

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Bighorn Sheep Disease Assessment – Game Management Units (GMU’s) 12A, 12BW & 13A

Project Type: Bighorn Sheep Disease Assessment

Project Number: 08-719

Project Description: It is recommended that a helicopter capture/disease assessment effort be conducted in Game Management Units (GMU’s) 12A, 12BW and 13A. Sheep captured during this effort will be tested for a wide variety of diseases. Information collected during this effort will determine timelines for recovery efforts including future transplants into the Kanab Creek drainage. This effort will also aid in the management of this important sheep herd. This effort is also outlined in “The Kanab Creek Supplemental Desert Bighorn Sheep Management Plan”.

Wildlife Species to Benefit: Bighorn Sheep – 100%

Implementation Schedule:

Beginning: *May, 2009

Completed: *May, 2009 *Dates are tentative

PROJECT FUNDING

SBG Funds Requested: \$14,850

Total Project Costs: \$14,850

Funds Administration:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Applicant: Todd Buck
Telephone: (435) 644-3794 / (435) 644-3792
HPC: Fredonia HPC

Address: 3500 S. Lake Mary Road
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Coordinated with:

Applicant's signature:

Date:

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO:
Game Branch

NEED STATEMENT/PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

Annual surveys from 1998 to 2006 indicate the bighorn population in GMUs 12A, 12BW and 13A has declined. In 1998 141 bighorn sheep were classified in 10.2 survey hours. This number declined to a total of 91 bighorn sheep classified in 23.4 survey hours in 2006's survey effort. This represents approximately 35.5% fewer sheep classified with a 129% increase in survey effort. In 2005 hunters reported observing sheep that were exhibiting symptoms of respiratory distress. Follow-up investigations by wildlife managers resulted in the documentation of sick sheep exhibiting reported symptoms and one ram mortality potentially resulting from reported symptoms. In 2006, the Department completed a capture and disease assessment of bighorn from GMU's 12A, 12BW and 13A. Results of the testing indicated the presence of Pastuerella, Mycoplasma, and Para-Influenza in several captured bighorn. This information led to the development of "The Kanab Creek Supplemental Desert Bighorn Sheep Management Plan".

The bighorn sheep population in Kanab Creek has been supplemented periodically from 1985-2005 with the most recent supplement occurring in 2005. This transplant effort was funded by the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society and involved the capture of 26 bighorn in the Virgin River Gorge area of GMU 13B. The captured bighorn were successfully transported to and released in northern 13A. District Wildlife Managers have completed monthly telemetry flights to monitor collared sheep since their release. Reports of collared sheep from this transplant effort exhibiting symptoms of disease suggest that the disease levels in the Kanab Creek sheep herd continues to be a serious issue and that some newly introduced sheep may have contracted the diseases.

A disease assessment/survey effort to monitor this population has been identified in "The Kanab Creek Supplemental Desert Bighorn Sheep Management Plan" for the spring of 2009.

Bighorn sheep habitat in GMU's 12A, 12BW, and 13A is remote, complex and encompasses an extremely large area. To capture sheep/collect data obtained through the use of helicopters by any other method would be essentially impossible.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- To determine prevalence of disease in the Kanab Creek Desert Bighorn Sheep population. This information will be used to guide future management efforts including transplant efforts in the Kanab Creek drainage.

PROJECT STRATEGIES:

Utilize Special tag funds to conduct a desert bighorn sheep capture effort/ disease assessment in the Kanab Creek Drainage (GMU's 12A, 12BW and 13A).

PROJECT LOCATION:

The survey will be conducted in GMU's 12A, 12BW and 13A, specifically the Kanab Creek Watershed including major side canyons (i.e. Hack, Grama, and Snake Gulch).

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Habitat in the Kanab Creek Drainage ranges from broken riparian habitat at the lowest elevations, blackbrush communities at the middle elevation, and open sagebrush pinyon-juniper communities at the highest elevations.

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

ESTIMATED PROJECT COST SHEET
Bighorn Sheep Survey GMU's 12A, 12BW & 13A

Costs Category- Helicopter, Fuel truck	Grant Dollars Requested (Special Tag Funds)
16 hours survey time @ \$825.00/hour (includes Ferry Time)	\$14,850.00
Totals	\$14,850.00

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

Helicopter surveys in GMU's 12A, 12BW and 13A will be conducted by AGFD employees, a contract pilot and a contract helicopter.

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

Results will be compiled by the Department's veterinarian and the Region II Game Specialist. A report on the results will also be included in the bighorn sheep hunt recommendation for GMU's 12A, 12BW and 13A in February 2010. Finally, results will also be included in the "Kanab Creek Supplemental Desert Bighorn Sheep Management Plan".

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

Tom McCall, Region II Game Specialist