

Wyoming Bighorn Sheep- Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group



A Brief History

WGFD-WY-WSF Bighorn Sheep Summit
6/18/2021

Wyoming Bighorn Sheep-Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group

- Convened by Governor Jim Geringer & Senator Craig Thomas
- February, 2000
- 52 Attendees (federal & state land & wildlife management agencies, domestic sheep producers, congressional staff, county officials, environmental organizations, agricultural producer groups, media)

It is the goal of the Wyoming Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group to maintain healthy bighorn sheep populations while sustaining an economically viable domestic sheep industry in Wyoming.

Final Report and Recommendations

from the

Wyoming

State-wide Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Interaction

Working Group

Terms of Agreement

Recommendations

September 2004

Now Wyoming Statute 11-19-604

Terms of Agreement (a partial list)

- The domestic sheep industry is important to Wyoming and should be protected; this includes protection and stability of grazing allotments and management changes only on a willing permittee basis, not under a sense of urgency or duress.
- Bighorn sheep are important to Wyoming and should be protected and enhanced in terms of numbers, health, and distribution.

Terms of Agreement (continued)

- Zero risk of disease is unattainable, but management can reduce risk and stress.
- There is a need for open, non-inflammatory communication. There is a risk of disease transmission, but rhetorical dialogue and interchange among all parties on degrees of risk is not beneficial or desirable.
- Existing and/or potential conflicts between domestic and both core native and transplanted bighorn sheep should not be used as surrogate issues to force or effect resource management decisions; the retirement, reduction, or removal of grazing allotments and management changes should be only on a willing permittee basis, not under a sense of urgency or duress.
- No net loss of domestic sheep industry AUM's in Wyoming is an important goal. While that may not be achievable in every given retirement, reduction, or removal of grazing allotments or management change, an honest effort to achieve that goal will be made in every case, with the economic viability of the individual permittee and the industry as the foremost concerns.

PRIORITIZATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP HERDS BIGHORN SHEEP MANAGEMENT AREAS

- **Bighorn Sheep Core, Native Herds**
- **Cooperative Review Areas**
- **Bighorn Sheep Non-Emphasis Areas**
- **Bighorn Sheep Non-Management Areas**

Wyoming Bighorn Sheep-Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group

Wyoming Bighorn Sheep Management Areas

CORE NATIVE HERDS

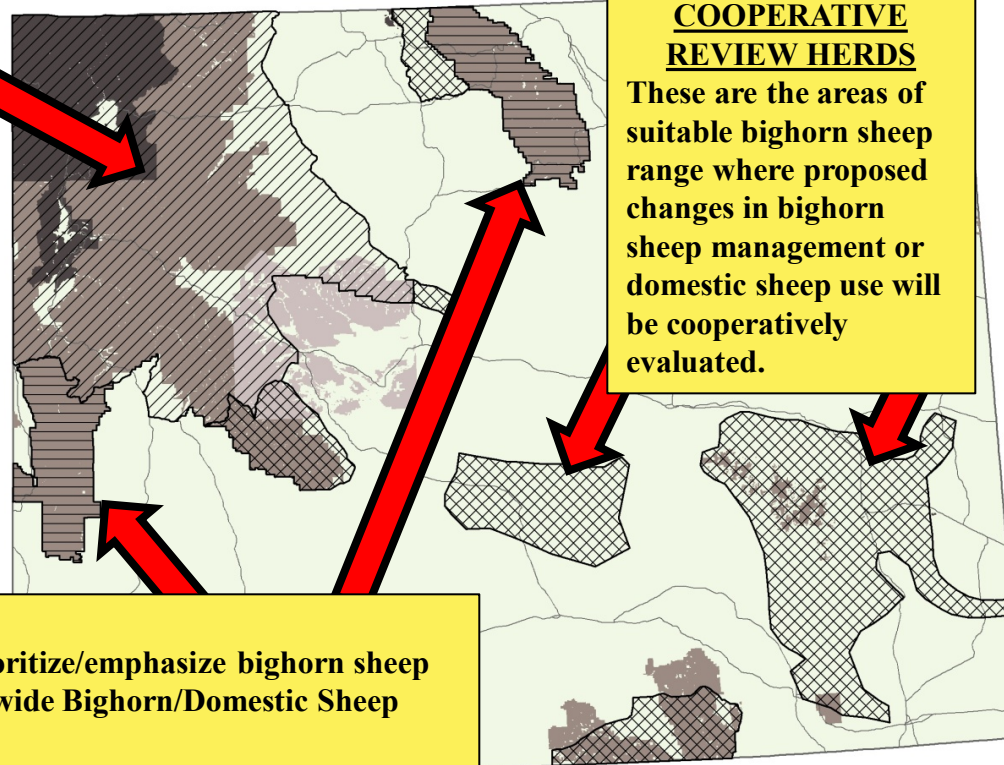
All efforts will be made to prevent contact between bighorn and domestic sheep, as agreed to by the Statewide Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group.

NON-EMPHASIS HERDS

No effort will be made to prioritize/emphasize bighorn sheep unless agreed to by the Statewide Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group. Any existing bighorn sheep populations will not be protected at the expense of domestic sheep grazing.

COOPERATIVE REVIEW HERDS

These are the areas of suitable bighorn sheep range where proposed changes in bighorn sheep management or domestic sheep use will be cooperatively evaluated.



Legend

- Bighorn Sheep Core Native Herds
- Cooperative Review Areas
- Bighorn Sheep Non-Emphasis Areas
- Land Ownership**
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Major Roads

Areas not specified are considered Bighorn Sheep Non-Management Areas

Updated January 2015



0 25 50 100 Miles

Appendix M

DEFINITIONS – BIGHORN SHEEP MANAGEMENT AREAS

Bighorn Sheep Core, Native Herds

- These are Wyoming's largest bighorn sheep populations
- These are the highest priority areas for bighorn sheep management in Wyoming
- These herds have never been extirpated, then reestablished via transplants. They include the Clarks Fork, Trout Peak, Wapiti Ridge, Younts Peak, Francs Peak, Targhee, Jackson and whiskey Mountain Herds.
- These sheep herds occur in the Teton, Absaroka, Gros Ventre and Wind River Ranges.
- Domestic sheep may occur within the boundaries of the core, native bighorn sheep herds. All efforts will be made to prevent contact between bighorn and domestic sheep, as agreed to by the Statewide Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group.

Cooperative Review Areas

- These are the areas of suitable bighorn sheep range where proposed changes in bighorn sheep management or domestic sheep use will be cooperatively evaluated.
- This includes most suitable bighorn sheep range in Wyoming not addressed in the core, native herds or non-emphasis areas.

Bighorn Sheep Non-Emphasis Areas

- These are the lowest priority areas for bighorn sheep management.
- These include the Wyoming, Salt River and Bighorn Ranges on National Forest.
- No effort will be made to prioritize/emphasize bighorn sheep unless agreed to by the statewide Domestic/Bighorn Sheep Interaction/Working Group.
- Any existing bighorn sheep populations will not be protected at the expense of domestic sheep grazing.

Bighorn Sheep Non-Management Areas

- These areas are outside of identified management areas
- Bighorn sheep area permitted to occur in these areas, but are not actively encouraged.
- Wandering bighorn sheep with known, suspected, or potential contact with domestic sheep, with likelihood of subsequent contact with established bighorn sheep populations, should be captured/removed from the wild.

Wyo. Stat. § 11-19-604

Wyoming Statutes Annotated
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*** This document is current through 2014 Legislative Session, with 2015 Legislative amendments included for Titles 1-10 ***

Title 11 Agriculture, Livestock and Other Animals
Chapter 19 Contagious and Infectious Diseases Among Livestock
Article 6. Wildlife/Livestock Disease Research Partnership

Wyo. Stat. § 11-19-604 (2015)

11-19-604. Wyoming bighorn/domestic sheep plan.

(a) The Wyoming bighorn/domestic sheep plan shall be developed and maintained by rule and regulation as provided in this section to address potential conflicts arising out of the interaction between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep within the state. The final report and recommendations from the Wyoming state-wide bighorn/domestic sheep interaction working group dated September 2004 together with appendices A through N as adopted by the group is adopted as the initial Wyoming bighorn/domestic sheep plan under this section and shall continue as revised or amended until repealed or nullified pursuant to law.

(b) Rules and regulations necessary to administer this article shall be promulgated jointly by the game and fish commission, the board of agriculture and the livestock board. The game and fish commission, the board of agriculture and the livestock board may jointly consider recommendations for changes to the plan and may revise or amend the plan through the rulemaking process pursuant to the Wyoming Administrative Procedure Act.

(c) The goal of the Wyoming bighorn/domestic sheep plan shall be to maintain the health of bighorn sheep populations while sustaining an economically viable domestic sheep population.

(d) The most current version of the Wyoming bighorn/domestic sheep plan shall be published on the website of the game and fish commission.

(e) In conformance with the Wyoming bighorn/domestic sheep plan the game and fish department may relocate or remove bighorn sheep to another area of the state if a federal judicial action or agency decision would require elimination of domestic sheep grazing in any area or herd unit designated in the Wyoming bighorn/domestic sheep plan as a nonemphasis herd. The game and fish department shall be reimbursed for the costs of relocation or removal of sheep under this subsection from funds available in the wildlife/livestock disease research partnership account.

HISTORY: Laws 2015, ch. 141, § 1.