**Cheatgrass Challenge Team**

**EXAMPLE: Cooperative Annual Grass Project Application**

**2020-2021, FY21 Funding Cycle**

Grant funds requested: **$92,030.00**

Name of project: Moorecastle Basin AIG Treatment

## Part I – Contact Information

1. **Applicant:** i.e., the person or organization taking the lead on the project

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Tommy Tutone |
| Organization: | BOTE |
| Address: | 1981 Stall Lane |
| City, State, Zip Code: | Boise, Idaho |
| Telephone: | 208.867.5309 |
| Email: | Tutone@gmail.com |

2. **Fiscal contact:** Individual and/or organization responsible for handling and dispersing award funds (if different from above)

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Jenny O'Leary |
| Organization: | OHW |
| Address: | 5309 Jenny Ave |
| City, State, Zip Code: | Boise, Idaho |
| Telephone: | 208.867.5310 |
| Email: | jennyl@ohw.gov |

3. **Other contacts:** If needed, include any special contact information, or additional contacts

| | |
|---|---|
| Landowner: | Jim Keller (Angel Ranch and Livestock Co.) |
| Project manager: | Tommy Tutone (same as applicant) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Technical contacts: | Pat Benetar - Lyons Valley Cooperative Weed Management Area (LVCWMA)<br>Joshua Uriarte - Governor's Office of Species Conservation (OSC)<br>Chris Yarbrough - Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG)<br>Alex Webb - US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) |

## Part II – Project Overview

1. **Project location:** County, township range, section, latitude/longitude with datum or UTM coordinates with datum and UTM zone, land ownership). Include a shapefile or pin with application.

| | |
|---|---|
| Single/Multiple Sites: | ◉ Single Site ○ Multiple Sites |
| County: | Lyons |
| Sage-grouse Habitat Mgmt. Area: | ◉ Core (Priority) ○ Important ○ General ○ None |
| Township/Range/Section:<br>*e.g. T1N, R5E, S1Z* | T14S,R03E,S25,26,30;T14S,R04E,S30,31,32 |
| Latitude/longitude or UTM with datum: | 579,195 4,669,278 NAD83 UTM Zone 11 |
| Ownership: *select multiple if applicable, for federal specify (e.g. BLM, USFS, etc.)* | ☒ Private ☒ State ☐ Federal ☐ Tribal |

2. **Narrative:** Where is your project located? How does it fit in with the larger landscape? What other actions are occurring that your project complements? Is your project associated with regional, state, and local plans? What partners are involved and how are they involved? Explain current conditions on the site, describe what the site is like before the project.

This project is located in Moorecastle Basin, approximately 25 miles southeast of Fritch, ID in Lyons County. In August 2018 the Moore fire burned 2,374 acres, 1,891 acres private, 186 acres state, and 297 acres on the Skargness Indian Reservation. The fire burned with moderate severity consuming sagebrush, bitterbrush and the perennial and annual grasses and forbs. Fire history shows no prior fire occurrence in this location, however 2 fires have burned adjacent lands. In 1989 1,101 acres and 1999 3,245 acres, these fires were within 3 miles of the Moore fire. These previous fires received no rehabilitation and as a result have had an increase of annual invasive grass (AIG), cheatgrass. There are some medusahead patches that have been recently identified as well.

The proposed project boundary is 1,151 acres, 959 acres private and 52 acres state. This area has an elevation range of 4,400-4,900 feet and has an average annual precipitation range of 8-9 inches. Prior to the 2018 fire, this area was comprised of sagebrush, bitterbrush, green rabbitbrush Idaho fescue, bluebunch wheatgrass, with an increasing cheatgrass understory and occasional pockets of cheatgrass throughout in disturbed areas. The area is entirely within mapped greater sage-grouse Priority Habitat Management Area (PHMA). The area is mapped as nesting and brood rearing habitat as well as winter habitat for sage-grouse and is within 2 miles of 3 occupied sage-grouse leks. Additionally the area is habitat for elk, deer and pronghorn antelope and is within the Moorecastle Complex Big Game Winter Range and Migration Priority Area as identified in the Idaho Action Plan (V3.0) for Implementing the Department of the Interior Secretarial Order 3362: "Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors." The majority of this area is mapped as High Resistance/Resilience (R&R).

Other actions being implemented within the area that would complement the proposal are stream restoration efforts. Immediately post fire, 1 mile of Moorecastle Creek wet meadow was identified at risk due to increased sediment potential with lose of upland and riparian vegetation. Currently Low-Tech Process Based Restoration (PBR) efforts are underway on 1 mile for stream (0.5 miles private and 0.5 miles of state land) to capture sediment movement in Moorecastle Creek and prevent deposition into Squaw Creek which is identified as redband trout habitat. Additionally, the Low-Tech PBR techniques will aid in the recovery of aquatic, riparian, wetland, and mesic habitat of the Moorecastle and Squaw Creek tributaries benefiting aquatic and terrestrial species.

IDFG and USFWS have partnered with private landowner in providing technical and financial assistance in completing the Low-Tech PBR treatments. IDFG, USFWS, LVCWMA are providing technical support for the proposed Cheatgrass Challenge project and the private landowner, OSC, USFWS would provide financial and/in-kind support for project implementation.

3. **Issue:** How does your project meet the criteria for Cheatgrass Challenge? What factors have been identified and will be addressed?

The 1,151 acre area identified within the proposal for treatment is within an identified Cheatgrass Challenge CORE area habitat and other than recent and past fire disturbance is a relatively intact rangeland. Past fire disturbances in the area that were left untreated have seen a significant increase in the presence of AIGS's (cheatgrass and medusahead) as well as noxious weeds found to be present in the vicinity (whitetop, Scotch thistle and Black henbane). Not treating this most recent fire disturbance carries a high risk of continued resource value loss and damage and a disruption of beneficial ecological processes as 2 years post-fire observations are indicating an increase and expansion of AIGs.

Addressing this project area will yield beneficial results in helping to keep this region as a CORE area and not as an untreated hotspot that would contribute to future AIG expansion and noxious weed seed source. If this project is selected and upon demonstrating positive outcomes in defending the CORE, the 1989 and 1999 fire disturbed areas will be evaluated for future submittals in an effort to defend and grow the CORE and prevent the area from changing to an altered state and becoming a transition zone area. This area is at the 4,400'-4,900' elevation range which in this particular area is prime for rapid conversion to AIG's if given the opportunity.

4. **Solution:** How will the problem/conditions be addressed? What are the objectives, methods used, total acres treated, amount/type of project treatments installed, etc. The objectives should be measureable. How will the project benefit resistance and resilience to annual grass invasion?

AIG's issue will be address through an adaptive management approach. Generally the grounds are grazed 4/1-9/1 and the grazing operator has the ability to defer grazing or restrict livestock from the area post treatment as necessary. This would be done through either the use of temporary electric fencing to restrict livestock or moving livestock to adjacent private pastures.

The treatment acre block identified is 1,151 acres, 959 private and 52 acres state. The area pre-fire had a high frequency of desirable perennial grasses and forb, post-fire there still is a high frequency of desirable. However, AIGs are increasing and expanding. The Rangeland Analysis Platform shows this area to be high in resistance and resilience and low cover of annual grasses (see attachment).

A fall aerial herbicide application will be applied to the entire project area and will reduce AIG competition in the short-term allowing for a release of native species on-site. A second herbicide application of smaller acres or spot herbicide applications for noxious weeds may be needed if it is observed that certain areas require additional control. Due to the low level of infestation it is not likely a second herbicide application will be needed. One year post herbicide the area may be drill seeded if it is observed that AIG areas were controlled but there was not a significant response of on-site desirable species. Response will be monitored through use of the RAP Platform, other remote sensing techniques, and site visits documenting pre-post AIG treatments.

The proposed seed mix to be used is Idaho fescue, bluebunch wheatgrass, Sandberg bluegrass, and Western yarrow.

**5. Project Timeline (Project funds awarded must be utilized 2 years + December**. I.e. funds awarded in July 2021 would expire in December 2023**) OPTIONAL: Include provided treatment scheduling timeline (excel format).**

Start date: 09/15/2021 End Date: 12/31/2022

What is the proposed project schedule? Elaborate below on each step of your project.

**See attached Treatment Table.**

Summer/Fall 21' – Establish monitoring plot locations, pre-herbicide treatment. Document conditions with photos.
Fall (Sep-Nov) 21' – Aerial herbicide treatment of imazapic at 5 ounces per acre on 1,151 acres.
Spring/Summer 22' – Grazing deferred. Evaluated treatment area using RAP and field assessments. Document effectiveness of herbicide treatment on annual grasses and noxious weeds. If noxious weeds are present, treat appropriately. Prior to fall, revisit site and determine if additional treatments are recommended.
Fall 22' – Implement a fall drill seeding or additional herbicide treatment if necessary. Continue to monitor and evaluate site.

**6. Permits**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Are permits needed for the project? | ○ Yes | ○ No | ◉ N/A |
| Will they be completed in time? | ○ Yes | ○ No | |
| List what permits are needed: | N/A | | |

**7. NEPA**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Is NEPA needed for this project? | ◉ Yes | ○ No |
| Has NEPA been completed? | ◉ Yes | ○ No |

**8. Maintenance:** Who will maintain the project, what aspects need to be maintained in the future and for how long?

| Who will maintain: | How will the project be maintained: | Duration of maintenance: |
|---|---|---|
| Private Landowner | Grazing deferment, photo monitoring, and potential re-treatment | 12 months post last treatment implementation. |
| | | |

**9. Post-Implementation Monitoring:** Provide additional information on how the project will be monitored to show effectiveness.

| Who will monitor: | How will the project be monitored: *photo points, line point, etc.* What variables are you monitoring for: *i.e. invasive/noxious species establishing/returning, juniper regrowth, seeding establishment/survival, etc.)* | Duration of monitoring: |
|---|---|---|
| Private Landowner | Site scale monitoring with 6 photo plots, landscape monitoring using Rangelands Analysis Platform. Additional Monitoring as required. | 15 months post initial herbicide implementation. |
| NRCS | Will assist in monitoring and additional treatment recommendations. | 15 months post initial herbicide implementation. |

**10. Year End Reports: Who is responsible for submitting yearly reports? (Due Dec. 31 each year of project)**

Name: _Tommy Tutone_____

Contact information: See above

**11. Technical Assistance:** Who will provide technical assistance to the project? Who will plan/design the project?

Name: Alex Webb – USFWS

Contact information: See above

**12. Preferred Funding Source:** There are multiple funding sources available (see table below for examples). Please **clearly** indicate whether you would like this application to be considered under a specific funder, or whether you have not preference.

NFWF and/or non-federal partners

**13. Project Partners:** Show all anticipated funding sources and indicate the dollar value for cash or in-kind (labor, equipment, fuel, materials, etc.). **Some funding sources require match – please include any financial or in-kind contributions from landowners!**

| **Funding Source:** *partner and contribution* | **Cash** | **In-Kind** | **Total** | **Match funding secured?** *Yes/No* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sage-grouse Actions Team | $ | $ | $ | ○ Yes ○ No |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NRCS | $ | $ | $ | ○ Yes ○ No |
| IDFG | $17,030 | $ | $17,030 | ◉ Yes ○ No |
| USFWS | $ | $ | $ | ○ Yes ○ No |
| NFWF | $75,000 | $ | $75,000 | ○ Yes ◉ No |
| Landowners | $10,000 | $15,000 | $25,000 | ◉ Yes ○ No |
| Other: _____ | $ | $ | $ | ○ Yes ○ No |
| Other: _____ | $ | $ | $ | ○ Yes ○ No |
| **Total estimated funds:** *add all amounts in far right column* | | | $117,030 | |

**Explain:** What project component/s will each source fund?

- 1st herbicide treatment 1,151 acres at $30/acre = $34,530
- 2nd possible herbicide treatment 500 acres at $30/acre = $15,000
- Possible drill seeding treatment 500 acres at $135/acre = $67,500
- Landowner to provide in kind labor and equipment for drill seeding (estimated $25,000)

Total project estimate cost up to = $117,030
Total funds requested = $92,030

Budget estimates for drill seeding are based on local contractor rates and past projects. The Budget estimate for Herbicide Application is based on NRCS Practice Code 315 – Herbaceous Weed Treatment for aerial herbicide application.
The Price of Native Seed is based off quotes from Idaho Seed Company.

## Part III – Project Budget (Use whole numbers, do not include cents)

| **Expense Category** | **No. of units** | **Unit Cost** | **Cheatgrass Challenge Team Funds** | **Cost Share:** *In-Kind/Cash (match)* | **Description**: *what will be purchased or done, who will provide the item/perform work* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Contracted Services:** *labor, supplies, materials and travel to be provided by non-staff for project information.* | | | | | |
| Aerial Herbicide Application | 1151 | $15 | $17265 | $ | Estimate of contracted rate for aerial herbicide application |
| 2nd Aerial Herbicide Application | 500 | $15 | $7500 | $ | Estimate of contracted rate for aerial herbicide application |
| Drill Seeding | | $ | $ | $25000 | Landowner to perform seeding labor with private tractor |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| **Subtotal (1)** | | | $24765 | $25000 | |
| **Materials and Supplies:** *refers to items that are purchased by or invoiced to the applicant, and are "used up" in the course of the project. Costs to the Actions Team must be directly related to the implementation of this grant.* | | | | | |
| Herbicide for aerial | 1151 | $15 | $17265 | $ | Imazapic and adjuvant for aerial application |
| Herbicide for 2nd Aerial | 500 | $15 | $7500 | $ | Imazapic and adjuvant for aerial application |
| Seed | 500 | $85 | $42500 | $ | Native seed mix |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| **Subtotal (2)** | | | $67265 | $ | |
| **Other:** *land use signature costs, project permit costs, small equipment repair, commercial equipment rental.* | | | | | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| | | $ | $ | $ | |
| **Subtotal (3)** | | | $92030 | $25000 | |
| **Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)** *Add subtotals 1-3* | | | $ | $ | |
| **Grant Administration:** *not to exceed 10% of MTDC.* | | | | | |
| **Grant Administration** | | | $ | $ | |
| **Project totals** | | | $92030 | $25000 | |

We, the undersigned, attest that to the best of our knowledge the information contained in this application is accurate and:

- The project funds awarded will be utilized Dec 1 two years after award (i.e. project awarded July 1 2021 would close Dec 1 2023.
- We understand that the submitted application is a matter of public record.

Also, should funding for this project be awarded we understand that:

- We may not incur any project expenses until all designated signatories have signed the grant agreement.
- We will be required to provide proper accounting of project expenses.
- We will be required to provide the necessary and normal maintenance to sustain the value of the project once it is completed.

By their signatures, the landowner(s) attest that they are authorized to sign as landowner, and they agree to provide, upon prior request and at a mutually acceptable time, site access to the applicant or representatives of the Cheatgrass Challenge for a period up to two years following project completion to allow project work to be implemented, monitored and maintained.

Applicant: _____ date: _____

Landowner: _____ date: _____

Landowner: _____ date: _____

Landowner: _____ date: _____

Landowner: _____ date: _____

Landowner: _____ date: _____

Landowner: _____ date: _____

Landowner: _____ date: _____

Supporting Agency Representative: _____ date: _____

Supporting Agency Representative: _____ date: _____

Supporting Agency Representative: _____ date: _____

Fiscal agent: _____ date: _____

## Project checklist:

☒ All maps and photos are attached to the application (required)

☒ Include a project shapefile or location pin for each project feature (required)

☒ Site drawings/diagrams/designs are included in the application submission (if applicable)

☒ Landowner, applicant, fiscal agent have signed the grant application (required)