

## California Department of Fish & Wildlife

# Big Game Account Project Proposal

Project Title: **Westside South Pasture Juniper Reduction**

Non Governmental Organization project contact:

Organization: Mule Deer Foundation

Name: Randy Morrison

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Email: [randy@muledeer.org](mailto:randy@muledeer.org)

Project start date: 10/1/2014

Project end date: 10/1/2015

California Department of Fish & Wildlife Region and location of proposed project: **Region 1**

### **Issue/Problem Statement:**

The proposed project is located on Bureau of Land Management land managed by the Alturas Field Office, 7 miles southwest of Alturas in Northeastern California.

This project is being proposed because many of the plant associations in the project area are at risk of being converted to juniper dominated woodlands in the mountain big sagebrush and bitterbrush communities. Western juniper canopies are approaching closure in many locations, inhibiting the productivity of the existing mountain shrubs, perennial grasses and forb understory.

The overall project is a three year project to remove non old growth juniper from sage steppe ecosystems within the area. Juniper removal will greatly aid in the recovery of the sage steppe habitat within the treatment area. 2000 Acres have been administratively cleared for on the ground work to begin.

### **Project Description:**

This proposal is for the first year of implementation of the project treating the first 650 acres of habitat. Areas that can physically be cut and removed by mechanical means will be and the material utilized for electricity at one of two co-generation plants in the area. Areas that are inaccessible to mechanical harvesting equipment will be cut by chainsaw and utilized for firewood or piled and burned. The Alturas BLM Field Office has done this in the past with very good results. The funds will be combined with existing funds to complete juniper cutting on this project by awarding a contract for juniper treatments at the cost of \$200 per acre.

**Expected Benefits:**

Reducing the encroachment of juniper in the area will greatly improve the productivity of the habitat by allowing big mountain sagebrush, bitterbrush and other related understory to flourish, thus restoring critical winter habitat for Mule Deer within the X3a deer hunting zone. An additional benefit of the project will be the restoration of habitat for Sage Grouse, which is a highly threatened species.

The probability of success is high, as to date, the BLM in coordination with the NRCS has already completed over 1700 acres of juniper treatments with the use of contractors in the area, and the results are quite positive.

**Proposed budget for this one year project:**

Contract to treat 650 acres of Juniper at \$200 per acre:	\$130,000.00
Partnership Contributions:	
BLM	\$15,000.00
Mule Deer Foundation	\$10,000.00
NRCS	\$33,000.00
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Subtotal of funds needed:	\$72,000.00
Grant Administration Expense: (10%)	\$7,200.00
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<b>TOTAL BIG GAME ACCOUNT GRANT REQUEST:</b>	<b>\$80,000.00</b>

**Cross Agency sign off:**

Bureau of Land Management	Peter Hall	Biologist	(530) 640-1507
National Resources Conservation District	Bryan Voelker		(530) 233-4137
Modoc County	Sean Curtis	Resource Mgt.	(530) 233-3276

Before and after photos in treatment area



United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Alturas Field Office  
221 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Alturas, CA 96101

Telephone: (530) 233-4137  
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7/10/14

Grant Selection Committee:

The Alturas Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is in full support of the Westside South Pasture Juniper Reduction Project. This project will remove non old growth juniper from the sage steppe ecosystem within this pasture and will build on the past success of the juniper cut in the rest of the allotment.

This juniper removal project will greatly aid in the recovery of the sage steppe ecosystem in this area as well as sage steppe dependent species. Many of the plant associations in the project area are at risk of being converted to juniper dominated woodlands in the mountain big sagebrush/bitterbrush communities. With the help of partners like you, we can help to restore the sage steppe habitat.

The Alturas NRCS is working closely with the allotment permittee and the BLM to complete this project and it is our hope that you will consider the Westside South Pasture Juniper Reduction Project for funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bryon Hadwick", written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Bryon Hadwick  
District Conservationist

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