



WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

# GRANT-IN-AID PRIORITY ESTABLISHMENT

## 2026

To more strategically address the needs of wild sheep and their habitats, during this GIA cycle, WSF will focus our efforts on the most critical, high-impact opportunities. These priorities have been carefully identified through collaboration with jurisdictions, WSF Chapters & Affiliates, WSF's Professional Resource Advisory Board (PRAB), and WSF Conservation Staff, ensuring these priorities reflect both on-the-ground realities and expert insight. By concentrating resources where they can be most effective, we aim to build healthier habitats and stronger wild sheep populations, ultimately increasing their resilience to environmental pressures and disease. These targeted priorities represent our true "needle movers" — the actions that will deliver the greatest, most lasting impact for wild sheep conservation.

## **Increase Resiliency of Wild Sheep and Wild Sheep Habitats**



# GIA PRIORITY ESTABLISHMENT | 2026

1. **Promote and support active habitat management on private, public, Indigenous and Tribal lands that creates a mosaic of ecologically appropriate vegetative communities or habitat features that benefit wild sheep.**
  - a. Apply active and aggressive habitat treatments (e.g., prescribed fire and timber/shrub management) to enhance forage quality and quantity and to restore grassland communities in areas where conifer (e.g., juniper) and shrub encroachment have diminished habitat quality.
  - b. Apply habitat interventions, including water development, water source enhancement, and associated monitoring systems, to counter changing environmental conditions known to be negatively affecting wild sheep.
  - c. Manage or remove exotic and invasive plant and animal species (e.g., exotic annual grasses, noxious weeds, feral horses and burros, and aoudad) that negatively affect wild sheep habitats.
    - i. Apply treatments (e.g., mechanical or chemical) and develop new approaches to treat cheatgrass and other invasive plants at a meaningful scale.
    - ii. Undertake actions to reduce invasive and feral ungulate densities in important areas used by wild sheep.
2. **Collaborate with private landowners, Tribal/Indigenous managers, and federal/state/provincial/territorial wildlife managers, considering the best source herds and ecotypes, to augment existing wild sheep herds, establish new herds, and/or re-establish wild sheep herds in suitable habitats.**
  - a. Utilize translocations to manage/augment populations and create herds in suitable habitats.
  - b. Identify and help create healthy source herds that can be used to support population recoveries and translocations.
3. **Develop approaches to recover wild sheep from respiratory and other pathogens, parasites, and health challenges.**
  - a. Investigate immunity and other biological characteristics of wild sheep populations to understand the key factors allowing their persistence.
    - i. Examine the health and disease responses of remnant, native populations of wild sheep that have persisted despite exposure to respiratory pathogens.
    - ii. Investigate characteristics of chronic Movi carriers that may allow persistence in the face of disease.
  - b. Develop secure, safe, and effective captive facilities and protocols to mitigate impacts of respiratory and other diseases.
  - c. Develop and test active or passive disease prevention and/or treatment protocols that could be used in domestic, captive, and free-range wild sheep settings.
  - d. Develop trials to evaluate benefits and impacts of trace mineral supplementation.
4. **Develop and implement targeted predator management that improves survival, recruitment and resilience of predation-suppressed herds, and proactively protects restored, augmented, or anticipated herds.**