



BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS

Wildlife Heritage Account Project Proposal Form

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Person Submitting Proposal/Project Manager: Jeremy Lutz

Organization/Agency: Nevada Department of Wildlife

Date: January 6, 2020

Address: 525 Round Mountain Dr.

City: Battle Mountain

State: Nevada

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NDOW Monitor (if the project would be managed by someone other than a NDOW employee):

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PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Toiyabe PMU (Bates, Hickison and Wolf Ranch) Pinyon/Juniper Thinning Project.

State Fiscal Year(s) Wildlife Heritage Account Funds are Needed: 2021

Project Location: Project will take place entirely within the Toiyabe Sage Grouse Population Management Unit located in Lander County, Nevada.

The project area is located directly north of Austin, NV. Thinning will take place in the Toiyabe and Simpson Park Mountains. See Attached map.

Amount of Funds Requested from Heritage Account: \$75,000

Is a Project Map Attached? Yes  No

(a map must include the project title, map scale, date map was created, and a north arrow)



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### **Purpose of the Project:**

The proposed project would thin or substantially remove encroaching pinyon pine and juniper trees from as much as 2,700 acres of important wildlife habitat located within the Toiyabe PMU using a contracted hand thinning crew.

The Toiyabe PMU encompasses approximately 1,126,956 acres throughout Central Nevada and has the highest density of sage grouse and its associated habitat found in Lander County. In the last 10 years the Toiyabe PMU has seen a 39 % decrease in lek attendance which has resulted in a substantial population decline. Many factors can be attributed to this decline including PJ encroachment, habitat fragmentation, habitat type conversions, riparian and spring degradation as well as geothermal development in high value habitat.

In an effort to help protect this valuable habitat, over 29,000 acres of pinyon/juniper has been thinned or greatly reduced in sage grouse habitat within the Toiyabe PMU since 2012. This has been a collaborative effort with the Battle Mountain BLM, the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, the Austin Ranger Forest District as well as the Nevada Department of Wildlife. This funding will help to continue the restoration activities needed to enhance and protect valuable sage grouse habitat within this PMU as well as the collaborative efforts put forth by all federal land management agencies.

Thinning pinyon/juniper from native sage brush steppe habitat has shown to have a positive impact for a myriad of sage brush obligate species including mule deer, pronghorn antelope and the many endemic bird species that depend on healthy sage brush plant communities. As pinyon/juniper stands increase in size and density, the grass, forb and brush community start to die off due to the trees ability to out compete these fragile plant communities for water and sunlight. Once this threshold has been crossed it is very hard to bring it back to a productive sage brush steppe ecosystem again.

**Detailed Description of Project** (include any development plans such as vegetation removal, planting, seeding, or installation of structures; also include the schedule for obtaining any necessary permits, completing NEPA compliance, etc.):

Since 2009, the NDOW along with USGS have radio collared several hundred sage grouse within the PMU to help delineate seasonal habitat. This collar information has been extremely useful to help determine where to focus restoration activities within the PMU that will have the biggest uplift to the bird and its associated habitat. This information was used to help delineate the 4 proposed polygons to treat which includes the Bates polygon, the Hickison polygon and the Wolf Ranch #1 and #2 polygons.

Once funding is secure a Scope of Work will be released where the Department will award the contract to the lowest bidder. All work will be conducted according to the specifications outlined in the NEPA documents pertinent to that federal land management agency. All work at the site will be implemented outside of the migratory bird, and sage-grouse lekking and early brood rearing seasons.

All NEPA requirements have been completed and are covered under BLM's Eagle Butte Wildlife Habitat Enhancement EA (DOI-BLM-NV-B010-2011-0021-EA) and the Toiyabe West Wildlife Habitat Enhancement



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EA (DOI-BLM-NV-B010-2013-0020-EA). Work will also be conducted on Forest Service administered land under an existing CE.

**How Would this Project Help with** “the protection, propagation, restoration, transplanted, introduction and management of any game fish, game mammal, game bird or fur-bearing mammal in this State; or the management and control of predatory wildlife in this State”? (See NRS 501.3575)

Large amounts of wildlife habitat, particularly mountain big sagebrush sites are at risk of PJ encroachment within the Toiyabe PMU. As trees begin to take over a site, the shrub and grass understory is essentially lost or greatly reduced through competitive exclusion. Sage grouse generally avoid areas largely dominated by trees as well as nonfunctioning sage brush steppe ecosystems. This project will specifically help to reduce PJ encroachment in high value wildlife habitat before it is lost.

**Legal Description of the Property on Which the Proposed Project is to be Located** (must include the property address, access roads, township, range and section):

Polygon	Acres	Township	Range	Section
Bates	600	20	47	16,20,21,22,27
Hickison	400	19	46	24,25,26,36
Wolf Ranch #1	900	19	45	7,8,17,18,19,20,29
Wolf Ranch #2	800	19	44,45	18,19,20,23,24

**Does this Project Have Additional Funding Sources Other than Your Wildlife Heritage Account Request?** Yes  No

**Does this Project Involve Habitat Restoration and Improvement of a Long-term or Permanent Nature?** Yes  No

**Please Describe in Detail the Reason Why You Need Wildlife Heritage Account Funding to Fund this Project:**

Wildland restoration is inherently expensive which is why several other funding sources have been asked to help fund this project including the Upland Game account, Habitat Conservation Fee as well as our Federal Partners Program. By collaboratively matching additional funding sources we will be able to perform more restoration activities in this PMU with the hopes of reversing the downward trend in sage grouse numbers by enhancing or restoring more of its critical habitat.

**Project Duration:** one year  two years  three years  more

**Estimated Start Date:** October 2020

**Estimated End Date:** February 2021



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PROJECT FUNDING

The funding breakdown below should cover the total funding needs of the project. While projects may be extended beyond the fiscal year for which money was awarded, such an extension must be due to unusual circumstances and be approved by the Wildlife Commission (see NAC 501.340). (Double click on the table to activate the embedded spreadsheet.)

1. Amount of Wildlife Heritage Account Cash Requested		<b>\$ 75,000.00</b>
2. Other Cash Funding Sources for this Project		
a. BLM		\$ 120,000.00
b. NDOW's Habitat Conservation Fee Account		\$ 50,000.00
c. NDOW's Upland Game Stamp Fee Account		\$ 25,000.00
d.		
e. Total Other Cash Funding Sources (lines a - d)		<b>\$ 195,000.00</b>
3. Donations or In-kind Services for this Project		
a. Volunteer Time		
b. Equipment		
c. Materials		
d.		
e.		
f.		
g.		
h. Total Donations/In-kind Services (lines a - g)		\$ -
4. Total Project Funding	<b>\$ 270,000.00</b>	



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**PROJECT COSTS**

The cost breakdown below should cover the total costs of the project you are seeking funding for. NOTE: THE HERITAGE ACCOUNT CANNOT BE USED TO PAY INDIRECT COSTS. (Double click on the table to activate the embedded spreadsheet.)

	<b>Heritage Costs</b>	<b>All Other Costs</b>
1. Land Acquisition		
2. Travel (NDOW travel costs can't be included)		
a. Per diem		
b. Mileage		
c. Total Travel Costs (lines a & b)	\$ -	\$ -
3. Equipment Items		
a.		
b.		
c.		
d. Total Equipment Costs (line a - c)	\$ -	\$ -
4. Materials		
a.		
b.		
c.		
d.		\$ -
e. Total Material Costs (lines a - d)	\$ -	\$ -
5. Miscellaneous Costs including Contractor Costs (if you will be using a contractor, include their name and list the specific services they will be providing)		
a. PJ removal contractor	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 195,000.00
b.		
c.		
d.		
e. Total Miscellaneous Costs (lines a - d)	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 195,000.00
<b>6. Total Heritage Costs Only</b> (add lines 1, 2c, 3d, 4e, and 5e)	<b>\$ 75,000.00</b>	
<b>7. Total All Other Costs</b> (add lines 1, 2c, 3d, 4e, and 5e)		<b>\$ 195,000.00</b>
<b>8. Total Project Costs</b> (add lines 6 & 7)	<b>\$ 270,000.00</b>	
(Note: total project funding from previous table must match total project costs)		



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Are There Going to be Any Ongoing Costs for This Project? Yes  No

If There are Ongoing Costs Associated with This Project, is There an Anticipated Funding Source for These Costs? Yes  No

**Do You Anticipate Needing Additional Wildlife Heritage Account Funds Beyond the Upcoming Fiscal Year? If So, Please Describe What You Think Your Funding Requirements will be and for What Purposes** (As noted above, extensions beyond the first fiscal year must be due to unusual circumstances and approved by the Wildlife Commission.):

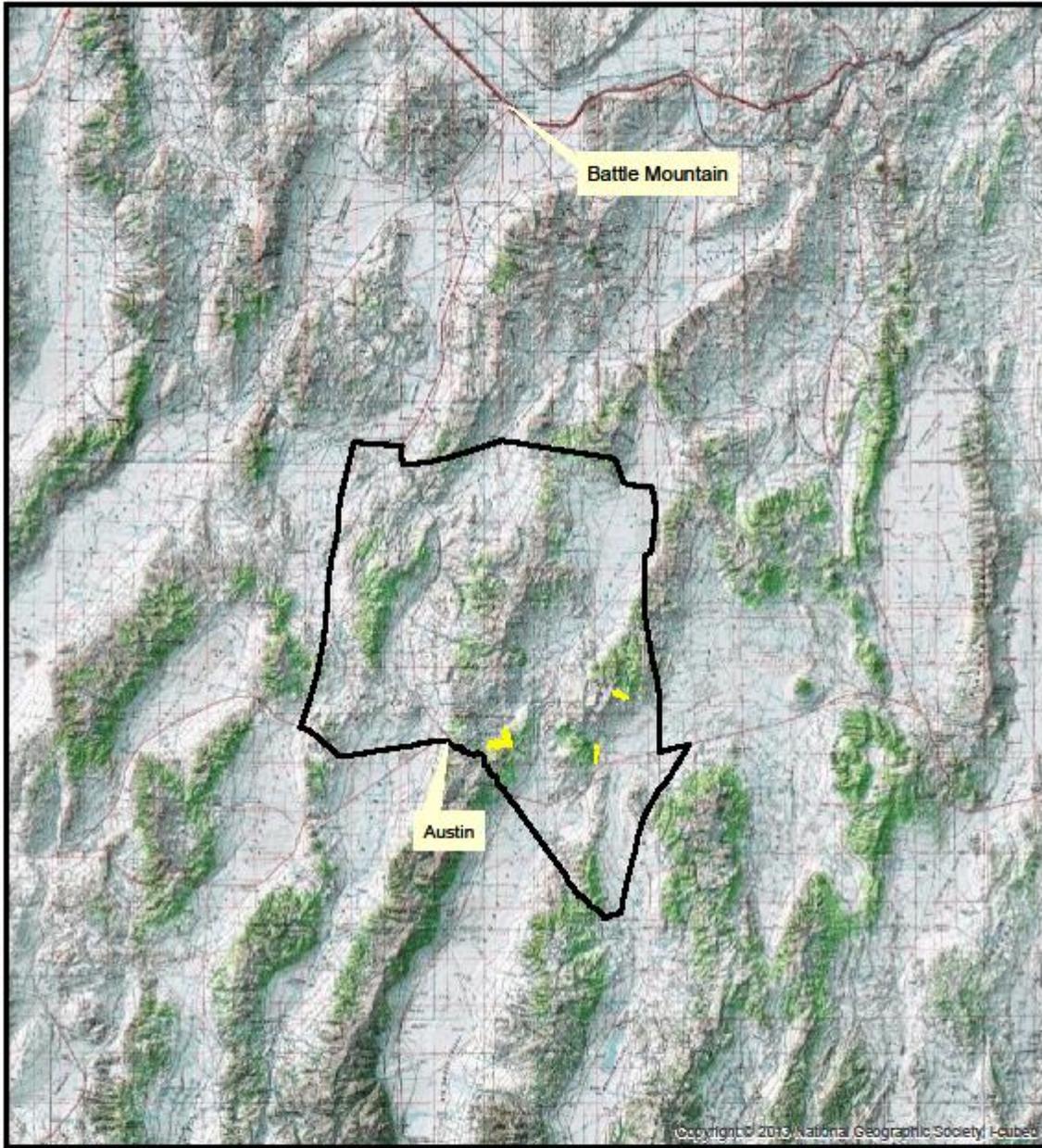
No additional funding will be necessary for this project until additional NEPA has been completed.

**How Will You Give Credit to the Wildlife Heritage Account and Other Funding Sources?**

It will be the privilege of the project proponent to identify all funding donors of this hand thinning project in any publications, signage, media releases, presentations, or the like.

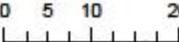
Authorizing Signature:

Review Date: 4/8/2020



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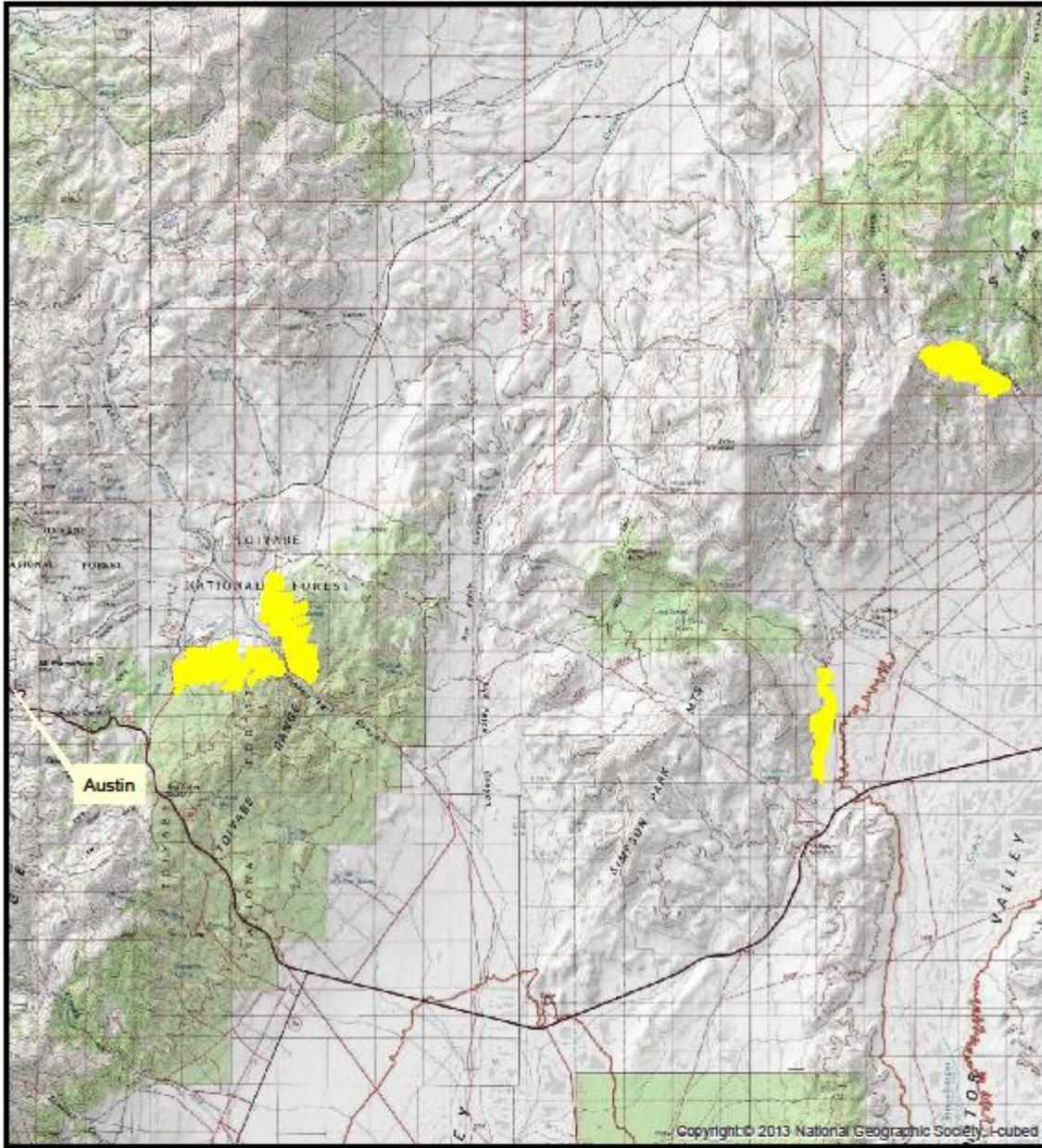
**Legend Bates, Hickison and Wolf Ranch Treatment Overview**

-  Toiyabe\_PMU (1)
  -  Wolf\_Ranch#1\_PJ\_Polygon (1)
  -  Hickison\_Polygon (1)
  -  Wolf\_Ranch\_PJ\_Polygon#2 (1)
  -  Bates\_Polygon#1 (1)
- 0 5 10 20 Miles
- 

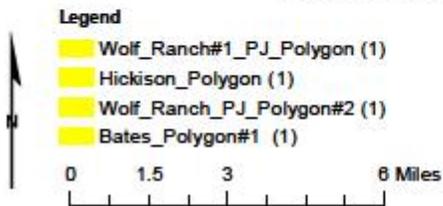
No warranty is made by the Nevada Department of Wildlife as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.  
Projection: UTM Zone 11 North, NAD 83

Date: 1/7/2020





**Bates, Hickison and Wolf Ranch Polygons**



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