

VERY ROUGH DRAFT

**Bighorn Sheep (BHS) – Domestic Sheep (DS) Interaction Working Group (IWG)
Ideas for Memorandum of Understanding Between the Working Group, the State of
Wyoming, and the Bureau of Land Management
11/12/2021**

- **Define Area of Interest**
 - Bighorn Sheep habitat/Area
 - specific acreages/land ownerships of suitable BHS habitat
 - specific acreages/land ownerships within “wild sheep zone” and land
 - Domestic sheep operation area affected
 - Acreages of use/land ownerships
 - Current allotments and status
 - What would change in private land ownership look like?

- **Potential BHS Transplant Proposal**
 - Summarize (or append) Habitat assessment and Risk of Contact Model
 - Specific number of BHS to be translocated
 - Transplant release site
 - Source population
 - Disease testing
 - Process
 - Future Transplants?
 - BHS specific population objective/goal
 - Best available science from habitat assessment and risk of contact model, while achieving highest likelihood of separation without displacing domestic sheep opportunities in this area.
 - population objective changes/reassessment must be reviewed by IWG
 - Mechanism of BHS/DS separation
 - Director Nesvik/WGFD letter
 - WGFD BHS population management through removals to maintain physical separation
 - Define removal triggers and process (consideration for WSA)
 - WGFD Letter: Assurance that if any group attempts to use BHS as a means to implement “detrimental” grazing changes in the Sweetwater Rocks area, WGFD will remove BHS from this area.
 - definitions/examples of when a removal would be made under this assurance
 - Show benefit of this proposal to maintaining healthy BHS populations statewide
 - Show potential benefits to Ag Community through cooperative process

- **Current Policy/Assurances**
 - BLM National Policy/Manual – add language that updates or addresses it
 - Manual 1730; 1.6 policy section
 - Must achieve separation of BHS/DS
 - Onus of separation on WGFD
 - Manual direction on wildlife
 - Lander RMP
 - Grazing Standard/Guidelines
 - Permit language
 - changes to current BLM permit language?
 - be consistent with our final MOU
 - Trailing language specific to BLM permittees
 - What assurances are needed?
 - Wildlife Standards/Guidelines
 - Table 2.14.4000
 - Support for optimizing distribution of native wildlife
 - “Goal BR: 10 Manage for quality habitats that would support the introduction, reintroduction, and augmentation of identified high-priority fish and wildlife species on BLM administered lands.”
 - “Objective BR: 10.1 Identify opportunities with stakeholders to introduce or reintroduce fish & wildlife species.”
 - Wildlife Connectivity
 - Connectivity language about genetically viable BHS populations which is used by the Forest Service (WY Greater Sage-Grouse Executive Order notices connectivity as well) – address by adding language regarding WGFD’s separate herd units and the reason why BHS don’t need that connectivity habitat
 - WGFD Policy/guidance
 - Wyoming Plan
 - Reiterate the cooperative review process
 - Recognize Wyoming plan is in statute

Specific Commitments of signatories

- In relation to the WY Plan
- Specific to this MOU

Notes:

- WGFD will need to write management criteria/regulations/recommendations for the Sweetwater Rocks BHS habitat – what does this mean for the MOU: include? Reference?

- Devil's Canyon in the Bighorn Mountain Range is a solid example of how the WGFD should manage the proposed Sweetwater Rocks herd
- Director Nesvik's commitment letter should be included or added as an appendix
 - Onus of separation back onto WGFD vs. BLM
 - define triggers for wild sheep removal
 - political or physical and define
 - define removal process (especially given WSA status)

Grazing BLM language being revised; therefore, this MOU effort is timely and may have an impact in the national BLM grazing language revision.

WPLI Senate Bill with Senator Barrasso if passed could change land status and management protocols.

Sub-group meeting – December 12; 2-4 pm; Casper

References:

BLM Manual 1730:

https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/uploads/ManagementofDomesticSheepandGoatstoSustainWildSheep_Manual1730.pdf

Lander BLM RMP:

https://eplanning.blm.gov/public_projects/18602/200032340/20034862/250041060/Lander_RMP_OD_PDF_as%20maintained%202021.pdf