



The RamPAGE

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation

FALL 2012

Photo credit: Joni Miller, Lander



Mark Your Calendars for Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 2012!
WY-WSF Winter Meeting
Days Inn, Thermopolis, WY (more info on page 6)
Hope to See You There!! Bring A Friend!

2012-2013 Calendar of Events

November 3, 2012 19th Annual Fundraiser
National Bighorn Sheep Interpretive Center, Dubois

November 30-December 2, 2012 Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Winter Meeting
Days Inn Safari Club, Thermopolis

January 9-12, 2013 Grand Slam Club/Ovis Convention
Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, NV

January 30-February 2, 2013 Wild Sheep Foundation Convention
Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, NV

May 31-June 1, 2013 Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Convention
Parkway Plaza, Casper, WY

Cover Photo: WY-WSF Life Member #172 Mack Miller with his 2012 northeast British Columbia Stone ram, taken with Tuchodi River Outfitters. Mack and Joni (WY-WSF Treasurer/Life Member #247) capitalized on a short-notice cancellation hunt, to chase their dream (story on pages 20-21)

Interested in advertising 2X/year in *The Rampage*? If so, please see ad rates below. Due dates for ads to be included in the semi-annual *Rampage* are October 15th and March 15th. Get your message out 2X/year to 850+ wild sheep enthusiasts!!

Wyoming WSF Board & Membership Meetings

Wyoming WSF holds its winter board/membership meeting on the first Saturday of December and summer convention/board/membership meeting the first Saturday in June. Details and locations are listed in the Calendar of Events and online at www.wyomingwildsheep.org.

Funding requests for consideration at the winter board meeting are due no later than Nov. 1. Funding requests for consideration at the summer board meeting are due no later than May 1.

The Grant-In-Aid request form is available on the Wyoming WSF website www.wyomingwildsheep.org.

Contact address:

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation
P.O. Box 666
Cody, WY 82414
E-mail: info@wyomingwildsheep.org

WYOMING WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

The **R**amPAGE Newsletter

FULL COLOR ADVERTISING RATES

Full-Page \$250 (\$200/issue, 2 issues)

1/2-Page \$150 (\$125/issue, 2 issues)

1/4-Page \$70 (\$50/issue, 2 issues)

1/8-Page \$50 (\$40/issue, 2 issues)

Donations netting WY-WSF >\$500 entitle donor to a free 1/4-page ad in each issue of *The Rampage*.

Ads must be received in camera-ready .jpg format by 10/15 & 3/15!!



2012-13 Wyoming WSF Officers & Board of Directors

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Doug.McWhirter@wyo.gov

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E-mail:
blayne@wildsheepfoundation.o
rg

Wanted: Your E-mail Address!!

Wyoming WSF is looking for e-mail addresses from our membership so that we can convey important information and communications in the timeliest manner possible (e.g., E-Newsletters). If you have not submitted an e-mail address or need to update the one we have on file, please send it to info@wyomingwildsheep.org.

Wyoming WSF will not share your e-mail address with third parties, nor will you receive solicitations or "spam" from our organization.

WY-WSF President's Message

Past Presidents

1983	Dave Steger
1984	Dave Steger
1985	Dave Steger
1986	Ron Ball
1987	Ed Novotny
1988	Ed Novotny
1989	Dave Steger
1990	Dave Steger
1991	Jack Hildner
1992	Jack Hildner
1993	Ron Ball
1994	Ron Ball
1995	Ron Ball
1996	Ron Ball
1997	Jim Collins
1998	Jim Collins
1999	Jim Collins
2000	Jim Collins
2001-2002	Cole Benton
2002-2003	Cole Benton
2003-2004	Cole Benton
2004-2005	Cole Benton
2005-2006	Cole Benton
2006-2007	Cole Benton
2007-2008	Bob Sundeen
2008-2009	Bob Sundeen
2009-2010	Jack Morey
2010-2011	Bob Sundeen
2011-2012	Mike Porter
2012-2013	Mike Porter

Hunting season is in full swing and hopefully you are making time to enjoy the great outdoors. After a long season of dry weather and forest fires, Wyoming is finally getting A LITTLE rain and snow, every little bit helps.

I have seen some tremendous rams being harvested around the state. It would appear that ram quality continues to grow as hunters are taking older rams. There is a report of a 14-year old ram being harvested this year, along with many other fantastic rams with large bases and long horn lengths.

The 2012 WY-WSF Convention in Casper was a tremendous success. Total expenses were \$72,604 and total income was \$164,168 with a net income of \$91,564. This represents an \$18,643 dollar increase from 2011, which was the previous best NET banquet. Thank you to all of our sponsors, members, board, and staffer Kevin Hurley.

The WY-WSF board has been active in allocating funds to benefit wild sheep. Projects funded between June-October 2012 totaled \$31,900; this represents 9 projects that directly benefit bighorn sheep, primarily in Wyoming. Thank you.

The WY-WSF winter meeting is scheduled for November 30 – December 2 at the Days Inn Safari Club in Thermopolis, WY. Jim & Cindy Collins have organized a great weekend. Please see the announcement on page 6 of this *Rampage*; please plan to attend, and bring a hunting buddy or friend who are not yet members. There will be many activities for kids including pheasant hunts, swimming, and mock wildlife forensics/crime scene investigations.

Also in June, your Board organized and passed the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Endowment. If you are working on your estate plan or would like to donate a **tax-deductible gift by year's end, please consider the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation.** If you are trying to manage your tax situations by year-end, with the proposed tax rate changes, WY-WSF can also accept real estate and securities in kind.

WY-WSF is experiencing many great things. Membership has grown to over 750 members, 14 new Life Members joined during 2012, we have a fantastic relationship with **Gray Thornton and WSF National, we've worked hard to establish strong partnerships** with WSF Chapters and Affiliates around the U.S. and Canada, and we have a great Executive Director (part-time) in Kevin Hurley, who continues to make a true difference for our chapter and for wild sheep. I also want to thank WGF Commissioner Mike Healy and Commissioner Ed Mignery (who is out hunting sheep, in HA 3, as I write this!) for donating Commissioner licenses for 2013. These licenses are essential to WY-WSF fundraising and our continued success.

Please remember, grab your favorite little hunting buddy and take them to the field to experience **Wyoming's great outdoors. I can't say enough, "THANK YOU", to everyone for your generous support of bighorn sheep, in Wyoming, and beyond.**

Sincerely, Michael J. Porter (Life Member
#323)
WY-WSF President



WY-WSF Executive Director's Message

I hope all our members have had a great summer and fall, and that many of you are chasing something out **in the mountains or in the sagebrush, as I write this message. I know I've had a good summer/fall (story on page 32)**, especially hunting Stone sheep in the Yukon with my son Kyle. What a fantastic trip/hunt/adventure! Lifetime memories, for sure.

As Mike indicated in his President's message, fall 2012 has seen some exceptional rams taken across Wyoming. While some areas may be a bit "off", most hunt areas are cranking out some great rams, for both resident and non-resident hunters lucky enough to have drawn a sheep license. At the winter meeting, WGFers will have preliminary 2012 harvest figures to share with attendees.

Speaking of our winter meeting (please see page 6, for details!), Jim Collins has been busy (between hunts!) making arrangements; this should be a great event, so plan on coming, and bring along a friend **who's not already a WY-WSF member**, and bring some kids/grandkids. Pay particular attention to the 3 pheasant hunts Jim is arranging for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings. Space is very limited, so get your name in to reserve a slot!


As always, lots going on in the bighorn sheep world. The WY-WSF Officers and Board of Directors are **fully-engaged in many topics involving bighorns in Wyoming, and beyond the state's borders. As Directors, the Board needs to hear from the membership if they've got an issue in mind that needs some care and attention. You know I'll help in any way I can, as well.**

Any NGO is only as strong as its membership and its budget, so please continue to help strengthen both. We had a great convention/fundraiser in Casper in June, are already working on the June 2013 event, and are hoping for a great turnout at our Thermop winter meeting by our members and others interested in **Wyoming's bighorn sheep. Hope to see many of you there! Have a great and successful fall!!**




WY-WSF Executive Director Kevin Hurley (Life Member #20)

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WY-WSF WINTER MEETING/BANQUET EXTRAVAGANZA

Days Inn Safari Club, Thermopolis Nov 30, Dec. 1 & 2, 2012

Friday November 30

8:00 to noon **Pheasant hunt ***

1:00 to 5:00 PM WY WSF Board meeting

5:30 till ? Hors d'oeuvres and games in the bar

Saturday December 1

8:00 till Noon **Pheasant hunt ***

1:00 till 4:00 PM Membership Winter Meeting (including funding)

1:00 till 4:00 PM **Wildlife Crime Scene Investigation (CSI), for kids 10 and up ****

5:30 bar opens and 6:00 Banquet/Auction/Fundraiser

Sunday December 2

8:00 till Noon **Pheasant hunt ***

*** Pheasant hunts will have two 5-person squads per morning. Cost is \$60 for adult, \$45 for youth 18 and under, which includes 3 birds per hunter (15 birds per squad). Bird dogs will be available. Clay pigeon shooting will be available prior to the hunt, to get warmed up! Furnish your own shotgun & shells. All hunters must meet Wyoming hunter safety requirements, and all hunters over 14 are required to have a Wyoming game bird license. Squads will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Youth numbers per squad will be limited. Get signed up now!!**

**** Wildlife CSI is being conducted by WGFD Thermopolis Game Warden Bengé Brown; Pre registration is greatly appreciated!**

A block of rooms is being held (till November 16) under WY-WSF @ \$81.60/night; please call Days Inn Safari Club, Thermopolis (307-864-3131) to make your room reservation!

The Saturday banquet is \$40.00/person if paid by November 23, or \$45.00 at the door. Send payment for banquet and pheasant hunt to WY-WSF, P.O. Box 666, Cody, WY 82414, or email info@wyomingwildsheep.org. You can also call WY-WSF Vice President Jim Collins (307-864-3929 or 307-921-0443) or WY-WSF Executive Director Kevin Hurley (307-578-8613 or 307-899-9375) for further info.

WY-WSF members will have a discount available at the TEEPEE POOLS; soak & play!!

At press time, we are checking the availability of the Wyoming Dinosaur Center for Sunday. We're also investigating a possible Sunday morning Wind River Canyon bighorn sheep viewing/field trip. Stay tuned for more information!

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation

2013 Wyoming Game & Fish Commissioners License Raffle

Tickets \$100.00 each; Only 300 tickets!!

*1st PRIZE: WYOMING GAME & FISH COMMISSIONERS
ELK, DEER, OR PRONGHORN 2013 LICENSE*

(Donated by WGF Commissioner Mike Healy, Worland)

2nd Prize: 7 Day Caribbean Cruise

3rd Prize: Ruger No. 1 Sporter 300 WIN MAG Rifle

4th Prize: Ruger M77 Hawkeye 7mm Remington Magnum Rifle

5th Prize: Ruger SR1911 .45 ACP Pistol

6th Prize: Nikon 10 X 42 Monarch 7 Binoculars

7th Prize: Nikon 4 X 16 Monarch Rifle Scope

8th Prize: Nikon RifleHunter 1000 Laser Range Finder

9th Prize: GoPro HD Hero2 11MP Outdoor Edition Camera

10th Prize: Kindle Fire

Drawing will be held June 1, 2013 at the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation annual banquet in Casper, Wyoming. Winners need not be present to win. For more information, and to order tickets online, please visit the WY-WSF web site: <http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org>

OR

For tickets, contact: WY-WSF, P.O. Box 666, Cody, WY 82414 (Phone): 307-899-9375
info@wyomingwildsheep.org

Commissioners License is good for Elk or Deer or Pronghorn in Wyoming, and is independent of regular WGFD license draw. Winners are responsible for all applicable license fees and taxes. Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Board of Directors members are eligible to participate in all fundraising activities.



Through the generosity of Larry & Brenda Pottterfield and MidwayUSA, a 4-rifle battery of Winchester Super Grade rifles was fully-donated to WY-WSF, then live-auctioned at the WY-WSF banquet in Casper in early June 2012. Purchased by longtime supporters William D. “Butch” Townsend III (Life Member #177) and Kathy Townsend (Life Member #200) for \$10,000, and by agreement with the Scholastic Shooting Trust Fund and MidwayUSA Foundation, 50% of the funds raised from the sale of this rifle battery were returned to, and matched 3:1 by, the MidwayUSA Foundation, in the name of a shooting organization to be selected by WY-WSF.



In a great show of support for Wyoming's 4-H Shooting Sports program, both the WY-WSF \$5,000 share, along with an \$8,500 share (50%) from WSF's sale of the same rifle battery at the 2012 WSF Reno Sheep Show, were sent to the MidwayUSA Foundation, in the name of the Wyoming 4-H Shooting Sports Program. This \$13,500 donation, matched 3:1 by MidwayUSA Foundation, turned into \$54,000 for Wyoming's 4-H Shooting Sports Program! Then, in an incredible turn of events, the Wyoming 4H Shooting Sports Program was able to raise \$50,000 of their own funds, and by submitting those dollars to the MidwayUSA Foundation, that \$50K was tripled, to a whopping \$200,000!!

Deposited permanently into the Scholastic Shooting Trust Fund, what now totals \$254,000 is available to the Wyoming 4-H Shooting Sports Program via an annual grant for up to 5% of the fund balance. This endowment will help ensure that Wyoming's 4-H Shooting Sports Program, and its network of youth shooters, adult instructors, and program volunteers will have a permanent source of revenue to maintain and/or expand shooting and related opportunities for Wyoming youth in all 23 counties and on the Wind River Reservation.

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation thanks the Potterfields, MidwayUSA, the Townsends, the Wild Sheep Foundation, Johnathan Despain and Steve Mack of the Wyoming 4-H Program, and everyone who helped make this happen! In Chemistry class, they always talk about catalysts, that make “other things” happen; in this case, WY-WSF was a real catalyst!!



In late August, the 2012 Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) Western Regional shotgun competition was held at the Cody Shooting Complex. More than a dozen western states, from as far away as Alaska and Arizona, were represented by teenage boy and girl shotgunners, their coaches, team mentors, parents, family members, and friends. Participants not only spent 3 days competing, they also enjoyed rodeo, dancing, whitewater rafting, museums, and fun amenities offered in Cody Country.

Guest of honor was the only two-time repeat skeet shooting Olympic gold medalist, Sgt. Vincent Hancock, a member of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning, GA. Winning an Olympic gold medal in Beijing in 2008, then repeating as gold medalist in London this past summer. Vince is an alumnus of the SCTP program, and once he leaves military service, he and his father Craig will be running the Hancock Shooting Academy, to assist young shooters turn their dreams into reality. What an honor and a privilege for these aspiring shotgun shooters to spend time, shoot, and visit with such a down-to-Earth Olympic champion.

Wild Sheep Foundation President and CEO Gray Thornton (WY-WSF Life Member #342), WY-WSF Board member Dan Hinz (Life Member #182), and WSF Conservation Director and WY-WSF Executive Director Kevin Hurley (Life Member #20) were on hand throughout the 3-day event. Using some of the proceeds derived via the sale of the MidwayUSA "Nearly Perfect Rifle Battery", WY-WSF and WSF co-sponsored more than 200 team and individual awards, in a variety of categories and shooting events. A great event for all!!!



Mule Deer Foundation M.U.L.E.Y. Coordinator Jon Zinnel and WSF President & CEO Gray Thornton bracket some of the young women and men shotgun winners during the 2012 SCTP Western Regional Shotgun Competition held in Cody in late August.

Mark Your Calendars for our 2013 Annual Convention
May 31-June 1, 2013, Parkway Plaza, Casper



(For WY-WSF office use only)

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Date: ____/____/____

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307-578-8613

info@wyomingwildsheep.org

www.wyomingwildsheep.org

If you know someone who might be interested/willing to make a donation to WY-WSF, please provide them with one of these donation forms, and ask that they make contact (info@wyomingwildsheep.org) no later than May 15, 2013!!

Volunteers Provide a Cool Drink for Wildlife
 Ryan Amundson, WGFD Wheatland Habitat Biologist &
 Will Schultz, WGFD Saratoga Wildlife Biologist

On July 14, 2012, a dedicated group of 17 volunteers from all over the state of Wyoming, representing the Bowhunters of Wyoming and the Wyoming Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation, helped Wyoming Game and Fish Department personnel develop a new water source for wildlife high atop the Bennett Mountains in the Seminoe Range of central Wyoming. The **group installed what is known as a water “guzzler.” Guzzlers work by collecting water from rain and melting snow in a large plastic collection apron, and storing it in a 1,800 gallon holding tank.** The tank is covered by a lid to minimize evaporation, with the exception of a small opening where wildlife can obtain water for drinking. Once the guzzler is full of water, it will provide a source of summer drinking water for a variety of wildlife. The guzzler and collection apron are protected from livestock use through installation of a 3-wire exclusion fence, that still allows passage by big game species to utilize the drinker. Wyoming Game and Fish **Department Habitat Biologist Ryan Amundson explained, “There are a number of mule deer, elk, and bighorn sheep which frequent this area because of the excellent forage. However, there are no reliable summer water sources at this elevation, and the animals must travel back down the mountain to Seminoe Reservoir or the North Platte River in order to obtain water. Wildlife can expend a lot of energy searching for water and they can also become more susceptible to predation in the process.”**

The guzzler project was developed cooperatively by the Rawlins Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The BLM’s Engineering and Operations staff delivered the guzzler kit to the mountain, and utilized their heavy equipment to prepare the project site for the team of volunteers. Funding for the guzzler tank, collection apron, and fence was granted by several organizations including: Bowhunters of Wyoming, Wyoming Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Water for Wildlife Foundation, and the Wyoming Governor’s Big Game License Coalition. Susan Barrett, a BOW volunteer who traveled from Dayton to help out on the weekend project stated, **“Helping out on projects like this is just another way we can give something back to the wildlife resources we enjoy so much.”**





Volunteers from BOW and WY-WSF, along with WGFD and Rawlins BLM personnel, hard at work on a hot day in mid-July 2012, installing the Bennett Hills water collection apron and guzzler, and erecting protective fencing.

Remind you of a prison chain gang?? Well done all, and thank you!!



A Landowner's Guide to Fences and Wildlife

Practical Tips to Make Your Fences Wildlife Friendly

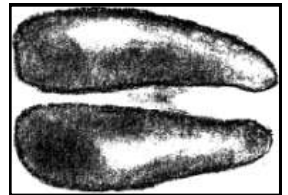
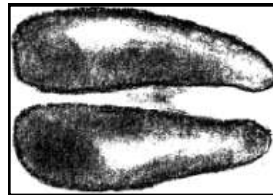
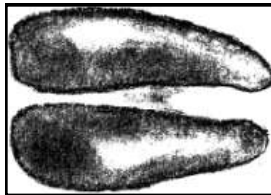
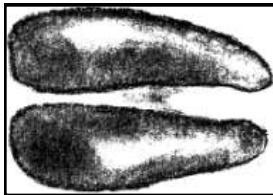
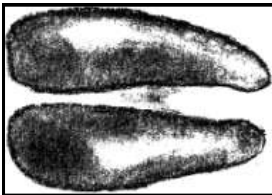


In June 2011, the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation board and membership approved a \$1,000 grant-in-aid request to the Wyoming Land Trust, to help in development and publication of this Landowner's Guide to Fences and Wildlife. We're pleased and proud to have assisted with this valuable and important publication. WY-WSF has 150 copies of this 52-page report, which we would like to share with our members. If you are interested in an electronic version (.pdf) of this publication, or if you would like to receive complimentary hard copy(ies) to share with landowners you know and neighbor, please contact WY-WSF (info@wyomingwildsheep.org) to request these!!

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Squaw Mountain Cheatgrass Control Project Completed in Southeast Wyoming Ryan Amundson, WGFD Habitat Biologist, Wheatland

In August 2011, over 15,000 acres burned in a wildfire southwest of Wheatland, encompassing most of Squaw Mountain; the fire burned with high intensity in many portions of the mountain. Approximately 5,000 acres were previously burned in July 1994. Following that 1994 wildfire, cheatgrass invasion was very high on south-facing slopes. Knowing that the 2011 fire burned with similar intensity and on many of the same slopes, plans were put in place to spray *Plateau* herbicide for control of cheatgrass, post-fire. Unfortunately, 2012 will go down on record as one of the driest ever, with less than 2" of moisture for the year recorded on Squaw Mountain. While the lack of precipitation during spring/summer 2012 did not aid in vegetation recovery, it did slow down the growth of cheatgrass, post-fire. Areas of known cheatgrass infestations and slopes considered at-risk were evaluated through the summer months, and in early September 2012, 5,000 acres of south-facing aspects on BLM and private lands were sprayed with a helicopter at 6 oz. /acre rate. *Plateau* herbicide, applied as a pre-emergent, works by prohibiting germination of cheatgrass seed. Two years of effective cheatgrass control are expected, so by 2015 we hope that native, perennial vegetation that has re-established will be able to naturally out-compete the more aggressive, annual (vs. perennial) cheatgrass.

Squaw Mountain serves as crucial winter range for mule deer, and several hundred deer utilize the area every year. Bighorn sheep are found within close proximity of Squaw Mountain, and post-wildfire, habitat conditions have greatly improved for bighorns, as dense conifer stands were removed. Steep, rugged terrain is found throughout the mountain, and fits what bighorns are looking for in escape- and foraging-habitat. The WGFD will continue to monitor the area frequently, as bighorns are likely to begin to utilize the area in the near future.

Partners contributing technical and financial resources to the project include the Wyoming Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation, BLM (Casper Field Office), Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Platte County Weed and Pest, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, Cross C Ranch, and Gittaway Ranch.



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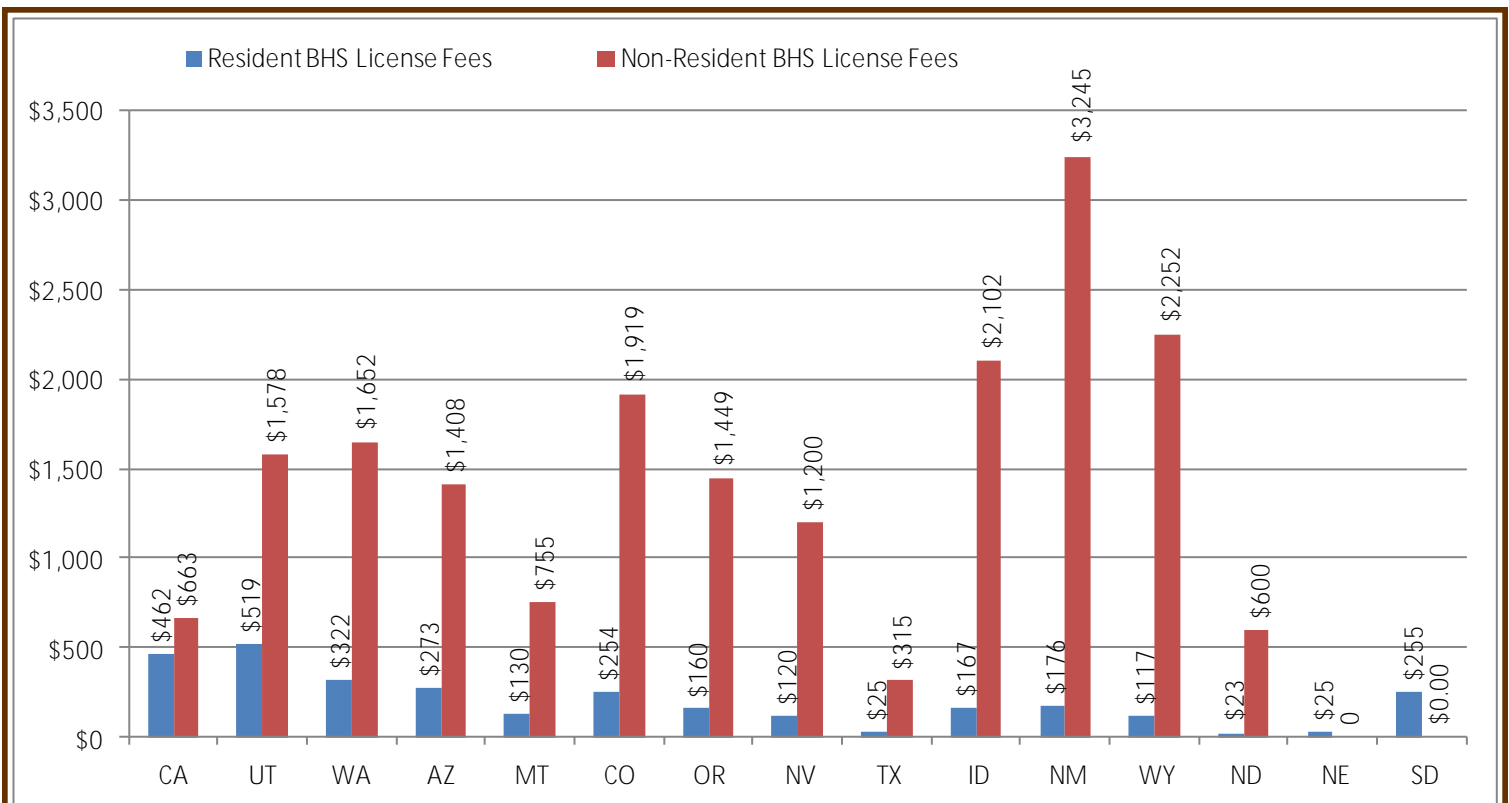
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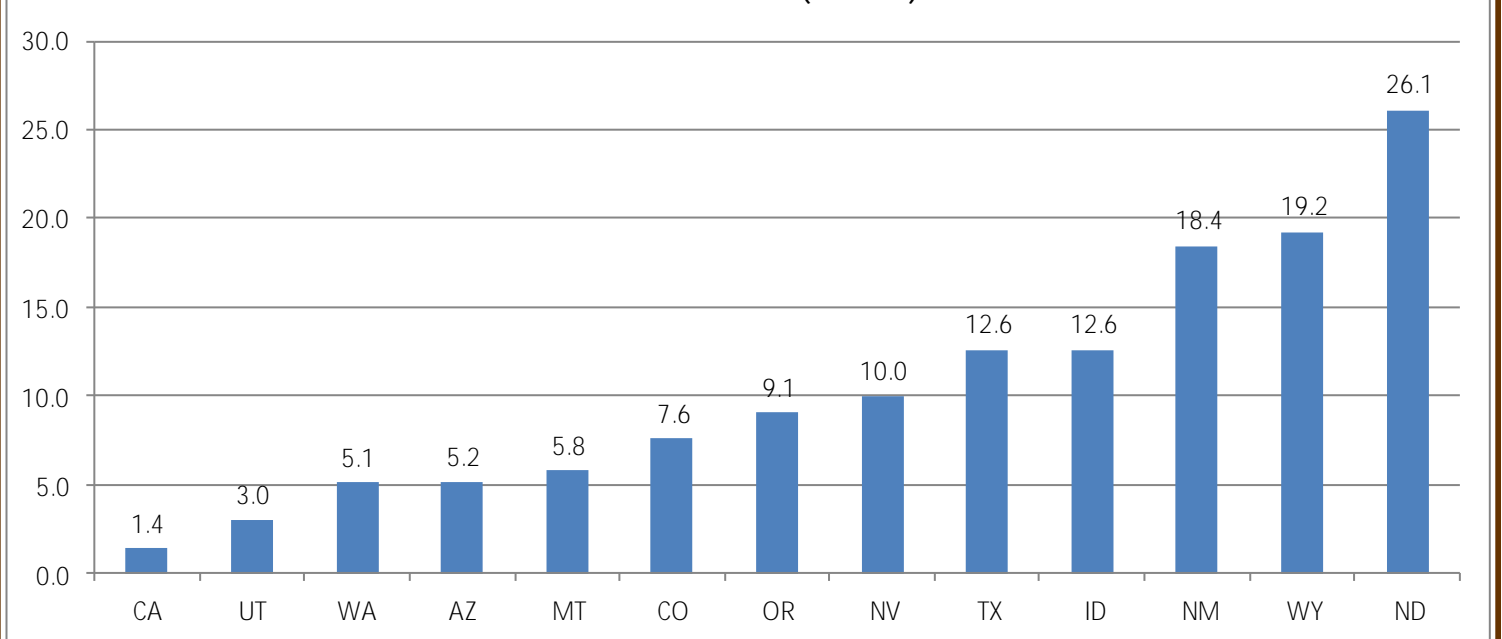




To assist the WY-WSF Board in their consideration of the WGFD Funding Initiative and proposed 2014 license fee adjustments, WY-WSF Executive Director Kevin Hurley put together this information and these graphs, depicting a 36-year history of Wyoming BHS license costs (both Res and Non-Res), a west-wide comparison of how current Wyoming BHS license costs compared to other western states issuing BHS licenses, and a graph displaying the ratio of NR:R BHS license costs, in Wyoming and western states.

WY-WSF attended the September 22 WGFD NGO meeting in Lander, participated in the October 11 WGFD webcast, and provided comments to WGFD by the October 24 due date; the WY-WSF comment letter is available on our website (<http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org>), since *The Rampage* went to press a week prior to the WGFD comment deadline.

NR:R Ratio (2012)





2012 BC Stone Sheep Hunt Mack (LM #172) & Joni (LM #247) Miller, Lander, WY

Anyone who has ever hunted wild sheep will tell you there is a certain lure about it that drives you to want to continue to do it. Therein lies the problem. It's not like elk or deer hunting, where you just get a tag and go. With sheep, you either have to draw a tag through the state lottery, win a raffle, or be financially positioned where you can just go buy the sheep hunts you desire. I come up short on that latter option.

This particular story began in June 2012 at our annual Fundraiser banquet in Casper. Wyoming WSF offered a Stone Sheep Hunt in the Yukon at our Saturday night auction. There were about a dozen people who bid at the start; within ~5 minutes, it was down to 2 people! Myself and another gentleman! And, the Auctioneer was looking directly at me! By now, I'd already bid \$6,000 more than the upper limit I'd set for myself. I was thinking, this is more than I paid for my first house! Even though I had a contingent of friends backing me with moral support, I wasn't getting much in the line of financial support. You know, at \$50 a friend, I don't have enough friends to cover \$30,000. Needless to say, I folded at \$29,000. After getting my heart rate down and wiping the sweat off my brow, I realized that because of the "Lure of Sheep Hunting", we had just conducted a successful fund raiser for WY-WSF, and some other lucky hunter was off to the Yukon in 2013/2014.

There are times in life when I believe things happen for a reason. The night of the banquet, I was not successful in my bid for a Stone sheep hunt, but I did win a beautiful Kimber 8400 Classic Rifle, and I went home with my bank account still intact. Little did I know that ~2 months later, my wife & I would be on a plane headed for British Columbia to hunt Stone sheep.

Fast forward to September 2012. Periodically, I receive e-mails from hunt broker Bob Jacobson, informing me of various hunt opportunities around the world. I had earlier received an e-mail about a cancellation sheep hunt in the Yukon. Bob informed me that hunt had already been sold, but that my timing couldn't be better. He had just received notice from Larry Warren at Tuchodi River Outfitters that he had a Stone sheep hunter injured at the begin-

ning of his hunt, and Larry was offering the remainder of that hunt at a reduced price. I realized that even though it was still expensive, this might be my chance to hunt Stone sheep. I ask him when this hunt might take place, and he said NOW! I informed him that my wife Joni, who is a sheep hunter and an avid outdoors-woman herself would accompany me, if possible. He said even though this was a cancellation hunt with a short time frame, Joni was still more than welcome.

Things happened at a whirlwind pace. Back on the phone with Bob Jacobson, he already had his travel agent arranging flights and hotels. She had us departing Salt Lake at 5:00 p.m. the next day, heading for Fort Nelson, B.C., via Minneapolis, Edmonton and Fort St. John. The final leg of our flight was on a 206 Cessna into base camp at Tuchodi River, ~48 hours after my initial inquiry about a cancellation hunt in the Yukon!

After arriving in camp, we were greeted by Larry Warren and his wife Lori. He informed us we had a shorter window to hunt sheep, and we would leave base camp right after lunch. His future son-in-law Mike Ford would be our guide, and his youngest son Ricky would be our wrangler. They already had the horses saddled, ready to go. Mike and Ricky brought us a set of pack panniers, told us “load your gear, weigh it, we’re headed for spike camp”!

We spent the next 5 hours riding and glassing the beautiful mountains of the Tuchodi River area, arriving at our destination after dark. Ricky and I took care of horses while Mike and Joni set up camp and started cooking supper. By the time we went to bed that night, Joni and I had gotten 3 hours sleep in the last 32 hours; we needed to re-charge! The next morning we were up and refreshed. After Mike’s famous hotcakes, eggs and stout camp coffee, we shouldered our backpacks for a day glassing for sheep. As most sheep hunters know, everything you do always consist of going up, and up and up, through usually some of the most demanding terrain on earth; this day was no exception! By the time we topped out on the final ridge and traversed down the other side to a point overlooking a secluded bowl, we’d been hiking for about 6 hours! We had glassed some sheep, but up to this point, no legal rams. It was getting late in the afternoon as we pushed a little farther down the ridge. The wind was blowing pretty hard, so we were hunkered down under a rock outcrop. We continued glassing for sheep, when we found a band of 8 head, with one potential legal ram. It was decided we had to start somewhere, and this ram deserved a closer look. The trek back to camp was a little easier knowing we were going after rams the next day. We arrived back in camp by headlight, well after dark. During supper, we hatched a plan for the next day’s stalk, and turned in for the night.

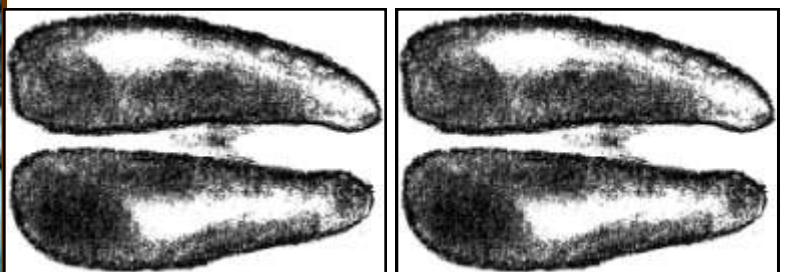
The next morning, we were up early for breakfast, shouldered our packs and headed up the mountain. We hiked ~3-½ hours straight up, over then down the ridge to the east of where we’d seen the rams the day before, to a point where we figured we could come down on top of them. We crawled the last 50’ or so, peered over the edge, but saw no sheep. Mike and I crawled around the head of a ravine to a point ~50 yards further west. Mike peeked over the side again, when he turned around and looked at me. I could tell by the smile on his face we had found sheep! Right below us at 130 yards were 6 rams, but no legal rams! We knew there were originally 8 rams, so we hunkered down to wait. After about 90 minutes, the 2 big boys finally showed up from some hidden ledges below. They jumped up on the bench where the younger rams were laying, pushed a couple out of the way, and bedded down. Finally, we were looking at 2 legal rams. After deciding which ram I would take, I waited for the ram to stand and present a clear shot. After about 40 minutes, he didn’t stand but he finally stretched his neck out and laid his head flat down in the grass for a nap. That’s all I needed. BOOM! A nice clean one shot kill; the ram never even moved from his bed! Joni and Ricky joined us and we made our way down to the ledges below to celebrate. After congratulatory handshakes and picture taking, we set about caping and dressing the ram. It was nice that Joni and Ricky were along to experience the whole thing, AND to help pack out the ram. It took us till after dark to get back to spike camp. The next day, we broke camp and headed back to base camp. The rest of our time was spent riding the country looking for wolves, sightseeing and taking pictures. Our time spent at base camp was really enjoyable, helping out and learning about Tuchodi River’s operation. Everyone there made us feel at home. We especially enjoyed the company and the awesome food prepared for us by Jodi, the base camp cook.

A huge Thank You to Larry & Lori for this opportunity to hunt Stone sheep, and to Mike and Ricky for their hard work allowing me to take a great Ram. As they say in Boy Scout’s, “always be prepared”!!

“My Turn” Brian Artery, Wheatland, WY

After guiding a few hunts and accompanying family and friends on bighorn sheep hunts over the years, it was finally my turn to look for an Area 19 ram. I live in Wheatland, and have been fortunate enough to experience some incredible hunts in the Laramie Range. I've always focused my spotting scope a little higher on the mountain, in hopes of seeing a sheep. I dedicated only a couple of long weekends in August to archery hunting, and saw several rams that confirmed why I had stuck with Area 19 for so many years. On one particular archery hunt, whether it was luck or fate, I set my bow down to glass and walked off without it. Several miles later, I realized I had left my bow on the mountain. While back-tracking to retrieve my bow, I stumbled on to this great ram that had expired over the winter. My friend Mike Wakkuri had previously nicknamed this ram “little Argali”.

When September arrived my brother-in-law Mike Porter, friend Tad Marshall, and I backpacked in a short distance to our favorite vantage point. After guiding with these guys for years and joining them on personal hunts, I knew I was in good hands. We located several awesome rams early, but they were just out of reach. After a few days, we decided to try a different location where I had seen large rams during the summer. The next morning, we spotted two rams feeding at daylight. One ram grabbed my attention immediately because of his large, deep curl, but I wasn't 100% convinced that I should try a stalk. Luckily, the ram didn't move much throughout the day, and after a full day of glassing and debating, I was able to harvest this beautiful ram. The ram is 37 ½ inches on the long side, with just under 16” bases. I had just realized my 25-year dream of taking a bighorn in Area 19. I would like to thank Mike Porter, Tad Marshall, and Steve Sherard for helping me realize my dream. I also want to thank the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation for investing in Area 19 bighorns. It was truly a great hunt, and going home with two great rams was an unexpected bonus.



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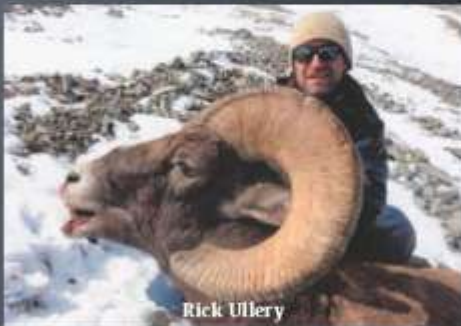
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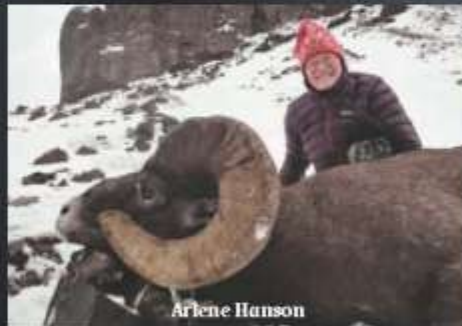
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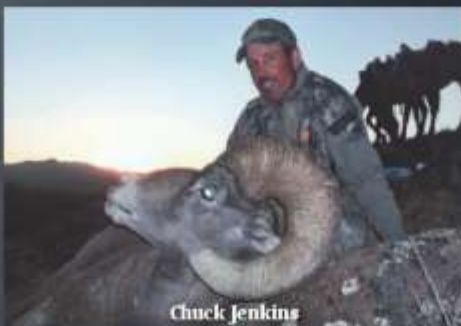
Rick Ullery



Arlene Hanson



Gary Johnson



Chuck Jenkins



Kevin Ho



Joe Guffy

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WY-WSF Life Members Jim Collins (#10), Thermopolis, WY & Greg Murtland (#159) Livonia, MI, with their 2012 Yukon caribou bulls, taken with Tim Mervyn in the Ruby Range. Jim also collected a nice blond mountain grizzly! Congrats to both!!



Wanted: Your Hunt Story & Photos!

If you are a member, and have a hunt story and photos that you'd like to share with our membership, we want to print it! Just send it to Wyoming WSF, and we'll try to publish it in our semi-annual newsletter, *The Rampage*. Photos are also welcome. Send your story and photo(s) to: Wyoming WSF, P.O. Box 666, Cody, WY 82414

Stories can also be e-mailed (WORD .doc format, please) to: info@wyomingwildsheep.org. E-mailed photos should be in jpg format, ≥ 300 dpi, if possible.

Mark Your Calendars now for the WY-WSF Winter Meeting in Thermopolis, November 30-December 2, 2012. Please see page 6 for details!

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WY-WSF Member Ryan Muecke, Powell, WY with a great Hunt Area 3 ram, fall 2012! Happy sheep hunters!!

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WY-WSF Member Jim Dawson, Wyoming Game and Fish Department's **Hunter Education Coordinator**, harvested an 8-1/2 year old ram after many years applying for this coveted sheep tag. His ram was taken in Hunt Area 5 south of Cody on a DIY hunt with son-in-law Jeff Shideman. After 2 early September hunts without success, Jim completed this hunt by taking his ram on the last day of September 2012.



BLACK HILLS GOLD in Hunt Area 20 - Chris Gonfiantini, Reno, NV

The beginning of a new year meant it was time to start applying for tags. When it was time to apply for Wyoming, where I had 17 points, I was going to buy a preference point for sheep since I had knee surgery scheduled for April. So, I did some home work and heard of a hunt that had relatively easy terrain, could be self guided, and had a few good rams with 170+ potential. And, to top it off, Wyoming was issuing a single non-resident permit for Hunt Area 20. I thought, what the heck, even if my knee isn't rehabbed, what are the odds of me drawing this unit?

In returning from vacation with my family in May, I was going thru my stack of mail when I opened up a Wyoming Game and Fish envelope, pulled out the green tag, which I thought would be for antelope and did a double take to see "Bighorn Sheep Hunt Area 20". I remember getting a flyer from Meade Dominick of 7D Outfitting, so I called him to see if he could shed some light on this unit, even though I was not going to hire a guide. Meade was very helpful and told me to call Kevin Hurley, who turned me on to John Kanta, a wildlife biologist in South Dakota. John was very helpful, and gave me the history of the herd and what I could expect. I then called Joe Sandrini, WGFD wildlife biologist in Newcastle. Joe was extremely helpful in explaining movement patterns of the herd from South Dakota to Wyoming and back to South Dakota, justifying the long season (September 1st - December 31)[†]. Joe also told me that I needed to get ahold of RC at the LAK ranch, to obtain permission to access the southern part of the unit, which I did.

As October approached, my good friend drew an antelope tag outside Worland, so we decided to hunt his speed goat for a few days, then head over to Newcastle to hunt sheep. In the meantime, my other friend was going to fly into Billings and drive down with our other hunting buddy, to meet us in Newcastle.



As good fortune would have it, my buddy got his pronghorn the first day, and we packed up and were off. When we got to Newcastle, we called RC from the LAK Ranch who was gracious enough to drive us around the lower part of HA 20, showing us the lay of the land. The next morning, we were up early to encounter 40 mph winds and snow flurries. We glassed all morning long, with no luck. We drove to the top where we talked to some deer hunters who had seen 4 rams, but said they disappeared in the trees. The next day, we concentrated around this location, but again no luck. We decided to go south and glass down the ridges; not 10 seconds later, Kent said "I've got them". We first saw 4 mature rams, below them were 3 more. Then, minutes later, we found 7 more young rams on another ridge. At that time, the mature rams got up and walked into the canyon. We decided to beat feet to town, and pick up Gary and Kevin who just arrived.

After our very quick turnaround, we were back on the mountain making a game plan. Kent dropped us off on top of the mountain and we worked our way towards the canyon where we saw the rams disappear.

Halfway down Gary put his hand out....we were busted by a young ram 40 yards away. After a few minutes, we backed out and had to go down and around him and one other ram that were in the trees. When we got to the other ridge, Kevin spotted a mature ram near the bottom of the canyon. We decided that he must be with the other rams. He fed over the ridge, and we were off. Thirty minutes later, we were on a rock outcropping looking at 7 rams about 100 yards away. After looking over this impressive sight, the hunt was over. We put our headlamps on, and packed him off the hill. I had harvested a beautiful 8-year old ram that scored 172 2/8 B&C. The next morning, we decided to drive straight back to Reno, 17-1/2 hours, since the adrenalin was still flowing! I would like to give special thanks to the Wyoming Game and Fish for allowing a non-resident to hunt this special area.

Our congratulations to Jim Hens, Albany, NY, on taking the pending new world record **(202+) Pope & Young bighorn, in Montana's** famed Hunt District 680 (Missouri Breaks)! Jim harvested the world record archery desert bighorn ram on Tiburon Island, and harvested the world record **Stone's sheep ram in British Columbia!** Attention: Large Dall's sheep rams, beware of sharp flying sticks in fall 2013!! :-))



Jan Dams of Belgium and Jordan Martoglio with a HA 5 ram taken on one of the **2012 Wyoming Governor's BHS** licenses.



WY-WSF Life Member Larry Masserant (LM #38) of Newport, MI with a HA 5 ram taken on one of the **2012 Wyoming Governor's BHS** licenses





Hunt Area 19 Ram! Rory Shogren, Casper, Wyoming

This ram was spotted on different occasions during summer scouting trips, before being taken on the 2nd day of the season. He had been hanging with numerous young rams all summer. He split off with another older, large ram, and one young ram. We looked for three days for any one of those larger, older rams we had seen seeing all summer. We started two days before the season, and finally got lucky and had them show up right where we needed them. This ram was taken at ~90 yards, after accidentally spooking some elk that were not seen during our stalk. He was taken in the Sybille Canyon area, and scored just under 170 B&C.



“Finally” by Mark Bundy, Casper, Wyoming

After putting in for a sheep tag for 22 years, I was a little excited when I checked the **Wyoming Game and Fish website and read “successful”** for an area 4 sheep tag. I knew I was getting close to drawing so had spent a lot of time and money on proper sheep gear. My brother Miles and I have spent a lot of years hunting in Wyoming but never for sheep. I have **heard numerous stories of hunters who drew sheep tags and wanted to “do it on their own”** and struck out with no sheep. This seemed a little silly to me considering it is probably a once in a lifetime tag. I had researched extensively and decided to go with Chris Nielson from Cody (Gary Fales Outfitting). His sheep knowledge is incredible.

The day finally came and we were on horses headed to the most beautiful country a feller could lay his eyes on. We spent quite a few days climbing with backpacks and glassing basins for a good ram at well over 11,000ft. We saw a lot of nice rams and finally came across one that we decided to take a crack at. Chris put us in good range and my dream sheep was on the ground. After pictures, the long hike to the horses and long ride to camp, it was well after dark. We were all exhausted. The next day we packed out of the high country. I now **have a serious case of sheep fever and hope someday to go again. I can’t thank Chris** enough. I will enjoy having the sheep in my trophy room forever. They are magnificent animals. The most challenging and rewarding hunting I have done.



Brooks Range 2012 Dall - Norm Decastro, Casper, WY

I booked my dream hunt through Cabelas Outdoor Adventures in February 2010 – Dall Sheep in Alaska’s Brooks Range - August 2012. May 2012 found me starting my diet and a mountain biking regimen; 40 pounds later (lighter), I was packed and on a plane to Fairbanks. The first thing I learned about Alaska is that it isn’t really easy to get anywhere. From Fairbanks I flew to Bettles, then to Cold Foot, and finally to an airstrip in the bush where my guide and wrangler were waiting for the hour ride into base camp. The next day found me on the trail with my guide Tim Nelson and a couple of packhorses for a 4-hour ride to spike camp.

We saw between a couple dozen to 30-40 sheep on the way, mostly lambs and ewes. But, as we neared camp, we saw groups of rams which we would check out in the following days. Once we got spike camp set up, gear stacked and covered, and the horses picketed and happy, I broke out the optics and began scanning surrounding ridges, basins, and high points. On one craggy, nasty peak in the middle of a basin formed by two glacial creeks, I spotted 4 lambs and ewes, along with a couple of rams lower down on a ridge. I remember thinking to myself – “I can’t think of a single reason I need to climb up that @#\$%^&!!” Two days later, after 6 hours of climbing, I handed my camera to my guide Tim and told him “Well, I’m here, might as well get my picture!”

We hunted the area for 3 days, and saw over 150 sheep, of which more than 40 were rams. I turned down two legal rams. One was a young “broomer” and the other was a full curl on one side, broken back at least 8 inches on the other. Nothing wrong with either, just not what I had in mind for my wall. To this day I do not have a big muley on the wall – for the same reason. On Day 4 we decided to break camp and hunt our way back to base camp. Weather was moving in, and it began raining on and off, increasing in frequency and intensity for the balance of the hunt. Stopping several times to glass on the way, we located what appeared to be a group of 10-12 rams in a remote basin “around the corner” from base camp. We made our way back to the cook tent in time for a hot dinner and some planning, to determine if and how we would go about getting a better, closer look at that ram band.

As it turned out, we never got a chance to look over those particular sheep. The next morning after breakfast, Tim spotted a couple of rams way down at the far end of the mountain, behind camp, down toward the air strip. When we had first landed, we looked over some sheep just around the corner from where these rams were located. I was sure they were rams then, but at a distance, that was all we could tell. I think these were the same sheep, 5 days later.

We saddled up and rode down the creek a couple miles to get a better look, determining that one ram warranted a second look. It was now raining, varying between waves of light mist to moderate rain and wind. I am sure anyone who has experienced Alaska can understand. We unsaddled the horses and picketed them, made ready with our gear, and headed up the mountain. The climb started with lush, spongy (and WET) moss carpeted in wild blueberry, cranberries, and timber. As we climbed, the terrain turned to granite-like boulder fields covered with wet (SLIPPERY!) lichen, what appeared to be a type of dogwood, and dense alder thickets interspersed with arctic willow. I can honestly say I have never seen anything like this. I have lived in Wyoming my entire life and hunted every critter we have here, and this was a couple notches above anything I have ever experienced. We were climbing and crawling hand-over-hand through this jungle-covered boulder field, crossing creeks and crawling on hands and knees through alder thickets. Even though I had Cabelas Alaskan Guide rain gear on, I was soaking wet – from the inside. I sweated through one set of clothing, and actually stopped and changed into another set of dry layers, which I proceeded to sweat through just like the first.

At one point, I was climbing at an angle up and to my left. Tim was above me resting (he apparently didn’t get the word that a good guide is obligated to approximate the physical condition of his hunter) and waiting for me to catch up when I stepped in a 5-foot hole and literally disappeared through the waist-deep brush. Oh, the look on Tim’s face when I reappeared. At least he had the decency to make sure I wasn’t hurt before laughing at me. At some point, we cleared the heavy vegetation and began moving laterally upward to close the distance into shooting range. When we got into position, we ranged the rams – now a group of 6 – at 280 yards. Tim set the spotting scope up to get a final look and confirm the ram was legal. Due to the extreme flare of his horns, it was actually hard to tell from the angle we had – behind and well below the ram. After about 45 minutes, he stood up, turned around, and laid down facing the other way. It was now VERY apparent we had not just a shooter, but a good one at that. I moved up to a handy rock and had a bench-rest solid shooting platform, half-prone and half-standing, due to the angle of the hill.

Not wanting to shoot him lying down, I waited another 10 minutes for him to stand up and present a full target. I was immediately snapped in and as I began to squeeze the trigger he laid back down. However, another five minutes passed and he was up again for good. I laid the cross hairs dead center on his body, right up behind his shoulder, squeezed the trigger.....and missed (later I found I had actually clipped his back). Yup, you heard me. Now understand that I am a guy who prides myself on my marksmanship. When my .300 Weatherby speaks, I am used to seeing something on the ground.

So the ram runs around the basin, now at about 350 yards, and quarters toward us, trying to figure out what just happened. Confused, I put the cross hairs on his shoulder again, squeezed the Jard custom trigger, and the ram collapsed with a shot through the neck about 10 inches higher than my point of aim, tumbling end over end about 60 yards, before coming to rest on kind of a rock ledge in a depression. Tim and I shook hands and congratulated ourselves, and began gathering our things and repacking our packs. As we are packing, Tim looks past me and matter-

of-factly says "He's up." (This was as excited as I saw Tim the entire hunt. The dude has ice water in his veins.....). I turned, and sure enough, he was up on his front legs, butt on the ground, and kind of wobbly. So I pulled my rifle from my Eberlestock pack, laid back down, and now knowing where I was hitting, held on the bottom of his chest and put a finishing shot behind his shoulder..... where the first one should have been.

Did I mention how rough this hill was? In a place I used to elk hunt, there was a hill we called "The Dirty Name" that we would climb first thing each and every morning to get to our favorite elk ridge. This was The Dirty Name's big brother, or maybe even sadistic Uncle.....It took us 45 minutes to travel 300 yards or so (as the bullet flies) to where the



ram lay, and the rest is history.

I cannot adequately explain how truly blessed I felt at that moment. I had fulfilled a dream I have had ever since I began reading Jack O'Connor books and magazine articles when I was about 9 or 10. I had walked and climbed in the neighborhood of 25 miles, climbed thousands and thousands of vertical feet, had looked over nearly 200 sheep, and glassed over 50 rams. I had actually turned two legal rams down, as I was determined to not just shoot a legal ram, but one that met my personal expectation of a true trophy. We just sat down, drank some water, ate some trail mix and candy bars, and marveled over the past few days. Tim is an excellent guide whose slow and deliberate style of moving, hunting, and always having his nose stuck behind a set of good binoculars matched my hunting style to a T. Like it should have been, I not only had a guide, but I made a friend I will always keep in contact with.

After taking a few dozen pictures – my camera, his camera, my iPhone, etc., we field-dressed the ram and conjured up mouth-watering visions of ribs roasting over fresh coals – O'Connor style – and fresh loin seared brown on the outside, medium rare inside. Liver and onions for breakfast. We tried to divide the load – most of the meat and gear for me, the head and cape for Tim. We cinched up our packs and gingerly picked our way down another route, not quite as steep and brushy but slimy and treacherous nonetheless. Hitting the creek bottom downstream from the horses, we dropped our loads, made our way to our four-legged transportation, and rode back to camp, arriving past midnight. Tim grabbed a set of saddle panniers and headed back for the packs, and I headed to the cook tent to rustle up some dinner and heat some water for cocoa and coffee.

I made my way to the tent I shared with my buddy Armon who had killed a boomer 41" ram a couple of days earlier. He asked if I had closed the deal, I said I had, and got a hearty congrats before he rolled back over in his cot and went back to sleep. I changed into some dry stuff and followed suit. The next morning – as I noted before – it was liver and onions for breakfast, handshakes and congratulations all the way around, and more pictures. This old boy ended up measuring right at 37" with 13 ¼" bases, and was aged by Alaska Fish & Game at 11 years. The third fellow in camp, Ian from Chicago, ended up taking the ram we had seen from spike camp with the broken horn, 37" on the unbroken side and 10 years old.

Great hunt, great outfit, great guide, and possibly most importantly, GREAT pilot (Thanks Jay and Judy at Brooks Range Aviation). Also, special thanks to Travis Baker, Hunting Consultant with Cabelas Outdoor Adventures, for making this all come together.



See You in Reno!

January 30th - February 2nd 2013



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Once-In-A-Lifetime Thinhorn Hunt – Version 2.0
Kevin Hurley, Cody, WY

Following my successful August 2011 Dall's sheep hunt in the Alaska Range with Mike Colpo of Lazy J Bar O Outfitters, I wasn't 100% sure what my next sheep hunting adventure might be; I just knew I wanted another one. So, after mulling it over for 5+ months, doing tons of research, poring over maps, reading reports and survey summaries, and talking with numerous sheep hunters and sheep biologist colleagues of mine, Day 1 of the Wild Sheep Foundation 2012 Sheep Show convention in Reno found me making a beeline to the booth of Dean Sandulak, Trophy Stone Outfitting (TSO), south-central Yukon Territory.

It only took a few minutes of visiting with Dean (& his wife Lori) before I made my decision. I liked the feel and reputation of their family-run operation, and I knew about the rams they'd taken. So, right there, before Dean "booked up" at our WSF convention and the following week's SCI convention, I booked a Stone's sheep hunt with them for August 2012. Dean was able to accommodate the dates I needed for my 21-year old son Kyle to come with me on this hunt. After being a non-hunting companion in AK in 2011, Kyle definitely wanted to "participate" this time around. Not being able to swing a 2nd Stone's sheep hunt for my college-age son, I got Dean to line Kyle up for black bear, wolf, and wolverine. Our hunt was set!

Fast-forward to mid-July 2012, and I was driving north through BC for the second year in a row! What a fabulous province! I visited friends and colleagues, saw some new country, and enjoyed the drive. Kyle flew to Whitehorse, and after a day sorting gear (for the umpteenth time), we took a charter flight from Whitehorse to Dean's base camp. After confirming our rifles were "on", and reducing gear yet again, we packed up and rode out the next day for spike camp, a beautiful 4-hour ride. We spotted ewes and lambs, the south end of a north-bound white wolf, a few caribou, and some gorgeous scenery. Arriving at one of Dean's spike camp cabins, we discovered just how much Yukon porcupines enjoy plywood and 2X4s! Even though several courses of tin siding had been placed on this cabin, as snow depths accumulated last winter, those "porkies" had quite a platform from which to do their business. Needless to say, we spent a couple hours doing damage control, but our spirits weren't dampened in the least.

Opening morning found us glassing Glenlyon Peak, the highest point in the Glenlyon Range (Pelly Mountains) at just over 7,000'. Two wolverines bounced around in the basin below us, but since we had rams spotted on the slope above us, Kyle and I opted not to fill our wolverine tags at that moment. Of course, those were the only wolverines we saw in 12 days! Glassing on Days 1 and 2 confirmed rams, but we weren't able to get close enough. With Day 3 being a complete rainout, we strategized for Day 4, making plans to climb Glenlyon Peak, to "...go where the rams were..."

With Dean, 19-year old guide Brad Friesen, and 18-year old wrangler Emily Beiler, Kyle and I rode partway up the mountain, then Emily retreated with the horses. Once we gained enough elevation, we spotted a group of 6 rams feeding in a large basin, way down the north slope of the mountain. Suddenly, something spooked that ram band (it wasn't us!), and as we repositioned to find out what, we were busted by two other rams. Our hopes were a bit dashed, but we kept slowly climbing to the top of Glenlyon Peak, glassing as we went.

More glassing confirmed those two sentinel rams were not part of our original band, which now numbered eight, still way down the mountain below us. We talked for about 30 seconds, agreeing we needed to bail off that ridge, and dive down into that basin. I loosely use the term "glissaded" to describe our descent; experienced mountain hunters know what I mean when I say we dug in our heels,

lowered our rear ends, and slid down 1,500' of talus and loose rock!

Belly-crawling and butt-sliding our way into position, we stalked within 200 yards of this band of eight rams, which alternated between feeding, bedding, and play-fighting. Three of the eight rams were "legal" by Yukon definition, but the ram I focused on stood out from his bro's. But, his pals wouldn't leave him alone; they kept circling around him, striking him with their front legs when he would lie down, testing his patience and his mettle. After running his buddies off for the last time, this ram separated, stood, and likely thought about bedding down yet again. However, one shot from my favorite rifle (Ruger 7mm mag; nicknamed "The Preacher" by my buddy Ron Lockwood) at 187 yards ended the moment; a 6+, 34.5" X 13.25" ram died where he'd stood, never taking a step. It was a pretty emotional moment for me, having Kyle right beside me, again. It took us 15 minutes to drop the 200 yards to this ram, so you can guess the steepness of the terrain.

Following all the shared congratulations and photo-taking, we caped and boned this ram, knowing we had a heck of a climb still ahead of us. Let's just say there is a new basin named "Hurley's Hell Hole" that now appears on Dean's map. Leaving the kill site at almost 8:00 PM, we ground our way up ~1,700', over the top of Glenlyon Peak, then dropped another 1,500' back down to Emily and the horses, reaching them about 11:30 PM. Thank goodness it stays light late that far north; combined with a nearly-full moon, we had an enjoyable late night/early morning ride back to camp, arriving at 1:30 AM!

Fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on perspective), Day 5 was another complete rainout, so we took it easy around spike camp, taking care of the cape and meat, and resting our weary bones. We figured we'd gained and lost over 6,200' in elevation the previous day, to get that ram, and get him out. Dean stated he'd never had a hunter go down into that basin before, and with any luck, he'd never have another one go there!

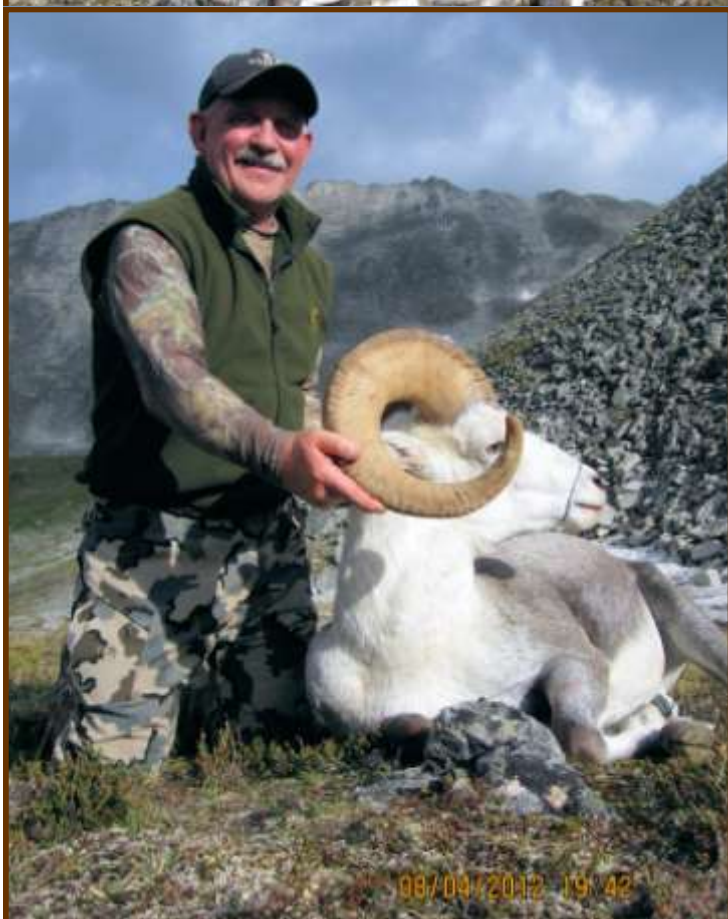
By Day 6, the rains had quit, and we rode several hours to another spike camp, to check provisions for Dean's upcoming hunts and try to find some berry patches for Kyle to locate a black bear. Sure enough, we found more porcupine damage at this camp too, so while Dean and Emily cleaned up that mess, Kyle, Brad and I headed for the blueberry hills. It wasn't long before we spotted what through binocs looked to be a grizzly, but upon closer examination through the spotting scope turned out to be a dark chocolate black bear, with a very grizzled back. A great stalk by Brad and Kyle put them within 30 yards of this bear, but he spooked before Kyle could connect. Seriously bummed yet seriously jazzed, Kyle and Brad dropped back down to where I was with the horses, and we rode back to spike camp.

Buoyed by the abundance of berries and bears, we were back out early the next morning, glassing the same slopes we'd hunted the evening before. Sure enough, we spotted a large "black" black bear, and the guys were off! As they approached this first bear, they spotted "Goldilocks" from the evening before; a quick decision resulted in a hard right turn, and they headed for this grizzly-looking black bear. A great stalk followed by a great shot by Kyle filled this dream hunt for him, with a 6' multi-colored black bear. I was so proud and so happy for my son.

That night, back at camp, it wasn't a "Dances With Wolves"-scale bonfire, but after caring for the bear hide, Dean and I had the good sense to turn in, while Kyle, Brad, and Emily lit up the night and celebrated around a fire (the strongest drink they had was powdered KoolAid!). Just three young folk, enjoying the experience, celebrating the hunt, the wilderness, and the critters; the stories they shared the next morning were amazing!

After almost 30 years in the outfitting/guiding business, Dean told us he could not recall a hunt where he laughed more. We had a great 12-day trip/hunt/experience. With 3 washout days of rain during our 10-day hunt, and seeing Stone's sheep, moose, caribou, wolves, black bears, wolverines, and a small portion of Dean's ~4.5 million acre concession, Kyle and I know we made the right decision in going with Dean/TSO. As I told Dean when we departed, we booked as clients, and left as friends. Maybe in a couple years when Kyle finishes his Mechanical Engineering degree at the University of Wyoming, there might be an archery Yukon moose hunt wrapped in a camouflage ribbon waiting for him to un-wrap!

Every time I do something like this, I realize how lucky I am to have been so deeply involved in the wild sheep conservation and hunting world for the past 31+ years. I can't wait for the next wild sheep adventure, 'cause I know there will be one!



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