the historic massive investment into bighorn research across Wyoming. Past efforts have contributed upwards of two million dollars, which has been used to fund salaries and wages, contracted services such as wildlife captures and disease detection diagnostics, as well as travel and other equipment. These past funds, which are foundational to the current proposal, can all be used as matching and supportive funds for the current request of $85,000.00.

The opportunity to address broad regional research questions with a relatively small financial contribution highlights the successes of past research efforts across Wyoming and is rare in wildlife research. Not only have past research efforts aggregated one of the largest integrated datasets for bighorn sheep, but the work has been highly collaborative, providing an opportunity to combine data from past efforts to address new questions. In this way, the aggerated data have utility far beyond the initial research questions or study areas. This proposal will capitalize on this unique opportunity and continue to build on the collaborative nature of bighorn sheep research across Wyoming. We will coordinate with all interested parties to ensure maximum success of the project and that the findings are effectively incorporated into local and regional bighorn sheep management and conservation. The results will help to inform a broad and detailed understanding of bighorn sheep migration and seasonal habitat use across Wyoming and represent and exciting and unique opportunity to expand from past efforts to collaboratively address new research topics at the state-wide scale.