

The **RAMPAGE**

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation
Fall 2017

“Ram Tips to the Sky”
Jeff Brock - HA 2
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YOU'RE INVITED!



SHEEP SHOW

JANUARY 18 - 20, 2018

REGISTER AT: WILDSHEEPFOUNDATION.ORG

Fall 2017

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Steve Kilpatrick-Executive
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Contact us at:

info@wyomingwildsheep.org
or by phone: (307)213-0998

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 on line 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

- 13 “Hunting with a Hero” by Frank Maestri
Keith Stansell pursues a giant desert bighorn
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Kurt arrows a Wyoming black bear
- 18 “A Month in the North” by Kevin Hurley
Kevin and son, Kyle, hunting Dall Sheep & Mtn Goat
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It took 19 years but this ram was worth the wait
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Hilda overcomes weather and altitude to bag her ram high in the Winds

Address Changes

Become a member to receive your own copy of the RamPage. Dues are \$25 per year or \$500 for a Life Membership. Subscribe at: www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store.

Please send address changes to: info@wyomingwildsheep.org or by phone at (307) 213-0998

Advertising Rates

Full-Page \$250
1/2-Page \$150
1/4-Page \$70
1/8-Page \$50

Donations netting WY-WSF >\$500 entitle donor to a free 1/4-page ad in the next 2 issues of The Rampage. Ads must be received in camera ready format by 09/25 & 3/5!!

2017-2018 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 1-2, 2017
Winter Meeting
Jackson, WY

January 19-21, 2018
Wild Sheep Foundation Convention
Reno, NV

June 1-2, 2018
Annual Convention
Casper, WY

June 21-23, 2018
WSF Chapter & Affiliates Summit
Jackson, WY



Wyoming WSF would like to thank, and recognize, Life Members who have signed up since the Spring 2017 Rampage was published. A complete listing of WY-WSF Life Members is available for viewing on the WY-WSF web page, under the “Life Members” tab:

<http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/content/life-members>

If you would be interested in signing up/upgrading to Life Member status with WY-WSF, please visit our store or membership pages on the website . A \$500, one-time payment (or \$100 down, with quarterly \$100 payments), invests in Wyoming’s bighorns, plus gets you or someone you know a high-quality wall plaque and name tag. We thank all of our past, current, and future Life Members!!

- 503 Dave Bell
- 504 Dan Marino
- 505 Brian Scott
- 506 Vic Dana
- 507 Larry McDermott
- 508 Russ Roberts
- 509 Doug Haupt
- 510 Ron Amack
- 511 Sandy Chitwood
- 512 Giuliana McDermott
- 513 Kolby George
- 514 Chris Otto
- 515 Josh Martoglio
- 516 Jeremy Sage
- 517 Dan Currah
- 518 Mike Murray
- 519 Rip Rippentrop
- 520 John Lee
- 521 Kay Giannola

*Blast from the Past - Executive Director Steve Kilpatrick.
Apparently he has always had an interest in sheep.*



Wyoming

Wild Sheep Foundation

2018

**WYOMING GAME AND FISH
COMMISSIONER'S LICENSE RAFFLE**

ONLY 500 TICKETS!

**\$50 per ticket
3 for \$100**



LICENSE DONATED BY COMMISSIONER MIKE SCHMID

A Commissioner's license is good for Elk, Deer, or Pronghorn and is independent of the regular Wyoming Game and Fish Department license draw. The winner is responsible for all applicable license fees. The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Board of Directors and members are eligible to participate in all fund-raising activities.

The license drawing will be held June 2nd, 2018, at the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Convention to be held at the Ramkota Hotel in Casper, Wyoming. The winner need not be present to win. To order tickets online please go to www.wyomingwildsheep.org.



For more information about Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation
307-213-0998 / email: info@wyomingwildsheep.org
WY-WSF, P.O. Box 666, Cody, Wyoming 82414



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

BY STEVE KILPATRICK

A little about the history of bighorns - and ties to the present.

Wild sheep have lived in the West and Wyoming mountains for thousands of years. In fact, it is estimated that 1.5 - 2.0 MILLION wild sheep, yes millions, of wild sheep lived in the western United States and Canada in the 1800's. That was less than 200 years ago! Fast forward to 1960, and the estimate was 25,000 in the same area. We don't have good estimates for Wyoming, but we do know there were 10's of thousands in the 1800's and an estimate of only 2,500 in 1960.



Conservation efforts, funded by people like you, have brought the US and Canada numbers back to about 85,000 - progress but a far cry from 1.5-2.0 M! Wyoming numbers are now about 6,700 - a far cry from the 10's of thousands in the 1800's.

The map is from a study by Helmut Buechner, 1960, which illustrates the probable distribution of bighorn sheep in the US prior to the advent of the white man. Bighorns were well represented across Wyoming.

Early explorers documented the abundance of bighorns along the Platte River. The earliest recorded bighorn sighting was in 1812, when Stuart and 6 starving Astorians took 2 bighorns along the Sweetwater River, 7 miles south of Rock Creek.

Bighorns were common near the confluence of the Sweetwater and North Platte. Stuart reported seeing "innumerable" flocks in November and December of 1812, near the confluence of Poison Spider Creek and the North Platte River. During the summer of 1842, Fremont saw "numerous herds" of bighorns 25 miles southwest of Casper near an island in the North Platte River. They called the bighorns "goats" and Fremont named the island Goat Island. The name has since been changed to Fremont Island.

Joel Palmer and his party saw large "droves" of bighorns 4 miles east of Independence Rock on May 31, 1846.

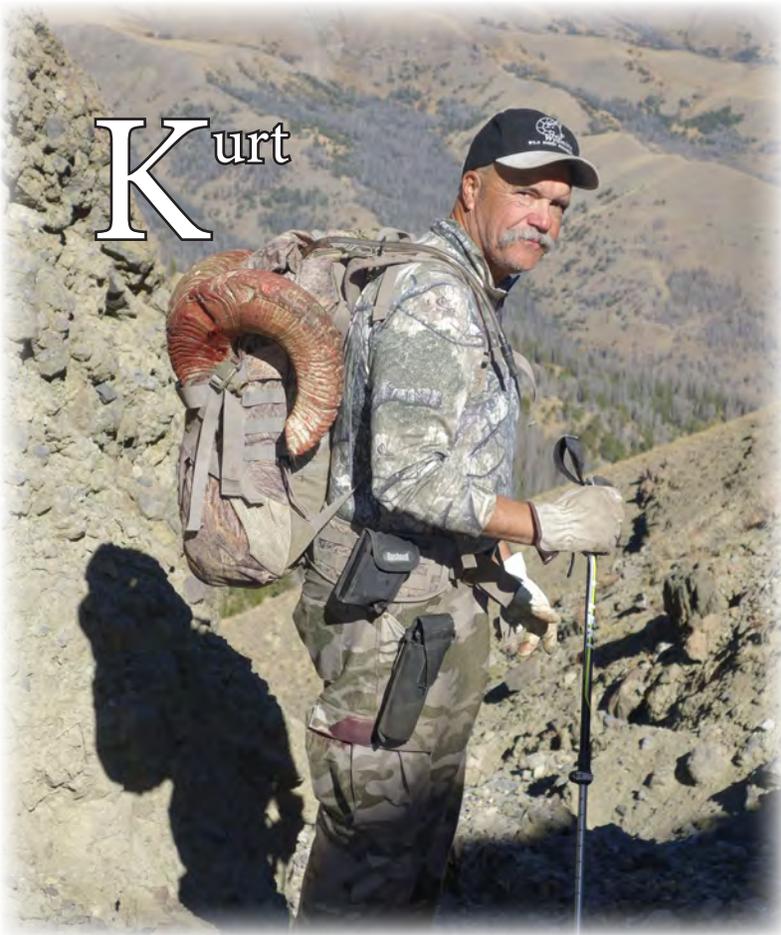
Wait a minute, east of Independence Rock, that's the Ferris Mtns. Yep, and that's where WY-WSF has been spending your dollars to reestablish bighorns some 171 years later. Transplants from Devils Canyon (west side of Big Horn Mtns.) have occurred the past two years with additional transplants planned for next year. If you wish to participate in this year's captures and releases, just give us a shout.

So, there you have it. You are making history by being part of the WY-WSF team that is actually "putting and keeping Kids and wild Sheep on the mountain" - the Ferris Mountains. We thank you for your passionate support. Come join us for the captures and releases in March, 2018.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY KURT EISENACH



Kurt

As my first attempt at this message to the membership, let me say I am honored that your board has put their vote of confidence in me. I will be reaching out and asking a lot from them and other members in the coming year.

The June banquet was another record setter and our move to the Ramkota brought a lot of positive comments. Your board will strive to continue improving this event and welcomes any new ideas or games you might have.

Thanks to the generous bidders for the WY Governor's sheep tags as 2 new records were set for this license. The first record

bid came in Reno but it was surpassed at our Casper event. The new standard to top is \$95,000. If you happen to talk to, or write Gov. Mead, thank him for supporting this great program. Our Game and Fish Commissioners were also very generous and provided several commissioner licenses for us to market. Be sure to thank Commissioners Rael, Schmid, Price and Culver.

We are continuing to push the Conservation Fund towards the stated \$250,000 goal. Thanks to all who have participated already and look for more great opportunities to come. The work on the ground that all this fundraising pays for is the core of what we try to do.

Several projects are completed or nearing that point. Ferris Mt. guzzlers were installed this summer and more sheep were transplanted to that mountain range this spring. Disease work continues on several fronts along with habitat projects in several areas of the state. I am constantly amazed at the amount of work this dedicated group of conservationists accomplishes for sheep.

Thank you all for being involved! For the upcoming year as you spend time in this great state think what else we might accomplish. Bring your ideas to the board. Sign up a new life member, or acquire an item we might use for the banquet. Consider stepping up and joining us on the board. Come join us on a volunteer day or help us with set up at the summer banquet. We always need help during the banquet. Talk to your circle of sheep nuts and find a way to make a difference. Those that step up and speak up will be the biggest difference makers in today's world. This group makes a difference!

Join us in Jackson Hole for the winter meeting and field trip on December 1 & 2. This less hectic and more informal meeting affords many more opportunities for conversation with your board and fellow members.

Please feel free to introduce yourself to me and don't be offended if I don't remember your name right away. That is one of my many weaknesses which I will try to improve.

There is much we can do here in Wyoming to help our sheep herds. It all starts with you the membership! Your generosity and commitment to our wild sheep resource is amazing.

Many of you will never draw another sheep tag here in Wyoming yet you continue to step up and speak up for wild sheep. I salute you and pledge to keep standing up for wild sheep.



Wyoming
Wild Sheep Foundation

2017 FULL CURL TABLE PURCHASERS

Businesses and individuals listed on the opposite page (if logos were available) made significant investments for Wyoming's bighorn sheep by purchasing a "full curl" table for 8 attendees at our June 3, 2017 banquet in Casper.

We thank them for their support, and invite others who might be interested in a full curl table for our 2018 fundraising banquet to please contact President Kurt Eisenach, Executive Director Steve Kilpatrick, or any WY-WSF board member.

We appreciate your outstanding support, and look forward to another great banquet/fund raiser in 2018!



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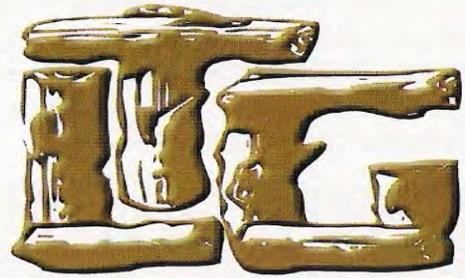
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Super Tag tickets: \$10
Super Tag Trifecta: \$30

**WYOMING'S SUPER TAG RAFFLE OFFERS
10 SPECIES AND 11 CHANCES TO WIN**

New – KUIU gear sponsorship for Trifecta, bighorn sheep, elk, mountain goat, and moose winners

Deadline to apply is July 2, 2018

Raffle winners must purchase any applicable licenses and/or stamps before hunting. Made possible by the Wyoming Legislature



2016 Super Tag
bighorn sheep winner
Jeff Campagna

Conservation Fund Hits New Heights Thanks To A Generous Donor

The WY-WSF Conservation Fund recently received a \$10,000 donation that will enable us to launch a memorial page for future fund raising efforts. The very first person memorialized is Al Benton(LM 130).

A portion of this donation will also fund the 2018 Life Member Breakfast in Casper, WY on June 2, 2018. Moreover, the 2018 breakfast will be named the Al Benton Memorial Life Member Breakfast to honor his passion and contributions towards putting and keeping kids and wild sheep on the mountain.

The WY-WSF urges it's members to make donations in memory of their loved ones. Donations will be invested and the interest earned will fund future projects focusing on habitat improvement, transplants, youth development, and research. We encourage the donations to include photos, short stories, memorials and obituaries.

Further information can be obtained at our web page:

<https://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/foundation.asp>

or by calling Executive Director Steve Kilpatrick at (307) 413-7249.



In Memoriam

Orville "AL" Benton, father of Cole Benton passed away February 5th at the age of 90. He served in WWII in Japan and the Korean Conflict. For over 65 years Al paid his respect for fellow veterans who have passed by taking part in the Military Honor Guard. He was honored last fall as the Grand Marshall of the Buffalo Veteran's Day Parade. Al and wife Jenny were huge supporters of the WY-WSF for many years. Al was WY-WSF life member #130. He left behind 8 WY-WSF Life members spanning four generations.

Thank you Sports Lure for your many years of donations to assist WY-WSF fundraising and for coming to the banquet and processing FFLs.

66 South Main, Buffalo, WY 82834
(307) 684-7682 800-684-7682



Conservation Fund Update

by Scott Butler

We all gather together, sometimes to learn about, celebrate and review the projects that have been done. To raise money and plan for projects to provide for the future of Wyoming's wild sheep population. Many of you know the WY-WSF Conservation Fund was started to be able to have a self generating source of funding to do these projects. Part of the plan also includes getting and keeping children involved in the future of wild sheep. At our summer banquet the board

awarded 2 lucky youth full WY-WSF Life Memberships paid for by the Conservation Fund. Giuliana McDermott and Kolby George were the lucky winners. The same will happen at our 2018 annual convention thanks to the support and interest the fund has had from the generous and fore thinking folks that have donated to this point.

New to the fund and our website is the memorial page. To support the Conservation Funds future and to memorialize a loved one or support by making it part of your estate planning, check out the website and the Conservation Fund info. The first addition to the Conservation Fund Memorial Page was \$5000 donated in the name of LM #130. Check out website to find out who life member #130 is. Who stands out in your life?

We ask that you take time to support the future of wild sheep and the children that will someday enjoy the wonderful world sheep live in.

“If you follow the etiquette of the new country, obey and respect the laws and customs of the land, the inhabitants will welcome you, and maybe want to be friendlier than your civilized heart can bear. There are four footed peddlers and salesman galore, but their wares are mostly profit sharing in a different sense than ours; and there are ways to discourage them and still be friends. We may really be getting away from it all when we hit the hills. We are in a different life, all right. Something is always going on. The sheriff, the police, and the law as the settlements know it, is gone. It's a different law out with our native inhabitants. Their law is survival, though with it you will encounter pride, humor, and curiosity. Some of them try to put by for winter and old age. They got no pensions or social security. The only taxes they pay are sometimes fatal, and paid to the human who invades their domain. They like respect, understanding, appreciation, and a little tolerance, same as our kids down in the valleys below. They are willing to share what they have, and feel that one good turn deserves another, even if our system of measurement isn't always the same one they go by.” Joe Back Dubois, WY 1959

Conservation Fund Total = \$201,137.06

Interest to date = \$15,602.99

GIAs funded = \$25,000

Life Memberships Awarded = 2

KEEPING KIDS AND WILD SHEEP
ON THE MOUNTAIN!

Join the Conservation Fund, Invest in the Future

Thank you Donors!

Photo Credit: Dean DiJenno



Desert Sheep \$100+

Photo Credit: Mark Gocke



Desert Sheep \$100+

Dall Sheep \$1000+

Jack Welch
Casey Tiltrum
Christopher Otto
Craig Kling
Dave Hill
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Edwin Brolyer
Erica Flomm
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J.W.Harris
James Schroeder
Joe Hutchison
John Burd
Josh Burd
Lorna Joslin
Mellisa Burd
Michael Van Biema
Mike Brownwell
Terry Rathert
Meade Dominick
Douglas & Timothea Crowe
William Trapp
Roy Roath
John Stevenson
Ewing Browning
Warren Youmans
Kyle Gamroth
Kirsti Ennis
Alex Maestas
Jerry Taggart
Dan Currah
Dan Marino
Ron Nading, JR.
Chris Otto

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Sara Domek
Sean Burd
Stacie Berg
T.K. Atkinson
Tim Sundles
Travis Bomengen
Wayne Henderson
Zack McDermott
Dale & Jacque Sims
Greg Pope
Kathleen Treanor
Bill Obeid
Paul Dona
Scott, Tera & Chance Butler
James D. Rice
Bill Joslin
Terry Dieren
Larry Irwin
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Dan Hinz
Vic Dana
Andy Hart
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Gail Gleason

William Gerhart
Ross Billingsley
Darryl Williams
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The Mooney Family
Luke Ellifritz
Myron Wakkuri
Bill Dooley
Brian Wigington
Russ Roberts
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James Kruse
Dave Jones
Doug Haupt
Sara Harris
Frank Grimes
Bill Durnal
Dallas Camp
Jim Berry
Rylie Alberts
Krystal Alberts

Stone Sheep \$500+

Buddy DuVall
Cole Hansen
Kurt Eisenach
Sam Lockwood
Scott Williams
Raleigh Whalen
Pam Sherfese
Brian Gee
Mark Conrad
Pete Fazio
Steve Kilpatrick

Butch & Kathy Townsend III
Cole Benton
George Law
John & Patty O'Brien
Len Camp
Marvel Cosner
Mike Thomas
Rice Family Foundation
WY-WSF
Mack Miller
Joni Miller
Wade Alexander
Dale & Paula Strickland
Rusty & Rosemary Gooch
Greg Clifford
B. Richard Lennington
Lyman McDonald
Ron Pomeroy
Kevin Hurley
Erik Alberts
Jerry Galles
Dean & Diane DiJenno
Ray & Karen Lozier
Adam Johnson
Al Benton Memorial

Big Horn Sheep

\$10,000+
Chris & Shelley Cohagan
Eric & Kathy Johnson
Jim Collins
Knoblock Fund
Ron Lockwood
Gary Butler

“Hunting With A Hero”

By Frank Maestri

I finished the final page of the book I could not put down for the last couple hours and thought to myself, “I sure hope I have the opportunity to meet this hero I have been reading about.” My neighbor Cole Benton of Grizzly Outfitters had loaned me the signed copy of a book his friend and hunting client had given him. The book is “Out of Captivity” and the hero is Keith Stansell. Keith was a United States Marine and later was in Columbia working when his Cessna caravan had engine failure and went down in the Colombian jungle. Keith and 3 of his colleagues were held captive for 5 years. The book takes you on their 5 year journey of captivity and leaves you impressed by all of these men and what they endured and survived.

I ranch near Sheridan, WY and run a hunting outfit in the fall. My neighbor and I share hunting stories and we always get together during the season to compare game and

have a whiskey.

When I stopped by Grizzly Outfitters last fall I finally met Keith and understood for myself the kind of man I believed to be a true inspiration to all of us was actually for real.

I am not sure why I got so lucky and was asked to go on a Desert Bighorn Sheep hunt in Mexico with Cole Benton and Keith Stansell, but I wasn't about to turn it down.

Wild Sheep hunting is my passion above all things in life and I suppose my excitement may have shown when Keith told me of the hunt he was planning.

It was December 2016 and the 3 of us were on our way to Monterrey, Mexico. 65-70 degrees in December was sounding great compared to the Wyoming winter we were having this year. We landed in Monterrey and had an hour and a half drive to meet

up with Emilio at La Palmosa where Keith would be hunting a Desert Bighorn Sheep. We had heard great things about the rams that had been taken this year at La Palmosa and we were excited to see what was in store for Keith's hunt.

Every Sheep hunt carries great excitement and respect. The respect part comes when you stand at the “TOP” where the Sheep live and revel over how they manage on those cliffs and rocky terrain. Next you wonder how “you” are going to achieve living where the wild sheep live and make it home safe with a harvested ram.

The accommodations of the base camp at La Palmosa were beyond any expectations I could imagine. I did not really want to call and tell my wife that the accommodations were better than most vacations we had been on and included a wine cellar, massage parlor and amazing meals and staff. Keith was ecstatic for tomorrow morning to come. We headed to our



individual haciendas and got a good night's sleep.

We woke up early and we left base camp. As we drove towards the rough terrain and peaks in front of us, we knew we had tough work to come in the days ahead. Keith had sighted in his .280 Ackley Hill Country rifle to 2 shots touching at 300 yards.

We parked the ATVs at the base of the mountains and started our climb. After hours of hiking and glassing, we just did not see the right ram that day.

On day two in the morning we had a nice ram spotted but as we hiked and hiked trying to get the right stalk going, the ram finally detected us and beat us.

We were now on top of the ridge in the late afternoon and we had been glassing for hours. Our eyes came across a beauty of a ram. We

were losing daylight and Keith had to be quick on the stalk and the decision to take the ram. Keith has no problem being quick, he made the strenuous stalk on the majestic desert creature. He was 350 yards away, the decision was made and the ram was hit. Keith had wounded the ram and due to the daylight ending, our search for the wounded ram ended also. The guides at La Palmosa were confident the ram was going to be found in the morning. Keith and the entire crew endured a long night in hopes that the ram was down.

At daylight we were grateful that the blood trail was spotted immediately. The hunt was still on. The ram was spotted and Keith had another 350 yard shot. Keith took the shot and his Boone and Crockett ram was down. Keith had completed a dream of his and Cole and I were there to see it. Sharing sheep camp with these two characters was gratifying and I am

so thankful to Cole Benton for the invite, Keith Stansell for his service and friendship and the family at La Palmosa for putting it all together.

Keith's Desert Bighorn Sheep grossed 186 inches and the happiness on all of our faces to see and harvest a ram like this was beyond dreamy.

La Palmosa is a special place, I am looking forward to two more hunts at this great facility on this great land in Mexico. I am accompanying Brendan Burns of Kuiu Ultralight Hunting on a hunt to achieve his grand slam in March 2017 and my father Michael, next January.

Here's to God, Country & Wild Sheep!!

Story by: Kirstin Maestri (The patient, loving wife of a wild sheep hunter)
Fence Creek Adventures



UP CLOSE....

For those faithful readers of the Rampage this is the third edition of my bear stories. For the last five years I have been privileged to bait black bear on a private ranch near my home in Bighorn WY.

The success on large trophy boars has been exceptional. A 13 year

many bears had visited the bait site. My picture gallery from the trail cameras was growing but not my trophy room. Large boars were on the camera but only at night. This spring the same pattern was developing; lots of bears on camera during the day but not the large older boars. I had been seeing a

out during daylight hours. That something showed up the day before Memorial Day; a big brown sow with a large brown phase boar in tow. The boar was badly rubbed and I really wanted a chance at the big black. I knew that the huge black would not stand for this! I cleared my schedule and planned to



old boar that scored 18" B&C and a 26 year old boar pushing the 20" B&C mark for my son Calvin and the ranch manager Chris Galloway.

Starting in 2015 it was my turn to be the hunter. In 2015 and 2016,

particular black boar for the last two years. He was back again and hitting the bait every two to three days. He obviously had been around a bait site before and only showed up at night. I would need something special to coax him

sit the bait for the next several days.

I love to hunt with my bow and was dedicated to taking this bear with it. I arrived at the bait site around 4:00pm on Memorial Day. The stand is only 22 yards from the

AND PERSONAL!

By Kurt Eisenach

bait, and the wind was blowing directly to the bait. Bears have an incredibly keen nose and I knew he would not show himself if he smelled me. I chose instead to sit on the hillside, across the draw from the bait. The open hillside was about 100 yards away, but my scent would not go anywhere he might pick it up as he came in. One hour before dark, after two smaller bears had visited the bait, the sow appeared out of the thick brush. Right behind her was the big black boar I had only seen in night pictures. As she fed at the bait he hung out a few yards away. The thick brush of the creek bottom allowed me to slip off the open hillside and within 25 yards of the pair. Watching them through some lighter brush, I waited, hoping they would leave the same direction they came in and give me a shot. As the sow started to leave, in the direction I had hoped, she stopped and stared right at me.

Being 25 yards from two mature black bears was getting real exciting. The big boar walked up behind her and stopped to see what she was staring at. This prompted her to keep moving and I knew he would turn and follow. When he did I drew and had a perfect quartering away shot at his heart and lungs. The shot hit home and the bear exploded out of the tiny meadow and into the thick brush. I was sure it was a fatal hit but with all the black hair it was difficult to tell if it was perfect. I waited about 10 minutes and then went to look for a blood trail. Not finding much in the first 10 yards and being by myself, I decided

tomorrow morning would be a better time to crawl around the thick brush with a wounded bear.

A bow is not much help on your hands and knees in the plum thickets.

The next morning with help in tow and a 12 gauge shotgun the trailing job was completed. He had only gone 40 yards up a well-used bear trail and died quickly.

The three of us had all we could handle to drag him on a tarp out to the meadow. The thick black

hide was beautiful; long and silky with no rub spots. He was over 350 pounds live weight and his age estimated at 12 to 13 years old by the Sheridan G&F biologist.

They took a tooth for more accurate aging and I will know more when that is examined.

The meat has been processed and the hide and skull went to Hartman's Taxidermy here in Sheridan.

I could never hope to take a better black bear with my bow. Now my freezer is full and my taxidermy bill is growing!



2017 WSF Chapter and Affiliate Meeting Polson, MT

In late June 2017, Steve Kilpatrick and I attended the WSF C&A meeting in Polson MT. It was hosted by the Montana WSF Chapter at the KwaTaqNuk Resort on Flathead Lake.

The drive up from Wyoming afforded Steve and I a great opportunity to discuss all things sheep related.

The agenda for the affiliate meetings covered several topics. We were informed of the current state of wild sheep disease issues both scientific and political.

The Montana chapter reported to the group on its efforts at the first Montana wild sheep, domestic sheep symposium.

Greg Schildwachter, "WSF's lobbyist", reported on their efforts in Washington DC and how we might get involved on the state and national level.

A presentation from Reeds Family Outdoor Outfitters on their fundraising opportunities for non-profits was extended to all chapters.

The joint membership opportunity with WSF and the advantages it provides were presented to the state and provincial chapters.

An open forum time was held each day for chapters to bring up issues of concern for discussion.

Ideas from raffles to banquet accounting practices were shared.

Great contacts with both National WSF people and fellow

chapter officers were developed.

A much better understanding of what we will need to do and provide while hosting this meeting in Jackson Hole 2018 was achieved.

The highlight of the event was the field trip to wild Horse Island on Flathead Lake. The wild sheep viewing opportunity there needs to be experienced by every sheep nut.

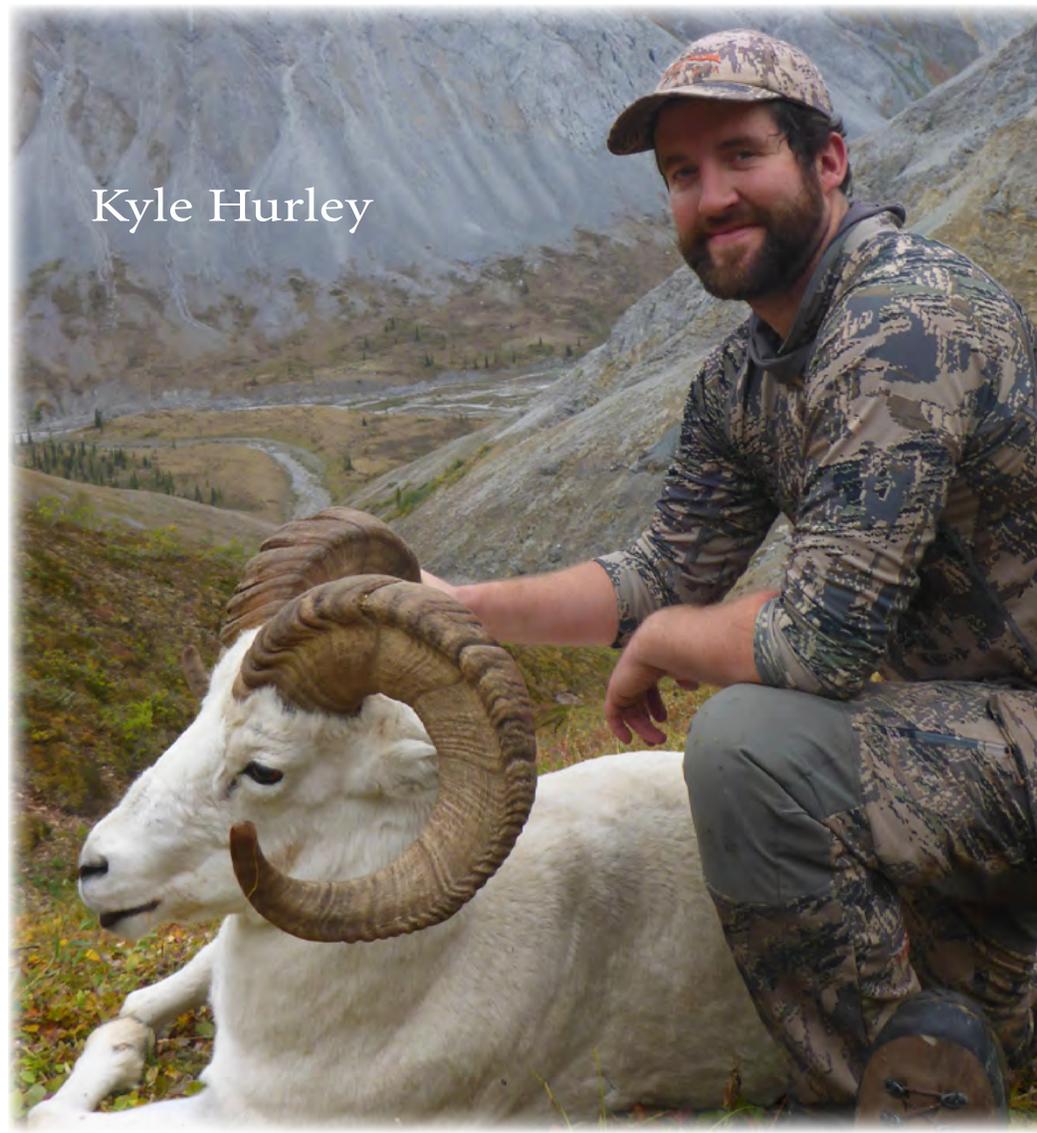
Have you ever
been 50 yards from
a 190 class ram?

Go to the island. It's worth the trip. The final evening included a cruise of the lake, a banquet and an auction on the resort's huge houseboat, "Shadow Cruiser".

Over \$35,000 was raised to be used by the Montana Chapter for wild sheep projects.

Thanks for the opportunity to attend this event and build experience and relationships that will help both Steve and I do a better job working for wild sheep in Wyoming.

Kurt Eisenach
Pres. WY-WSF



Kyle Hurley

A Month in the North: Father/Son Memories A Lifetime in the Making!

Kevin Hurley, WY-WSF Life Member #020 Kyle Hurley, WY-WSF Life Member #105

Like the TV commercials say, “priceless”! Spending 28 days with my grown son. Hunting, talking, laughing, riding, flying, glassing, and driving our way through the Yukon and northern British Columbia. Hunting Dall sheep, caribou, mountain goat, and moose. You could not have scripted this any better. WOW!

Roll the time machine back to the Wyoming WSF banquet in Casper, in June 2016. You’ll recall that long-time supporter Lynn Stewart of Dubois won the Wicked River Outfitters 2016 BC mountain goat hunt in the Life Member drawing. For several reasons, Lynn wasn’t able to take that hunt, so he generously donated the hunt back to Wyoming WSF, which subsequently conducted a phone auction. Long story short, I bought the hunt to help WY-WSF recoup some of the expense the chapter had incurred, and started planning an adventure. Since I had the good fortune to harvest a Wyoming billy in 2004 in the Clarks Fork Canyon, I wanted to give this hunt to my son Kyle, since his chances of drawing either a Wyoming or Idaho (where he now lives) mountain goat tag were no doubt slim. Given the terms of the original contract between WY-WSF and Booker from Wicked River, and the terms of the Life Member drawing, I upgraded to a second species hunt, so I could chase a big Yukon bull moose.

As a long-time donor/exhibitor at the WSF Reno Sheep Show, I visited w/ Booker; he was amenable pushing this hunt from fall 2016 to fall 2017. In thanks, I also booked a moose hunt for Kyle’s new bride Tess, so she could accompany us. Prep was on!

Knowing the dates of this BC mountain goat & moose hunt, and knowing how much I wanted to go on another sheep hunt, but with Kyle as the hunter in our reversed roles, in March 2017, at the WSF Midwest Chapter fund raiser in Minnetonka, I bought a combination Dall sheep/mountain caribou 2017 hunt, and was able to work out dates and logistics with Chris Widrig, the longest-tenured outfitter in the Yukon Territory.

Fast forward to August 19th, when Kyle flew to Whitehorse, Yukon; I had driven from Bozeman, working my way north through WA state and BC, hauling all the gear and the guns, working my way north through a very smoky British Columbia. The Alaska Highway is such an awesome route to drive!

On the morning of the solar eclipse, when many were turned toward the sun, wearing funky glasses, Kyle and I flew in to Widrig Outfitters’ Goz Lake base camp, in the heart of Chris’s 4,000 square mi concession. It took 4 days, more than 80 miles of riding, and countless elevation gain and loss, but Kyle was able to connect on a beautiful 10 year old Dall ram with a perfect heart shot from 321 yards. If you’ve never had fresh sheep ribs over an open campfire, you haven’t entirely lived! This was one of the happiest and proudest moments I can ever recall, right beside my son when he took his first ram...

Mountain caribou were few and far between, so ol’ Dad got skunked, but we had gotten what we came for. As we flew back in to Whitehorse on September 1, to get the ram inspected and plugged,

we shifted gears and then headed for Fort St. John, BC. On Tuesday after Labor Day, in sequence, Tess, then Kyle, then Dad flew a Super Cub ferry in to Booker & Amber’s Wicked River base camp, to begin the second half of our adventure.

The next morning, after gear was further sorted, we packed 8 hours into mountain goat country, in Booker’s 2,500 square mile concession, spanning beautiful Graham-Laurier Provincial Park. Aside from soaking in the incredible scenery, glassing till our eyes hurt, and drinking cold, clear mountain water from any creek, river, or side drainage, we occupied our time searching for mountain goats in the alpine basins and rocky crags. On Day 4 of this hunt, Kyle and Tess, accompanied by guide Cole Briltz, climbed into a high basin and connected on a nice young billy late that afternoon with another perfect 220-yard shot.

I was down below with the horses, glassing mountain goats when I heard the shot. Several hours later, this trio triumphantly scrambled down an incredibly steep slope, with smiles as wide as a mountain valley. Kyle connected on his first mountain goat; we spent the next day in spike camp, caping and fleshing the hide, savoring fresh back strap and tenderloin.

After a day’s ride back to base camp, and a layover night enjoying Amber’s excellent cooking, we turned our attention to finding a big Yukon moose. Day hunts out of the base camp didn’t produce, so we packed in another 6 hours to one of Booker’s cabin-based spike camps. Despite days in the saddle, hours

behind spotting scope and bino's, and seeing plenty of moose sign at well-used mineral licks and along the trails, the warm temperatures (upper 70s) kept moose in the thick timber. Unfortunately, we never saw a moose, so Tess and I were both out of luck.

As we packed up to ride 6 hours back to base camp, we heard the same wolves howling that we'd heard for several days. On a last-minute whim, we crossed the Graham River on foot, snuck through the

willows, and found 4 wolves on the edge of a big meadow. By the time we were in position, 3 of the wolves had moved to cover, but Kyle was able to connect on a young gray wolf. Our howls drew responses, but we weren't able to entice the other wolves back into the open. What a great way to finish off this hunt!

Those of you who know me understand what this experience meant to me, and what an opportunity this was for an outstanding adventure, hunting the mountain game that have filled my world for almost 40 years. With my only son. As I get older and slower, I realize I don't have all that many chances left to experience more adventures like this.

But, I'll keep trying, as long as I can...!

Thank you to Wyoming WSF for securing this BC mountain goat hunt. Thanks to Lynn Stewart for generously donating it back to the chapter. Thanks to Booker & Amber for their hospitality, flexibility, and incredible food. Thanks to WSF Midwest Chapter for securing this Yukon hunt, and thanks to Chris Widrig for the quality operation he has professionally run in a very remote part of northeastern Yukon Territory, for more than 32 years.

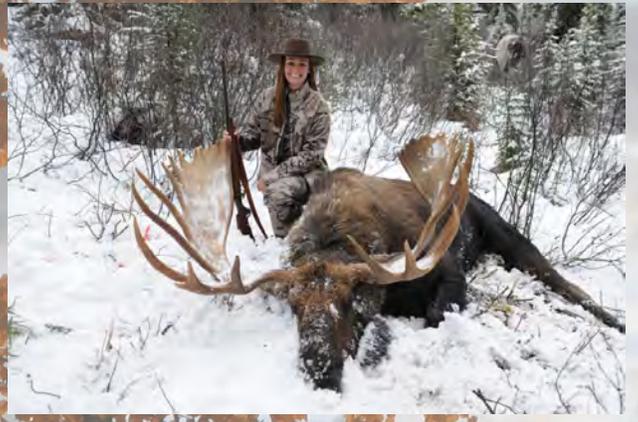
I will never forget this adventure, and I will always treasure spending a month with my son, Kyle in the Great North.

I'm proud of you man, and so happy for you...! I can't wait for the next adventure, whatever that might be...!!





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WSF GEARS UP FOR 2018 SILENT AUCTION!

The upcoming 2018 silent auction in Reno, NV will once again be sponsored by the Wyoming chapter and this year there are big changes to the traditional fund raiser.

The silent auction is moving to a new, larger venue just off the convention floor, adjacent to the merchandise floor space, and the <I> Club event.

This year there will be a new method of bidding on silent auction items that will allow everyone to participate via their phones. 501 Auctions will help the Wild Sheep Foundation provide a comprehensive electronic management platform, mobile bidding and expert staff to help. Registration will only take about 15 seconds, once that is accomplished an

application will be downloaded to your phone, and bidders can then watch their items and up their bids without going to and from the Silent Auction area. WSF understands not all of our members want or have the availability to download an app on their phones, so for those folks, we will be providing bidding in person at the Silent Auction area where a monitor will let you know where the bid is at the time of your visit back to the display area.

Donors will be happy to know that their products and donations will be viewed by tens of thousands of sheep lovers both through the online auction and by the convention goers.



TO ENTER YOUR DONATIONS INTO THE SILENT AUCTION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Dean Dijenno - 307.213.0998 • ddijenno@gmail.com or

Kim Nieters - 406.404.8764, knieters@wildsheepfoundation.org

We look forward to seeing you all in Reno!



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Our 2017 annual convention and fund raiser at the Ramkota in Casper was remarkably fun and successful.

Friday Night Social - More folks attended the social than ever before. Live background music by Sara Domek (Natl. BHS Center) and Erica Flom (Water for Wildlife) provided an enjoyable atmosphere for socialization. Sorry we ran a little short on food. We will order more for next year! A revolving slide show of sheep, members and their youth “on the mountain” also received praise. Keep those photos coming!

Complimentary Life Member Breakfast - A record 118 folks showed up to our 16th LM breakfast. Your passion for wild sheep is evident when 520 of our 750 members are Life Members! Simply amazing. One of highlights was LMs contributing \$3,800 to the WY-WSF Conservation Fund, which is being used to fund wild sheep projects into the future.

Membership Meeting - Attendance to the membership meeting was also excellent. Membership was brought up to speed on numerous topics and approved funding for 11 Grant In Aid projects totaling \$97,200. In addition, leadership changed hands with Kurt Eisenach being approved as the new President and Zach McDermott as the new Vice- President. New Board members are Adam Johnson, John Harris and Warren Youmans.

Ladies Sip and Paint - This activity was hit with 37 gals producing their own paintings while sipping on wine. They did have an instructor to help keep the wild bunch in order and provide basic painting tips. It was a good thing that the floor was covered with plastic!

Youth Activities - We believe in putting and keeping kids on the mountain as well as sheep. So we incorporated youth activities by recruiting Sara Domek, Karen Sullivan and crew from the Dubois Sheep Center along with Dr. Ryan Brock from WSF. They engaged a “herd” of youth in BH sheep ecology, archery and other activities throughout the afternoon.

Seminars - A full suite of seminar topics including transplants, habitat enhancements, sheep hunting, national Wild Sheep Foundation update and statewide BH sheep updates were presented. WGFD Director Scott Talbot also provided a general Department update. Approximately 125 folks attended and asked questions.

Banquet - There were numerous highlights during the Banquet!

- Ron Ball Award - our most prestigious award - presented to a most deserving Freddie Goetz
- Youth - approximately 50 youth were front-and-center for awards including 2 life memberships donated by the Conservation Fund, 2 custom log chairs, a youth cow elk hunt along with several other prizes and awards. Kids are the future!
- Attendees were asked to donate to the Conservation Fund. They generously donated \$13,700!!
- Wounded Marine Veterans Kirstie Ennis and Brian Meyer made short presentations and provided a short and inspiring video of Kirstie's life and determination to excel. WY-WSF and Hunting With Heroes will be sponsoring Kirstie on a Wyoming sheep hunt in 2018, thanks to a donation sheep tag from Keith Neustel (LM#98) and outfitting services by Trails West and Grizzly Outfitters.
- Kirstie Ennis announced the recipient of the 2017 wounded veteran BH sheep donated tag, Sara Harris, of Casper. Gap Pucci, of Jackson, donated his BH sheep tag for hunt area 7.
- Life Member Mtn Goat Hunt - Pat Pace of Cheyenne will be going to BC and pursue a mtn goat with Wicked River Outfitters, who full donated the hunt for our LM incentive.
- Auction - Many fine items were gifted and underwritten for our live and silent auctions and folks were quite willing and generous in sporting Wyoming's wild sheep. Some highlights include:
- Two Wy WGFD Commissioner licenses bringing \$13,000 to \$14,000 each.
- The Wy Governor's BH sheep tag brought \$95,000!!!

In summary, you have expressed your passion and generosity by generating a net of approximately \$180,000 to put and keep KIDS and SHEEP on Wyoming's mountains. WE THANK YOU!!



2017 Ron Ball Award Winner, Freddie Goetz

I would like to thank all the previous Ron Ball Memorial Award winners for choosing me as the 2017 Award winner.

I was totally surprised. I would like to apologize to everyone who was present at our fundraiser. I was just too emotional to even give an accept speech.

This award means a great deal to me and I will cherish it forever. I know my good friend Ron Ball was with me when I received this award. He was the best there is. Thanks again to all the previous award winners who made it possible for me to join such an elite group.

I will always be putting sheep on the mountain.
Thanks again Freddie L. Goetz #6

“THE RON BALL MEMORIAL AWARD”

THE WYOMING WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION’S HIGHEST HONOR



By
Kevin
Hurley

Senior Conservation Director
Wild Sheep Foundation
Bozeman, MT

Each year since 2003, the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation has presented what is known as the “Ron Ball Memorial Award”, in recognition of one of the Chapter’s original five founders.

Ron Ball was a rancher and outfitter from the Big Piney area who served as either President or Vice-President of Wyoming FNAWS (at that time) for 11 of our first 14 years of existence. Ron was a big man, whose presence and contributions were also huge.

Ron and his family were dedicated volunteers who organized many early Chapter events, meetings, and live/silent auctions.

Wording on the Ron Ball Award speaks highly of the type of individual Ron was, and what he did for wild sheep in Wyoming.

This award reads:

“Presented Annually, In Recognition of Outstanding Achievement Toward the Betterment of Wyoming’s Bighorn Sheep”

I was fortunate enough to be the first recipient of this special recognition in 2003, and this award holds a special spot on my wall. As you can see, over the past 14 years, a virtual “Who’s Who” of dedicated individuals have been recognized by the Wyoming Chapter for their contributions to Wyoming’s bighorn sheep.

- 2003 Kevin Hurley
- 2004 Jim Collins
- 2005 Gov. Dave Freudenthal
- 2006 Melanie Woolever
- 2007 Steve Kilpatrick
- 2008 Terry Cleveland
- 2009 Gary Butler
- 2010 Fritz Meyer
- 2011 Cole Benton
- 2012 Dennis Claman
- 2013 Bob Sundeen
- 2014 Tom Easterly (D)
- 2015 Doug McWhirter
- 2016 Lynn Stewart
- 2017 Freddie Goetz

The Ron Ball Memorial Award is presented during the annual June banquet. Nominations may be made by the WY-WSF Board of Directors and/or past award recipients; selection of the recipient is made by the past winners. So, if WY-WSF members know of someone they would like to see nominated for this award, please notify one of the current Board of Directors, or one of the past recipients.

None of us do what we do for wild sheep to receive credit or recognition. However, there are some individuals that do so much, and help lead the way, that taking a moment to look back, helps all of us move forward!

Freddie Goetz with his Area 19 Ram harvested in 2014 after 47 years of applying!



GRANT IN AID UPDATES

Ferris Mountain Wildlife Guzzlers - Miners Creek Guzzler Camera Trap Installation and Photos

The Rawlins BLM staff had the opportunity to finally mount and install a camera trap on the recently constructed Ferris Mountain - Miners Creek wildlife guzzler on Friday (9/9/17). This camera trap is set up to forward any triggered pictures to an email address (the camera only allows for pictures to be sent to two email addresses) via a Verizon cell phone data plan; so we do not have to frequently re-visit the project site to recover photo data. We have another camera trap to install on the Sand Creek guzzler site, but I'm not sure when that installation will occur. We plan to operate the cameras from spring through fall and remove the cameras and their hardware in the fall (November) of each year.

The camera set ups purchased are produced by Reconyx and each kit cost around \$1,650.00. Each kit contains a Camera (PC-900C), solar power unit, security box, and a high gain directional antenna. We custom fabricated a mounting pole for all the hardware and also installed a small cattle panel enclosure around the camera mount.

When we arrived at the Miners Creek guzzler location we documented both mule deer and bighorn sheep near the guzzler location and the guzzler tank showed signs of utilization by elk and mule deer; the tank was half full of water (400 gallons).

Over the course of the first weekend the camera trap captured pictures of both elk and mule deer utilizing the guzzler. I just wanted to share with folks these first few photos documenting the positive impacts these projects are already having on wildlife in the Ferris Mountain area. I placed a small sign on the camera trap documenting the purpose of the wildlife guzzler and thanking all our project funding supporters which included: Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, Bow Hunters Of Wyoming, Water For Wildlife,

Rocky Mountain Elks Foundation, Wyoming Governs Big Game License Coalition - Wyoming Wildlife Foundation, and the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust.

Thank you again for all your support, and I'll continue to share photos from the camera trap. I'm looking forward to our first bighorn sheep photos utilizing this development!

Thanks again,
Mike Murry
Rawlins BLM



GRANT IN AID UPDATES

Guzzlers installed on the Ferris Mountains

On July 21, 42 people hiked up the steep slopes of the Ferris Mountains and installed four wildlife guzzlers to benefit the growing Ferris-Seminole bighorn sheep herd. Guzzlers are systems designed to collect and store rain and snow runoff. The four guzzlers were installed on ridge lines in the eastern burned third of the Ferris Mountains, and are ready to collect water for sheep and other wildlife. Their main purpose is to increase high elevation water availability for bighorn sheep near lambing areas to improve their chances of survival. The Ferris-Seminole herd currently consists of approximately 150 sheep, supported by four transplants totaling 77 sheep into the Seminole Mountains between 2009 and 2015, and recently expanded into the Ferris Mountains by transplants of 24 sheep in 2016 and 22 more in 2017. The Wyoming Game and Fish management objective for the Ferris Bighorn Sheep Herd Unit is a post-season population of 300 sheep. The Wyoming Wild Sheep foundation has been instrumental in funding the capture, transplant, and habitat improvements needed to bring Bighorn sheep to the Ferris Mountains. Since the 2011-2012 wildfires opened up more of the Ferris Mountains as bighorn sheep habitat, the Bureau of Land Management has been actively involved in projects to further

enhance habitat for the newly transplanted animals. This year's installation of four guzzlers

to providing water, the most vital resource of all to wildlife," says Executive Director of the Water for



enhances bighorn sheep habitat by increasing high-elevation water sources and reducing the need for sheep to travel long distances to water. Water For Wildlife Foundation also played a major role in the coordination and installation process. "The Water for Wildlife Foundation is pleased with the successful outcome of the Ferris Mountain water project installation. Through the collaborative efforts financially and on the mountain from various foundations and agencies - thank you for your dedication

Wildlife Foundation, Erica A. Flom. Statewide Habitat Biologist Ryan Amundson says, "Currently, water sources on the upper portions of the mountain are very limited, resulting in long travel distances to permanent water sources. These daily treks can result in increased predation levels on wild ungulates, particularly fawns, calves, and lambs. By installing water sources near preferred bighorn sheep lambing cover and escape terrain, we hope to increase the survivability of bighorn

GRANT IN AID UPDATES

ewes, lambs, and rams. The Ferris Mountains have received transplanted bighorn sheep from Devil's Canyon (located east of Lovell, WY) over the last two winters. They are doing well in their new homes, but can do even better with better water distribution and some planned prescribed fires."

Two of the four guzzlers were installed within the Ferris Mountain Wilderness Study Area, with precautions to preserve the wilderness qualities of this area.

The 42 people accessed the remote sites by foot and installed the guzzlers in less than one day without any mechanized equipment - just hand tools and lots of sweat. Guzzlers were camouflaged with natural materials found near the site including dead trees and rocks.

In addition to bighorn sheep, the guzzlers will also provide water for other wildlife species including elk, mule deer, neotropical migrant birds, and small mammals. Remote, motion-detecting cameras will be installed at the guzzler sites to provide documentation of the wildlife species benefiting from this cooperative effort.

This project was a product of several generous funders including the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation(\$11,000), the Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition(\$12,000),

the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation(\$2,000), Bow hunters of Wyoming(\$2,000), the Water for Wildlife Foundation(\$3,000), WWNRT(\$2,500), the Sweetwater Conservancy provided sack lunches and 2 days of grill rental(\$477), and WY-WSF hosted the Saturday night steak feed(\$660).

The participants who provided technical expertise, manual labor, and other support to install the guzzlers represent the

Sweetwater River Conservancy at Pathfinder Ranches.

"The Ferris Mountain guzzler projects were an extremely ambitious effort on the Bureau of Land Management's part, and we could not have accomplished this workload without the support of so many different organizations and funding partners. It has been truly inspiring working with these folks to accomplish like-minded goals for the benefit of wildlife and their



Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Water For Wildlife Foundation, Bow hunters of Wyoming, Wyoming Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation, and

habitats, and nothing is more inspirational than working with a group of volunteers" says Mike Murry, rangeland management specialist with the BLM. The Wyoming Wild Sheep

GRANT IN AID UPDATES

Foundation would like to thank everyone involved for a job well done on behalf of Wyoming Bighorn Sheep. The Ferris and surrounding ranges are historic bighorn sheep habitat. Explorer John Stuart and six starving Astorians killed two bighorns along the nearby Sweetwater River in 1812. His party observed “innumerable” flocks along the Sweetwater and Platte Rivers. Joel Palmer and his party saw “large droves”

of mountain sheep four miles east of Independence Rock in the Ferris Mountains on May 31, 1846. Later, massive die offs occurred across the West and managers have since struggled to bring them back. Finally, the non-migratory, early lambing genetics of the transplants from Devils Canyon seems to be a fit for the Ferris Mountains. And now, the guzzlers will allow these bighorns access and to better utilize previously inaccessible and underutilized forage across much of the Ferris Mountains.

We will probably never reestablish bighorns to “innumerable flocks” but it’s certainly exciting to see a viable herd back in the Ferris.



GRANT IN AID UPDATES

Update on the Temple Peak Bighorn Sheep Herd in the Southern Winds

With significant and greatly appreciated funding from the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, collaborative efforts continued in the Temple Peak Sheep herd. These involved winter and summer helicopter observation flights, capture and radio-collaring, and monitoring of bighorn movements - important work that further enhances our knowledge and ability to conserve this historic population in the southern Wind River Mountains.

uncertain as to what summer areas these isolated rams occupy and whether they mingle with the Temple Peak herd.

or the day after capture (ewe was lethargic at capture and reluctant to leave capture site). Though the stress of capture was likely the immediate cause of death, both ewes being in poor health prior to capture was the ultimate cause. In addition, 1 of the Bull Lake rams died in May 2017, likely from lion predation but possibly pre-disposed from disease.



Fortunately, survival remains high as all 14 captured in 2016 are currently alive as well as 8 of 10 from 2017.

Flights:

A cold, January helicopter survey on the Wind River Reservation's three main wintering grounds showed the highest count of bighorns in at least the last 20 years - a good sign that this population, though small, continues to move in the right direction. During the flight, we counted 75 bighorns around the Washakie Reservoir area (44 ewes: 12 lambs: 19 rams). Add the 15-20 that occupy the North Fork Popo Agie Canyon, and that's a minimum count of 90-95 bighorns. In addition, we observed 8 rams in the Bull Lake area. Though technically not part of the Temple Peak herd, we were

Capture & Disease Testing:

Following a successful effort in 2016 during which 14 bighorns were radio-collared (11 ewes, 3 rams), we continued in March 2017 with helicopter-capturing and collaring another 6 ewes and 2 rams near Washakie Reservoir as well as 2 rams near Bull Lake. To our collective disappointment, the very "clean" disease status observed in 2016 was not to continue. All 10 sheep tested positive for combinations of *lucetoxin*+*Mannheimia*, *P. multocida*, and/or *M. ovipneumoniae*. Unfortunately, 2 ewes perished either while in-hand (necropsy showed severe fluid build-up in lungs that may or may not have been related to infection),

Movements:



GRANT IN AID UPDATES

Article courtesy of: Pat Hnilicka (US Fish & Wildlife Service), Daryl Lutz (Wyoming Game & Fish Department) & Art Lawson (Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribal Fish & Game Department)

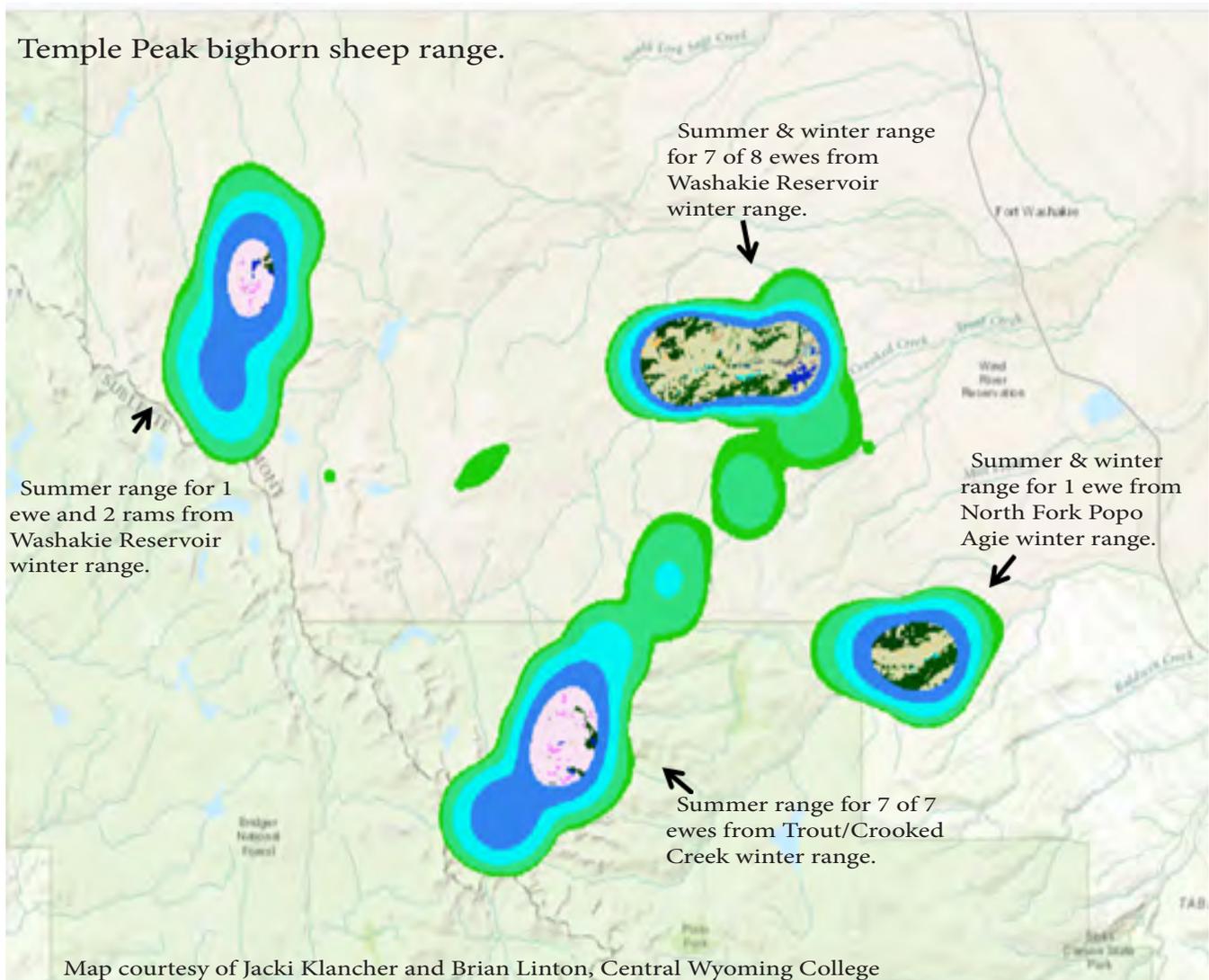
Understanding when, where and how these sheep move is of primary importance, and some interesting patterns have emerged. Sheep from adjacent winter ranges were completely different as to whether they moved to high-elevation summer ranges or not. Ewes from the Trout/Crooked Creek winter range consistently moved to high-elevation summer range of at least 12,000 feet (7 of 7 marked ewes), and 5 made round-trip forays in August back to stay on winter range (7,000 feet) for several days to, we assumed, visit natural

mineral licks. These ewes then returned to high elevation summer range. Bighorns in the Whiskey Mountain Herd have displayed similar patterns. In contrast, nearly all marked ewes (7 of 8) from the adjacent Washakie Reservoir winter range stayed at low elevation (less than 9,000 feet) and did not move to high elevation summer range. Likewise for the one collared ewe in the North Fork Popo Agie area. The variance in movements is perplexing. Hopefully further study will help us understand this difference.

Another interesting find:

one Bull Lake ram moved to high-elevation summer range and occupied the same areas as rams from Washakie Reservoir. And so, it conclusively appears the Bull Lake segment should be included in the Temple Peak herd.

On behalf of the USFWS, WGFD, and Tribes, we thank you, for this work would not have been possible without the generous support from Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation and its members.



GRANT IN AID UPDATES

WY-WSF Working With Private Landowners

By Steve Kilpatrick

One of the more difficult challenges in maintaining bighorn sheep populations in Wyoming is providing for separation between them and domestic sheep in order to prevent disease transmission. The WY-WSF is constantly seeking opportunities to pursue separation strategies. Thus, we recently struck a “deal” to maintain species separation with Hay Creek Land and Cattle Company, located along the Owl Creek drainage northwest of Thermopolis. They recently incorporated a band of domestic sheep into their ranch operations and concerns of commingling and disease transmission between the two species followed.

WY-WSF life member Jim Collins approached the family members and discussed strategies to provide for separation along the Owl Creek drainage. Hay Creek Ranch family member Josh Longwell, felt they could maintain separation if dilapidated livestock water structures could be refurbished within and along the lower reaches of their ranch. Historically, they moved their domestic sheep to the upper reaches of Owl Creek, where commingling could occur, because of the lack of water below.

Solution - WY-WSF and the Hay Creek Ranch folks partnered up to refurbish four nonfunctional livestock water structures in the Blondie pasture within the lower reaches of the Owl Creek. WY-WSF Board approved \$14,000 to revitalize 3 guzzlers and 1 spring structure in the lower pasture. Temporary tanks were also purchased to provide immediate relief prior to structure refurbishments.

This is a good example of WY-WSF’s boots-on-the-ground willingness to work with private landowners in addition to our public land managers “to put and keep kids and wild sheep on the mountain”.



GRANT IN AID UPDATES

Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp Update

By Jason Hunter, Regional Wildlife Supervisor, WY G&F



The Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp has been undergoing renovations this season. The renovations have been long overdue and will get the camp up and running once again hosting similar learning opportunities it has in the past and will include programs conducted by the National Bighorn Sheep Interpretive Center (NBSIC) in Dubois. With the exception of the new dining hall/kitchen area, all of these renovations have been to structural and infrastructure related items to existing buildings that have been in need of repair for many years.

Beginning in mid-May construction crews have been busy taking down dead trees, removing asbestos, installing new water, sewer and electrical lines, demolishing and rebuilding the dining hall and kitchen, digging, roofing, framing, installing new windows, and so much more. The

Camp sits within The Department's Whiskey Mountain Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA), and as the beginning of the WHMA winter closure approaches, contractors will be ensuring that all major external work is complete so that internal renovations can continue over the winter.

Finally, the NBSIC was instrumental in the additional fundraising effort for the Camp. A total of \$128,000 has been raised and \$30,000 of that came from the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation. The remaining amount came from approximately 100 other generous donors from Wyoming and around the United States. There has been a lot of time and money donated by several individuals over the past few years and a lot of this donated time came from

the Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp Working Group. The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission voted earlier this year to completely fund the approximately \$5.8 million dollar project and at the September meeting they voted to use the funds raised to complete additional projects to facilitate outdoor education, like the outdoor screened pavilion/classroom, which had been cut from the project due to funding.

A big thank you is due to all those organizations, foundations, and individuals who contributed to this project. A renovated camp will begin a new era of conservation education and continue to inspire the next generation of conservation leaders.

To view more updates and see more pictures, visit the Camp web page at: [Http://bit.ly/DuboisWMCC](http://bit.ly/DuboisWMCC).



GRANT IN AID UPDATES

How did he get here? Genetics for identifying wandering rams

Authors: Sierra M. Love Stowell, Holly B. Ernest

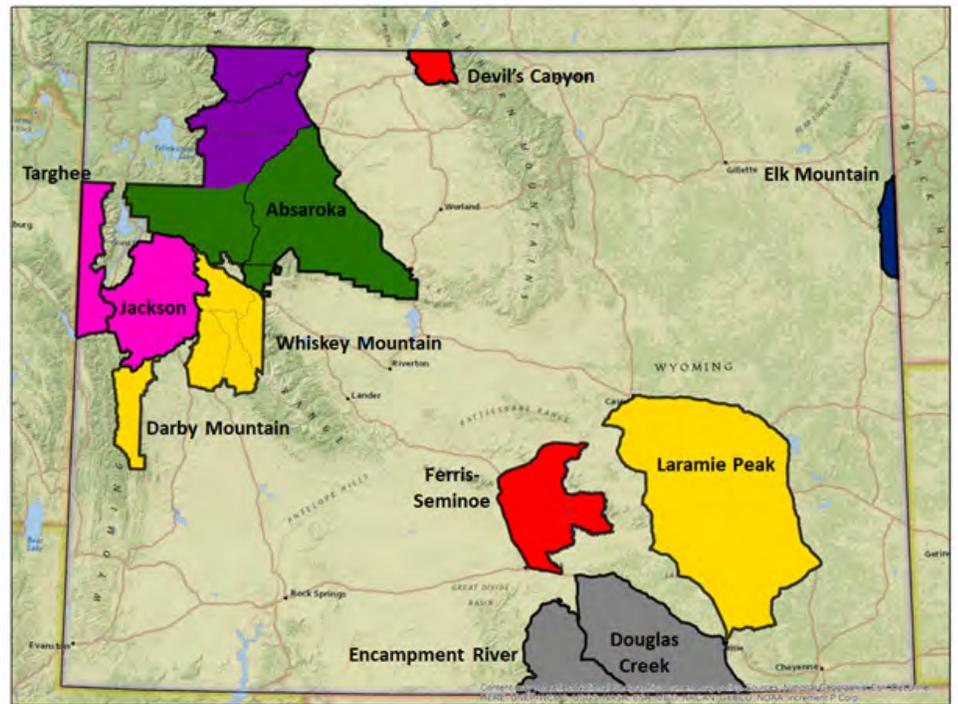
Every year, solitary rams are found in unexpected places, far from other herds and normal bighorn sheep habitat. Bighorns are herd animals, taking advantage of group living for avoiding predators and grazing more efficiently, since individuals in a herd can spend each spend less time being vigilant. The herds are divided by sex, with ewe groups including lambs and juvenile males, and ram groups with mature males. Both groups move following the seasons, but ram groups tend to wander farther throughout the year than ewe groups. Young males strike out from their ewe groups to join or form ram groups as they become socially and physically dominant. During the rut, ram groups disperse and males wander between rutting groups. These travels can range from a few miles to crossing counties. Such wanderings are a natural part of bighorn sheep biology but they can also pose a risk to the health of the herds they join. During their travels, wanderers may have come in contact with domestic livestock or other potential sources of disease, and bring those germs to new bighorn sheep herds. Those germs could then decimate a vulnerable herd. To protect the herds before a wanderer can reach them, the wanderers are removed. The Wildlife Genomics & Disease Lab at the University of Wyoming receives muscle or blood samples from these sheep. We're developing tools to identify where the wanderers might have started their journeys. The process starts with describing the genetic signature of the different herds in Wyoming and

the surrounding herds. Each herd has a unique genetic signal that makes it different from the other herds. We can tell that the sheep in the Absarokas are different from the Whiskey Mountain herd, and that the Jackson herd is different from the Absarokas. Sheep from the eastern edge of the state and the Black Hills are especially different from the sheep in the west. When we receive a sample from a wanderer, we compare its genetic makeup to the known herds, which are called reference populations. If a wanderer matches a known herd, we have strong evidence that it came from that herd. If a wanderer doesn't match any of the reference populations, he probably came from a herd that hasn't been sampled yet. For example, based on genetics we

can tell that a wandering ram recently caught in Wheatland probably came across the prairie from Nebraska or South Dakota, rather than nearby Laramie Peak.

Why does this matter?

Pinpointing the source herd for wandering individuals tells us a couple things. First, knowing the starting point for a journey can help us identify potential routes the wanderer may have taken and disease hazards he encountered along the way. Second, it can help us determine if a particular herd is the source for many wanderers. If many sheep are leaving a herd, it can suggest that the source herd has more sheep than the habitat can support, giving managers more data to decide whether to adjust harvest limits and other management strategies.



Caption: A preliminary map of bighorn sheep genetic groups in the state of Wyoming that have been analyzed to date. The hunt areas are colored by their genetics, so that areas from the same genetic group have the same color. When a wandering individual is captured, it can be matched to these source herds

GRANT IN AID UPDATES

National Bighorn Sheep Center Expanding our Education Program: LAMBS (Lessons, Activities & Materials about Bighorn Sheep)

The National Bighorn Sheep Center continues to enhance and expand our Education Program outreach this year, with support from the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, the Wyoming Community Foundation and many generous members and partners. We had one of our best visitation summers ever, with over 3,930 visitors between May and September alone! Here are just a few other highlights of the recent activities and programs at the National Bighorn Sheep Center:

- Over 20 public events including educational presentations, outings and volunteer field opportunities including wildlife-hazardous fence removal in the Whiskey Basin Habitat Management Area and a special Solar Eclipse “Wildlife Wonders” package offering in August;
- Expanding our Education Program, LAMBS (Lessons, Activities & Materials about Bighorn Sheep) with solid work from our Education Manager Karen Sullivan and our LAMBS Education Team, including over 270 direct student interactions such as classroom visits, education tours at the Center and education trunk use, with an additional 6,500+ youth and families reached during outreach activities at the Wild Sheep Show in Reno, NV, the Wyoming Outdoor Expo in Lander, WY and the WILD Festival in Jackson Hole, WY;
- A brand-new logo and “look” through a rebranding effort & a soon-to-be-launched new website with the goal of better marketing the Center and our educational programs and outreach;
- A new film for use at the Center and online is in the works. It will highlight our local Whiskey Mountain herd, its management, challenges facing the herd and our community’s pride in bighorns. Production support from the WY Community Foundation, the WY Wild Sheep Foundation and our members;
- Bighorn sheep research and habitat data collection with the Whiskey Mountain Technical Committee, volunteers and other partners which involved the capture and collaring of bighorns in the Dubois area this past spring and habitat assessments, and;
- Partnering with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department as the fiscal sponsor for the Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp renovation project which is set for completion in May 2018.

As we look to 2018, which will be our 25th Anniversary Year, the National Bighorn Sheep Center’s Board of Directors, Staff and Volunteers are more excited than ever to be helping to educate more people about bighorn sheep and the conservation of wildlife and wild lands. As we continue to grow our education reach, we will work to inspire and educate youth, families and adults about bighorn sheep and the conservation of wildlife and wild lands.

For all the news on upcoming events and special programs, including our Bighorn Bash Annual Fundraiser on November 4th and lots more, check out our website at www.bighorn.org.



“At the Speed of Lichens”

By Eric Maichak

Every year around mid-May, hunters swarm the internet and overwhelm the capacity of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department website following anxious anticipation of the lottery for limited quota tags. One of these coveted tags includes the iconic bighorn sheep. For some, decades of failed applications mandate consistent accumulation of preference points, a magic number needed for a successful draw. For others, chaos drifts into luck and the wait to draw is less than the time it takes to finance a mortgage. For all who are fortunate enough to draw, the tag presents unparalleled opportunity for success, failure, and all manner of risk. Despite initially staring at the monitor in disbelief, eventually holding the tag in hand was proof that the time had truly come for that opportunity.

In the late 1800s, several hundred thousand acres east of the newly created Yellowstone National Park and west of the quickly developing basin of agricultural destiny were set aside as a federal timber reserve. Here was a rugged, majestic landscape of jagged peaks and valleys, forged by the unimaginable volcanic force of the creeping caldera and carved by gnawing erosion, complete with resilient habitat and bountiful wildlife resources. This is a hard, unforgiving land that conjures tattered, sepia-toned images of sinewy horses sagging under panniers, stout rams lazily springing up sheer cliffs, and steely-eyed nameless hunters and companions kneeling in respect of their pursuits, conquests, and fatigue. In Pinchot's buffer of many uses between Teddy's lasting stamp of conservation, and northwest of Buffalo Bill's playground base camp town, lies Wyoming bighorn sheep Hunt Area 2.

Fantasy is rarely reality, and the unknown leaves but two options to either go in cold, or go in prepared. Hours, days, months blur in a redneck training montage: pushing through the pre-dawn fog at the gym gaining strength, endurance, and flexibility;

Monday morning meetings at the range questing for 3" groups at 400 yards; scouting trips to find sheep, perennial water, flat ground, and comfort with bears; and sifting through the barrage of questions, advice, gear, and copious solicitation from outfitters, taxidermists, and grand slam advocates. It's surprising who can find you when they want to.

Less than 24 hours till opening day and the black Tacoma crawled through the river, across the alluvial plain, and ultimately to the end of the 2-track at the narrow canyon mouth. Companions and stock were absent thanks to last minute work obligations and schedule changes. Amidst the humid fragrance of decaying vegetation and roaring creek, another truck with local plates sat quietly, dew covering the windshield. Competition. The dense pack bulged yet rode well atop eager strides up the valley, hiking staff resonating with each planting. Beyond the cobble and cottonwood, the trail dissolved into the switchbacks, sweat, and solitude values of the North Absaroka Wilderness.

At 11,000 feet on the divide, a thousand feet and hour climb ahead of not one but now two groups of sheep hunters, clouds streamed past in the pale moonlight. The tent nose-pole continued to buckle under 40mph wind but became easy to ignore. Bears gnawing on ankles probably feel worse. After a fruitless opening morning glassing for rams and attempting to locate an eastern route away from the parties that grew to 4 horses and a Jack Russell terrier, a game trail zig-zagging up the saddle to the west and into the next basin was irresistible. Just another 1,000 feet down, up, and down to get into it. Oh well, not much else to do up here except explore, glass, and push limits.

The next 5 days fulfilled a friend's wisdom: "This is a game of the lowest lows and highest highs. Be patient. You have time." Lungs, ankles, and back hardened to the daily routine of breathing wildfire smoke, climbing unstable terrain, and sleeping on an unrepairable pad. One hunting party

abandoned the area. The Jack Russell party connected with a fine 8-year old ram to the southwest. An all-day attempt to intercept a group of rams along a cliff band ended in vain after failing to accurately predict their route; they went low, unseen, and drifted effortlessly around the peak a mile away. See ya.

Five days into the hunt and food resources dwindled along with confidence in the basin. Nothing materialized in the bowl where seven rams loafed a week earlier. Frustration peaked and plans changed: secure camp, hydrate, pack extra water, and prepare to overnight in the adjacent basin to the southwest. An hour later near the top of the couloir, a quick glance uphill revealed a sheep, grazing and unaware, in the shadow of the cliff some 300 yards uphill. It was also a ram.

Prone on the breccia, quality of the other three rams, distance of the shots, and difficulty of the terrain were judged. The weather will not get better than this. The work schedule will not diminish. Friends are on-call to assist extraction thanks to a loaned locater beacon. From nearly 11,500 feet, the No. 1 sang, echoes from the divide fading into the still morning air. The decision was final.

Confirmation, reverence, elation. Cell phone coverage was insufficient, but the locater appeared to successfully transmit the "sheep down, need extraction" message successfully. A short drag downhill and a bed-site and rock outcrop provided a convenient location for processing. Despite the inherent potential noise of the talus and lack of ambush cover, vigilance increased. Fairy tales of bears running to gunshots invaded the mind. Six hours later and camp was in view 1,000 feet below. No rescue party yet. The descent into camp provided an appropriate test for what was to come.

At camp, gurgle of the pseudo-glacial creeks and rivulets bouncing about the cliffs began to sound like voices, perhaps horses snorting as they powered into the hanging basin. But there were no people.

There were no horses. There were no silhouettes on the skyline pass, waving and cheering as they approached. There were only ewes, lambs, and mountain goats peering down occasionally as they fed far above. There were only wishful thoughts. There was only what appeared to be another successful transmission of the message requesting extraction.

Dinner, coffee, sunset. Perhaps the rescue party was networking, preparing stock, and finalizing a plan for the morning. In the event that hiking out was inevitable, camp was consolidated into the pack except the stove and sleeping bag. Despite the weight of the pack, without the skull, it was manageable. Preparing to spend the night and defend the meat and skull, camp was now at the highest nob in the center of the basin, above and well away from the trees and din of the creek. Spray was in-hand.

It had been a while since an all-nighter, and never in a setting like this. The moon, nearly full and unclouded, illuminated the basin, outlines of trees, rocks, and the horizon clearly distinguishable. Constellations, shooting stars, and satellites drifted across the night sky and helped pass the time. Rocks, possibly dislodged by sheep, occasionally trickled down the cliffs promoting consciousness.

Quick surveys of the surrounding area revealed no large moving blobs. The shoulders of Orion rose above the horizon at 4:00. And finally, first light. And thankfully, no bears.

6:30, coffee, silence. Based on the distance, terrain, and weight of the pack, it might be 10 to 12 hours to make the truck. With night temps barely below 40 Fahrenheit, the meat had to get out of the picture as an attractant and into a cooler. Go big or go home? Go big, and go home. With pack shouldered, staff in one hand, and the other hand clutching the skull, the arduous grind ensued at 8:00.

Four hours, two basins, and a few thousand feet of gain-loss-gain later, the view over the drainage leading to the truck was ecstasy. Descending into the drainage, a ewe and lamb provided escort past a large excavated hole previously unnoticed on the initial assault to out climb the other hunting parties. With temperatures and upslope winds rising, vigilance peaked until the hole was well out of site. 2,000 feet lower, quadriceps burning, and boots finally hit cobble. Despite several past lower-body sports injuries, the most precarious stretch of the hike was over, and there were no apparent physical issues.

Direct afternoon sun baked the pack, the pungent smell of meat and blood was now obvious. Flies swarmed. The valley never ended. Every break became longer than the last. It was harder and harder to get moving again. Trapezius muscles burned from the sheep skull that became heavier and

heavier no matter which hand carried it. Gravity kept shoving the pack lower and lower. There was less than a sip of water left in the bottle. It wasn't fun anymore. Blue-streak insults directed at the distance and terrain were at an all-time high of abrasive creativity.

With shadow swallowing the ever-narrowing valley, over-the-shoulder glances and shouts to bears perceived or actual were more frequent. There was nothing left but the mental image of the tailgate, the most comfortable spot in the universe.

At eleven and a half hours of hiking, the pack, staff, and skull finally came to rest in the back of the truck. From the tailgate, pain and soreness faded into the trance of the roaring creek left behind seven days earlier. Inserting the key in the ignition was simultaneously as familiar and foreign as the smell of the cab. Staring blankly, melting into the bucket seat, squeaks and groans of the suspension yielding to the 2-track gave way to the growl and whir of tires on gravel and eventually pavement.

Beyond the pass, the moon, tinted blood-red from Montana's smoke, rose over Heart Mountain. In the truck, cell coverage and 2-way communication confirmed that the wrong button had been pushed; no message requesting extraction was deployed or received

and far behind,
in the rugged
land of Hunt Area 2, sheep
picked their way among
the talus and rock, moving
at the speed of lichens.



"Ram Tips to the Sky"

By Jeff Brock

Nineteen years! I have been waiting for this tag for 19 years! My dad started putting me in for a Wyoming tag, since I was old enough to hunt in Wyoming, which is 14 years old! It took 18 preference points to get it! I was finally going to get my first Big Horn Sheep ram! My dad was as excited as I was, so now we had to start preparing for the fall hunt by getting into shape, lots of target shooting, reloading bullets, looking over topo maps and talking with friends who have hunted up in that area, to get advice on hunting in that area!

We live west of Cody, Wyoming, with Unit 2 in our backyard, so we are fortunate to know this area a little and how extremely rugged it is. My dad has a friend, Eugene Brumbaugh, who offered to take me up to our hunting area over Labor Day weekend, and help me since he had professionally guided up in that area in previous years. My dad, Steve Brock, offered to go up and be our Camp Jack, so we packed in 11 miles into a remote area using our horse, mule, and 3 of Eugene's horses. We got the camp all set up, and we had a day before the season opened to spot for rams using our binoculars and spotting scope and make a plan for the opening day. That 5-day trek turned out to be hot, sunny, and dry and gave us many opportunities to see 19 rams and a few ewes, but nothing exceptional. We also saw 21 mountain goats, mostly nannies and kids.

The following weekend my Dad and I went again with our horse and mule for a very aggressive day hunt.

Did I mention that Dad's horse is a black Draft/Mustang cross with dread locks of mane hanging over his eyes and neck and dinner plates for hooves, while my mule, TJ, is a black jack mule who is spry and thin, so we made quite a scene while we were trudging up the terrain in hopes of finding a ram! After riding 6 miles, in the most rugged, tree fallen, rocky place I had ever seen, we found a great place to tie up the stock and hiked up to a ridge overlooking a huge cliff face to spot for critters. Again we saw many rams – one which looked like a HUGE one, but they were all too far away and in such tough terrain, we knew we couldn't get one out and get home the same day. I was really trying to get my hunt done in one day so I wouldn't have to take time off from work! This day ended up to be a 16-hour very hot day, and I was wondering if I was going to be able to pull it off in one day, but I was still determined to try to stick to my plan, but my dad had other plans!

My Dad had hired Josh Martoglio of Shoshone Lodge Outfitters last year to get his Big Horn Sheep. Josh is a pro with a passion unheard of and eyes that can spot sheep distances away like an eagle. He led dad on a hunt that ended up with a successful end with a 160-ish ram, and many memories to savor and talk about around the fire. Well, dad called Josh to see if there was anything he could do to help with my hunt. I also have to mention I worked and lived as a wrangler for a couple years so Josh and I are great friends! Josh was excited and said he could squeeze me in if his clients filled their tags before their scheduled hunt ended! He said a one-day hunt was tough and didn't give him a lot of time to "gitter done", but he would have the troops out there and they would do their best!

The following Saturday, Josh called and we made a plan for him to pick us (yes - Dad was going to go along too)! We were to be picked



up at 6:30 am Sunday morning ready to rock and roll! We drove up to a glassing point and looked for rams along the cliffs for a couple hours. We met Tim O'Leary, Josh's guide, there as well. We saw zilch in that spot, so we drove to a trail head and we saddled up his horses and loaded packs and took off for another lookout ridge. There was now a Black Labrador Retriever, Dax, joining our string! Dax just happens to be Josh's 1-1/2 year old mascot and goes on all his hunts with him! I got to ride Joker, a mule, and Dad rode Pearl, a big bay draft cross. We rode about 5 miles to a ridge overlooking a huge cliff face. Jordan, Josh's brother, and Lorenzo, a sheep guide from Mexico, were up glassing another area where it was very cold, miserable, and windy with 1 foot of snow. They spotted a couple rams and were going to keep an eye on them while we pursued this.

We tied up our horses and while eating lunch, we spotted 5 rams and a couple ewes- one ram was a ¾ curl, but nothing to write home about. Tim & Josh decided to go up to another glassing area, and a half hour later Tim came running back all excited and told us Josh sighted "a monster of a ram! Are you ready for an aggressive, long, steep hike?" I determinedly said, "YES!"

While Dad and Tim stayed put to watch from afar, I gathered up my gear on my horse and led another pack horse down a steep hillside, remounted and rode uphill about 1 mile. We met 3 hunters on their way out, Josh was worried they may have spotted my monster ram, but to his relief, they said it was too rough of terrain for them and they were heading out. Josh & I continued riding and then found a spot and tied our horses up. Josh asked me if I wanted to use his long-range rifle, and I quickly agreed to do so

as I didn't want to miss a chance on getting this brute! Little did I know, but his gun weighed a whopping 12 pounds, and I was going to be carrying it to the spot where we would get into a position to use it!

After we got to a point where we could see this monster, which appeared to be a full-curl, we sat for 45 minutes. Josh set up a shooting bench using two day packs for a rest on the steep, loose shale hillside in wait. The ram finally stood for 60 seconds to stretch, but I couldn't get a shot in due to bushes being in the way! We waited for another 45 minutes with my neck straining to see through the scope, and charley horses tearing into my thighs. Josh advised me that when the ram stands again concentrate ONLY on his body not his horns! He also told me how to position myself so the neck strain would be less! Oh the sight I saw - this sheep was laying, but looking up into the crisp blue sky and slowly moving his head so that his horns could be seen and portrayed like his crown - caramel colored glory with broomed tips - quite the display for this King of Rams with his horns to the sky!

What seemed like an eternity, the ram stood again and looked around. He looked right down at us and I was worried that he had spotted us. He walked over to the right a little, but I couldn't get a clean shot! Josh said just stay on him. As the ram took one more step, I squeezed the trigger and shot. I was looking up at him and he was about 200 yards away. I didn't hear the usual thud you hear when bullet meets muscle, but figured it was because the ram was up above and sound carries up. The ram was hit, but disappeared!

We waited about 20 minutes while gathering up gear and whooping and hollering, and then hiked up the rocky, cliffy terrain until we

got to the kill sight. We spotted hand-sized spots of blood every 10 feet and followed it a huge cliff where there was a beautiful, small waterfall. We couldn't find the ram anywhere up there, and after glassing a bit, Josh spotted my dead ram way down below. It had fallen several hundred yards off of several cliffs and landed 70 yards from where I had shot it! The first thing I thought was, "Oh no! The horns are going to be ruined!" But Josh screamed, "You killed a monster, Jeff!" What a moment of celebration we had with many more once we notified Dad and Tim to come up and see what I got!

There were pictures galore taken of this dandy of a ram! He was a full curled ram that appeared to be 11 years old! As Tim and Josh prepped the ram for being packed out, many stories were told, lots of laughter, hugs and handshakes and of course pats and snacks for Dax galore! I carried out the Ram's head, cape, and a day pack, Dad carried a quarter, and Tim & Josh carried everything else out to where the horses were tied up and after loading everything on the horses, we rode out to the trail head and met up with Jordan and Lorenzo- it was 8:30 p.m. by the time we had everything all loaded up and ready to head back home to a dinner my mom had made for all of us!

Who would think you could get a monster ram in a one-day hunt? We did it! I was at the right place, at the right time, with the right person, and great friend, Josh Martoglio. To experience this with my dad only made it that more special! My ram has a SCI green score of 175-5/8. The bases are narrow, which is typical for their genetics in this area; otherwise it would have scored higher. He was 11 years old! He now is at the taxidermist, while I patiently wait a year for him to be displayed on a pedestal!

“I am a Sheep Hunter”

by Kirsti Ennis

After being injured in Afghanistan, losing a leg, fighting for my life, and being forced into a medical retirement from the United States Marine Corps, I was lost. After serving for 6 years, at the ripe age of 23, I found myself looking for my purpose once again. I found myself in the outdoors; it saved me. The mountains intrigued me; they kept me hungry for life. I have been an avid hunter for years, but had never done a hunt that I considered to be physically demanding with or without my leg.

Last year, at the Wild Sheep Foundation's annual sheep show, I made two promises to the audience. A promise that I would keep fighting, one foot in front of the other, and a promise that I would one day be able to say I was one of the elite; that I would be a sheep hunter. Thanks to the generosity of Jim Lyon, Jeff Burwell's Alaska High Peak Adventures, and Wounded Warrior Outdoors, I found myself in the Tetlin Indian Reservation on my very first sheep hunt.

I had researched the Dall sheep plenty and admired their pristine white and peculiar behavior, but

nothing would ever compare to the first time I saw them through binoculars. We hiked tirelessly, to go up, only to come back down. It was freezing, we were soaked, I was in pain, but I was happy.

I would be lying if I said sheep hunting was easy on one leg. I fell, I hurt, I ached. I was

They towered above us as we scrambled through scree, low crawled through the river, and eventually worked our way up. For two and a half long hours we clenched to the side of a mountain, losing daylight quickly. I honestly thought our chances were blown for the day. Then, my guide Hoby, looked at me with a crooked smile and said, “We’re going to make a move.”

A beautiful full curl, lamb tipped ram sat ever so conveniently behind some rocks, refusing to stand, lazily eating some grass. It felt like fifteen minutes that I sat behind the rifle before he moved. The moment he stood, I was ready. From 478 yards, the ram never moved again. My head fell into

my hands and I cried. I cried for the mountains humbling me. I cried for the journey we just sought out on. I cried for the ram, for all he provided, and for showing me that I am still full of grit and capable of doing what most will never do on two legs.

I can now tell the world, I am a sheep hunter.

frustrated with myself and caught myself fighting back tears at times. I have climbed two of the highest peaks in the world safely, but managed to break two prosthetic knees on this sheep hunt. Patience has never been a virtue I was blessed with. I was impatient with myself, and found myself wondering what it would be like had I done this with two legs.

After days of hunting, and nearly turning around, we found ourselves in ram city. I felt as though rams surrounded us.



Photo Credit:
Matt Guthrie

Bighorn Bash

Annual Fundraiser

Saturday, November 4th

Dubois, Wyoming



NATIONAL
BIGHORN
SHEEP
CENTER

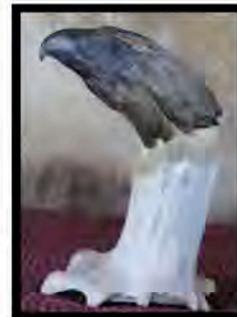
We welcome you to register for the National Bighorn Sheep Center's single largest Annual Fundraiser, the Bighorn Bash! Registration for the night of the event includes a fantastic dinner, live and silent auction, games and much more. To register, please visit www.bighorn.org, or please contact us at info@bighorn.org or by calling 307-455-3429 to purchase your dinner tickets. "Big Four" Raffle tickets are also available online (you do not have to be present at the Bighorn Bash to get in on the Big Four Raffle-we will ship to winners). **Space for the event is limited and tickets sell-out early, so register as soon as possible.**

THIS YEAR'S BIG FOUR PRIZES ARE:

- Two night stay for two people during the month of March 2018 at **Brooks Lake Lodge**. Package includes transportation by snowcoach to the Lodge from the highway and meals during the stay.
- Hawk head carving on bison horn by **John P. Finley** of East Fork Arts.
- 12-Piece Franklin Mint Collector's "The Sportsman's Year Hunting and Fishing Knife" Set and Case. Donated in Memory and Honor of **Paul Good** by **Candy Good**.
- Custom designed and created elk ivory silver neck piece made in Lander, WY by Eric Olsen of **Olsen's Western Store & Trading Post**. Chain is adjustable and can be worn in a multitude of lengths. Truly a one of a kind jewelry statement!

DRAWING NOVEMBER 4, 2017 AT THE BIGHORN BASH!

\$10 PER TICKET OR \$50 FOR SIX TICKETS



As a nonprofit organization, we depend on supporters like the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation and YOU to make the Center successful. Your financial support helps keep the Center open year-round, our education programs running and assists herd research and necessary updates to our exhibits. We need your help now more than ever so that we can continue to improve these programs and the Center as we enter our 25th Year in 2018. Learn more about all of our programs and happenings online at our website or come visit the Center. Your support during the Bighorn Bash is very important to this success. **Register for the Bighorn Bash no later than October 15th to be included in the early bird drawing!**

On behalf of Bighorn Sheep and the Board of Directors and Staff, a hearty and heartfelt Thank You for your support.

Members are encouraged to submit photos for publication in the RAMPAGE as well as in our website galleries. Please send your photos via email to: info@wyomingwildsheep.org.



Russ Gorman Cody Area Ram



LMS Leo & Carrie Goss with their Dall Sheep



LM Zach McDermott is kicked out of the < 1 Club!

Chris Galloway with his Griz



Kirstie Ennis with her Dall



LM Joe Kondelis with a Wyoming Area 3 billy.



Member's Gallery



LM Frank Maestri public land buck



LM Donnie Robbins Area 19 Ram



Dave Fehringer with his Area 4 Ram assisted by Mack & Joni Miller

BLAST FROM THE PAST

DO YOU KNOW THIS GUY? (Answer on Page 3)



LM Dan Hinz with his Sandhill Crane



LM Meade Dominick is kicked out of the <1 Club!



Nick Dobric with an archery elk!

“Searching for a Stone in a Boulder Field”

By Eric Johnson

As hunters we know about patience and perseverance, we just don't know when and how much is needed. Little did I know how much booking this stone sheep hunt with Yukon Stone Outfitters in the Yukon Territory 3 years ago was going to test me.

2017 finally came around and I trained all summer and was excited by the time August 22 rolled around. But wait, I had committed to driving to Whitehorse all 2100 miles by myself, a feat in itself! After a 3 day drive I arrived in Whitehorse and met with Aaron, who told me he was flying into base camp in 30 minutes and I could go in early. I spent the next 2 days learning that the Pelly Mountains makes it's own weather and I was going to see lots of low clouds and rain/snow. On the 3rd day I was flown to another lake where I meet my guide Kurt and wrangler Nick. We packed the horses up and then we rode 30-40 miles over 2 days through 6-10ft high willows and over a snowy mountain pass to our first sheep camp. The country looked great, but I only saw bear, wolf, and moose tracks on the horse trails, nothing else.

Fast forward to the 6th Morning, we hiked straight up the mountain to glass for sheep. With the valleys choked with willows we would look

for ravines or chutes lined with rocks and boulders to ascend the mountain. (only slightly easier!) Once on top we glassed all day and we only spotted one band of 5 rams many miles away. The next morning we rode the horses to get a closer look at these rams. We were able to find them again, they were beautiful, color variations from light to dark, but they were all young, maybe one being close to legal. The next day we packed up and moved camp to the next drainage over.

This valley had a few caribou in it but no sheep that we could see from camp. On the 9th morning we climbed up to the top of mountain and glassed, hiked along the ridge, and glassed some more. We saw some sheep scat but no sheep in the many good looking basins. It wasn't until after lunch that we finally saw



2 rams low on a distant mountain in the trees and bushes below a big boulder field. We spent the afternoon in a rainstorm getting closer to the rams. Once we got to where we thought they were, we were still 2 miles away. The rams looked to be legal, one dark one had a nice low curl. As a bonus, we spotted 2 other rams across the valley, one had a goofy horn and the other was a white ram.

On the 10th morning we found an easier route to access the mountain that had the rams. After hiking in, we were unable to find the dark

ram with the low curl, but we found the goofy horned and white ram. We stalked close to them but decided to pass on these rams as they were borderline legal too.

Where had the original 2 rams gone? The mountain they were on was big, long and tall. Did they go over the top? Or were they hiding in the trees.

On the 11th morning we climbed up the east end of the mountain and hiked up to the ridge line and worked our way west, checking the north side of the mountain for rams. No sign of the 2 rams. Once we approached the highest point on the mountain we started side hilling the south side through boulder fields and we came to an abrupt corner and we could see where the 2 rams had been 2 days before. I sat down and put the bino's on the area and I turned to Kurt and told him the rams were bedded 800 yards across the boulder field from us! I think we all were a little too excited. The rams had us pinned down as there was no cover between us just a boulder field. They got up and started feeding away from us. We would move when their heads were down feeding. We got to around 600 yards and they moved over a crest in the slope. We picked up our pace, scrambling over the rocks until we were on the crest of the slope. We were having trouble finding the rams in the rocks, and then one step too many, and they spotted us first and were off and running. We had got in too close, and we did not see exactly what direction they had gone. I remember Kurt saying spooked rams go up into the cliffs. At this point we all knew we had blown it, and then the weather changed, fog

rolled in and it started snowing. By the time we had scrambled back through the boulder field to our packs it was a full on snow squall. We descended to get out of the storm and decided to let the area rest overnight and come back in the morning to hike the entire mountain looking for the rams.

The 12th day had us climbing up to the top of the mountain and glassing every basin, chute, slope we could see. It was a clear sunny day for a change and made for good viewing. We worked our way the entire length of the mountain and then dropped down 1000 ft or so on the west end. No luck finding any rams. We realized we had hiked some 8-10 miles and would have a long trip back too. We turned around about 5pm and climbed back up on top of the mountain. We all were exhausted and our food supply was pretty thin or gone at this point. I kept glassing each basin on the way back. Coming up to a particularly small rocky chute, I looked down in the rocky abyss and saw a small patch of grass in the boulders. I put the bino's on the spot and I saw 2 bedded stone rams! I quickly took the range, adjusted for the steep angle, and backed away from the edge. Setup my pack for a rest to shoot from on the edge of the cliff. The ram stood up a few minutes later. It took 3 shots to bring the dark ram down and watch him fall off the cliff. Wow what a change of events. Someone was watching over us! After high fives, pictures, caping, and quartering the ram, we watched the sunset and started our hike off the mountain at 10:30pm in the dark. We inched our way down the cliff and side-hilled through the steep boulder fields, sheep grass, willows, and spruce trees to the valley below. It started raining for the last 3 miles of our journey back to camp. We reached camp at 4:30am and

everyone was up waiting for us! We had been up for 20 hours and hiked at least 20 miles.

I knew this concession was a low density stone sheep area but this hunt gave me a new understanding for finding a stone in a boulder field!

With lots of positive patience and perseverance one can find an old ram hiding on an out of the way mountain.



Eric
Johnson

“I Finally, Actually, Have A Bighorn Sheep Tag!”

By GayLynn Byrd

GayLynn Byrd is a current Wyoming Game and Fish Department Commissioner, avid hunter and wild sheep enthusiast. She resides and manages a ranch with her husband in the Douglas area, the soil of her roots. They are committed to producing high quality habitat for their

her name in the hat for a Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep tag. She was serious. A Stone and Dall's sheep had already eased some of her sheep hunting bug, provided her with life-time memories and found their way to her ranch house wall. But, there was that Rock Mountain bighorn, that perpetuated the longing.

had finally happened! Of course, I made lots of calls to inform every one of my good luck and dialed up a family friend that had promised to take me after a sheep if I drew the tag. He was almost as excited as I was.....He loves to hunt sheep! We made a plan - took an early trip to area 1 to scout for rams , then found 3 young strong guys to

help us pack in camp, and up the mountain we went! It was beautiful country...But steep! There were no well-traveled trails - we just found our way - much like the sheep travel, I guess! After a long hike, we set up camp and made plans to be on top of the mountain early the next morning. We saw lots of young rams - then late in the day, saw a legal dark caped ram that really caught my eye! We looked for a way to get to him,



livestock and wildlife. The Byrds have been engaged in multiple aspects of wildlife management including outfitting, hunting for themselves and managing a ranch in a way that balances the needs of wildlife and livestock. GayLynn didn't just casually toss

GayLynn provided the following summary of her experience:

“I answered my phone in the spring of 2012 to hear - “Congratulations!....You drew a sheep tag!” I was in total disbelief - after 30+ years of applying, it

but it wasn't going to happen - too many cliffs, and other sheep in the area. Ditto for the next day. We hiked back to camp, had a nice fire, meal, and enjoyed the peace and quiet of the mountains! Off we go again for the top of the mountain, but before we get there, we see

sheep.....YES...the one we want is in the group! They had fed over the mountain during the night! I just had to get in position and shoot! And it was done - I had gotten a Wyoming bighorn sheep. We took lots of pictures, caped the head, boned out the meat, and headed for camp - downhill all the way! What a great trip - the people that helped, the scenery and the experience of it all were a dream come true."

I asked GayLynn what the most memorable part of the experience was and she responded with two things. One, the ecstasy and thankfulness of finally drawing the coveted tag, she truly had one in

hand. Two, the air was sooo thin up there where the sheep reside. While GayLynn feels plenty comfortable straddling a horse, her hunt was one hundred percent backpack. Yep, one of those mentally and physically tough gals, with Wyoming roots. We, and the wildlife of Wyoming, are fortunate to have folks like GayLynn committed to six years of volunteer time on the Game and Fish Commission. They are passionate about the conservation of our wildlife. Her experience with the multiple, and ever more complex, sides of wildlife conservation prompts her to focus on balance and compromises which do not jeopardize the future of your wildlife.

The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation sincerely thanks all of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Commissioners for their passion and commitment to our wildlife.

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“Halloween Ram”

By Hilda Sexauer

When I first moved to Pinedale WY in 1996 my co-workers told me that if I ever wanted to hunt bighorn sheep I should start applying now. I never gave it much thought beyond filling out an application every year. However in 2016 that changed. I drew a 23/8 tag. I was used to backpacking and fishing this country but I have never looked at those mountains from a hunter's perspective. Well, at least not the granite peaks above 10,000 feet. I was pretty certain I was physically in good enough shape for the hunt but I knew heights were going to be a challenge, particularly those gnarly rock ledges and sheer faces

of granite. However, if you want to hunt sheep you need to be in their habitat. I was ready to take on the challenges. My expectations were to have a fun, see wildlife, learn new country, learn about sheep behavior, and learn how to hunt them. If I actually got a ram, that would be a bonus.

The hunt started in Bear Basin with two of us. We (my husband and I) are both experienced backpackers but novice sheep hunters. Our gear was packed in the first twelve miles. We backpacked the rest of the way to the magnificent land of granite above 11,000 feet. We dealt with chaotic weather: warm, cold, sleet, snow, rain, wind, and lightening. Those conditions, particularly the lightening, made sheep hunting difficult. After four days we only

saw ewes and lambs. The weather turned for the worst so we packed camp and hike the fourteen miles to the truck. Though we never saw any rams, I learned new country. I worked on my patience and my ability to sit still and glass.

My second trip was to the same area but with an experienced sheep hunter and wildlife biologist Dean Clause. Heights continued to be a challenge. For me it was about trusting my hunting partner. I took one granite face and rocky ledge at a time. Trust, trust and more trust. I realize that for most people, this would be no big deal. For me, it was an accomplishment. I was falling into a routine: get up early, hunt until dark, eat, sleep and start the process all over again. That sounds like a typical hunt but it felt different when sheep hunting. One evening we made an approach on three rams but they were too far for a shot. The next day we waited for them. Hours past, visibility decreased, rain/sleet, and darkness was slowing moving in. No rams. The weather changed that night to a full force wind and snow storm. There was twelve inches of fresh snow on the ground in the morning. The wind howled and snow continued throughout the day. The two man backpacking tent and the sleeping bags were home for the day. The next morning we emerged from the tent to a field of snow and a bright blue sky. It was absolutely beautiful. The air temperature was cold, our water was partially frozen, and our boots were as hard as rock. We found tracks the next morning heading off the mountain, probably from last night or early morning. It was also time for us to move off the mountain. We hunted our way down the snowy and icy talus slope





to our campsite for the night. Nine days and time to hike those same fourteen miles back to the truck.

It was now October. It snowed more and more drifts formed. For the remaining hunt days I was with another experienced sheep hunter and biologist, Kyle Berg. During a one day trip we found four rams not that far away. Three hours later with worn out legs from hiking through drifts to my waist (his knees), we finally got in position; so we thought. They moved. Though the urge was to continue to pursue the rams, the wise decision was to back off, hike back to the truck, and start fresh the following day. It was dark by the time we reached the truck, nearly five hours later.

The hunt continued for nine more days in the Gypsum and South Fork Gypsum drainages. We found rams but I was unable to get a steady rest for the shot. I was frustrated with myself. There really was no need though; I knew my hunt was already more than I expected. I got the challenge I wanted.

There was now only three days left to hunt. The evening before the last day Dean, Kyle, and I found a group of rams on Big Sheep

Mountain. The next morning we found them bedded down. We waited. It was cold, snowy, and windy. They eventually stood up and presented themselves with a long downhill shot with a strong crosswind. I didn't connect but the 270 flush worked great. Because of the high winds and blowing snow, the rams had no idea what the heck just happened. They started to move up the mountain, and we started moving along the top of the mountain in their direction. We didn't know which draw they would climb. By luck alone, the two rams climbed the draw right in front of us. I didn't notice the snow and cold anymore. It no longer mattered. Thirty-six yards in front of me were the rams. Unfortunately, I initially didn't have a clear shot due to several rocks in front of me. I waited and waited until I got the green light from my hunting partner behind me. One shot, three rolls, and the ram was off the mountain and out of sight. It didn't seem real. We finally found him in a boulder field at the base of the mountain. I smiled.

I continued to smile as I took my time admiring and thanking the beautiful dark coated, snow white nosed ram.

I thank Dean and Kyle for their willingness to not give up and to continue to hunt with me until the last day, last hours of the season.



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1



4



7



2



5

Youth Photo Captions

- 1.) Kiana Brunette with her first elk
- 2.) Kelli(Josh)Kilpatrick, Emily & Levi
- 3.) Bridger with LM Uncle Mack Miller
- 4.) Keyton Brunette, nephew of Laurie Marcovitz with a dandy buck.
- 5.) LM Drake Amundson's 1st archery bull elk.
- 6.) Thayne and Logan Rutherford and JonDavid Tator with a rare double on antelope near Elk Mtn.
- 7.) Jennie, Jhett & Jax Taylor with their antelope.



3



6



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Winter Fund raiser/Banquet/Field Tour to be held in Jackson on December 1-2, 2017!

Friday, December 1st

2:00-5:00 PM: Board Meeting, 49er Inn and Suites

5:00-9:00 PM: Informal Gathering and Hors D'Oeuvres at the 49er Inn and Suites- \$15

Saturday, December 2nd

8:30-3:00 PM: Meet at 49er Inn and Suites. The field trip will consist of a tram ride to the top of the Tetons to view and learn about BHS and Mtn Goat management in the Tetons, then a vehicle tour to either the Gros Ventre or National Elk Refuge to learn about mangement of the Jackson Hole BHS herd. We may witness a sheep capture by WY G&F. If the weather is bad we will view Mtn Goats in the Alpine area.

The tram fee will be about \$15-20 payable that day. A Brown Bag lunch is available for \$12.50 each.

3:45-5:00 PM WY-WSF: Membership Meeting, 49er Inn and Suites

5:30 PM: Cash Bar, Raffles,Silent Auction items, 49er Inn and Suites

6:30 PM: Buffet style Dinner featuring roasted NY Strip loin and roasted pork tenderloin with all of the fixings for \$30, children 18 and under eat free.

Formal Presentations During/After Dinner include:

- Sarah Dewey/Aly Courtemanch-BH Sheep/Mtn Goat management in the Teton Range
- Aly Couremanch- management update for the Jackson BH Sheep Herd
- Doug McWhirter - 2017 Harvest Update

Register on line at: [www. Wyomingwildsheep.org/store.asp](http://www.Wyomingwildsheep.org/store.asp) for Friday night, Saturday lunch and/or dinner by Nov 25th or return the registration form with check or credit card info.

To make your own lodging arrangements, please call: 49er Inn and Suites- 330 W Pearl Ave, Jackson, WY 83001, Phone (307) 733-7550, webpage: <http://www.jacksonhole.net/property/49er-Inn-and-Suites>. Rooms start at \$100 per night,25 rooms blocked under: **Wy Wild Sheep**. Room blocks expire on November 15th.



WY-WSF 2017 Winter Meeting Registration

Informal gathering and Hors D'Oeuvres from 5-9 PM Friday, Dec. 1, 2017 at the 49er Inn and Suites, 330 W Pearl, Jackson, WY

Number attending = _____ Total Cost @ \$15 each = _____

Field Trip - 8:30-3 PM Saturday, Dec. 2 2017 at the 49er Inn and Suites, 330 W Pearl, Jackson, WY

Tram Ride to the top of the Tetons at the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort to learn about BH Sheep and Mtn Goat management in the Tetons and a vehicle tour to view and learn about management of the Jackson BH Sheep herd to either the National Elk Refuge or the Gros Ventre drainage. WGFD biologists may conduct sheep captures during this trip. All weather dependent. The tram will cost \$15-20 payable that day.

Number attending = _____

Lunch choices to be picked up at 49er Inn include sandwich, chips, a piece of fruit, cookie, and bottled water.

Ham and Cheddar Number of ham lunches = _____

Turkey and Swiss Number of turkey lunches = _____

Roast Beef and American Number of roast beef lunches = _____

Total Lunch Cost @ \$12.50 each = _____

Banquet meal at the 49er Inn and Suites beginning at 5:30 Pm. The menu includes roasted NY Strip loin or roasted pork tenderloin with all of the fixings

Number Adults attending = _____ Total Cost @ \$30 each = _____

Number 18 + under attending = _____

KIDS 18 + UNDER ARE FREE

Total Event Costs = _____

Name: _____

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

List names of those who are attending with you: _____

Credit Card # _____ EXP. Date: _____

Mail your registration form with check or credit card info to: WY-WSF, P.O.Box 666, Cody, WY 82414 by **Nov 25th.**

Feel free to call Dean DiJenno at (307) 213-0998 for questions or to make alternative payment arrangements.

Call the 49er Inn at (307) 733-7550 to make room reservations by NOV 15, listed under WY WILD SHEEP.



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Welcome to Grizzly Outfitters, LLC. Our specialty is Wyoming and Montana trophy mule deer, antelope, and elk hunts. Grizzly Outfitters has been in business for over 25 years. We offer excellent quality animals as our repeat clients can testify. Our hunt area is exclusive on 245,000 acres in one block covering both Wyoming and Montana. We have a complete record keeping program and acquire yearly records on each animal taken. The teeth are analyzed to determine age, weights are taken, location of harvest, and the condition of the animal are all recorded.

We at Grizzly Outfitters, LLC pride ourselves in having some of the best guides. Pepper, Tyler, Pat, Jess, Colby, Adrian, Ed, and Brad have all been involved in our operation for many years. They know and understand the game patterns and the terrain.



Our success rate runs close to 100% due to these qualified guides. They are the foundation of Grizzly Outfitters, LLC.

Our hunts are four days hunted on private, BLM, and State lands. You will be guided 2x1 or 1x1 which ever you choose with four wheel drive pickups and on foot. These are spot and stalk hunts. We offer both rifle and archery hunts. We can handle any type of hunt regardless of your age or physical condition.

Our main lodging is the Cabin Creek Lodge, which is our personal residence, and the Squaw Creek Camp is used for the Wyoming season. We offer excellent accommodations with all the comforts of home. We employ two full time cooks, so be ready to gain some weight with our home style meals.

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Mike Merigliano, has been contracted by the Bridger Teton Forest to retake historic (approx. 100 yr) photos on the B-T Forest. He has graciously offered to include comments on BH Sheep sign and changes over the past 100 yrs that may impact BH Sheep.



E. Blackwelder 163 and 164 . Courtesy of the American Heritage Center. University of Wyoming

August 22, 1911



M. Merigliano

August 22, 2017

Doubletop Peak and environs from the head of West Dell Creek. Gros Ventre Mountains.



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THESE PHOTOS WERE ALL TAKEN IN THE 2016 SEASON



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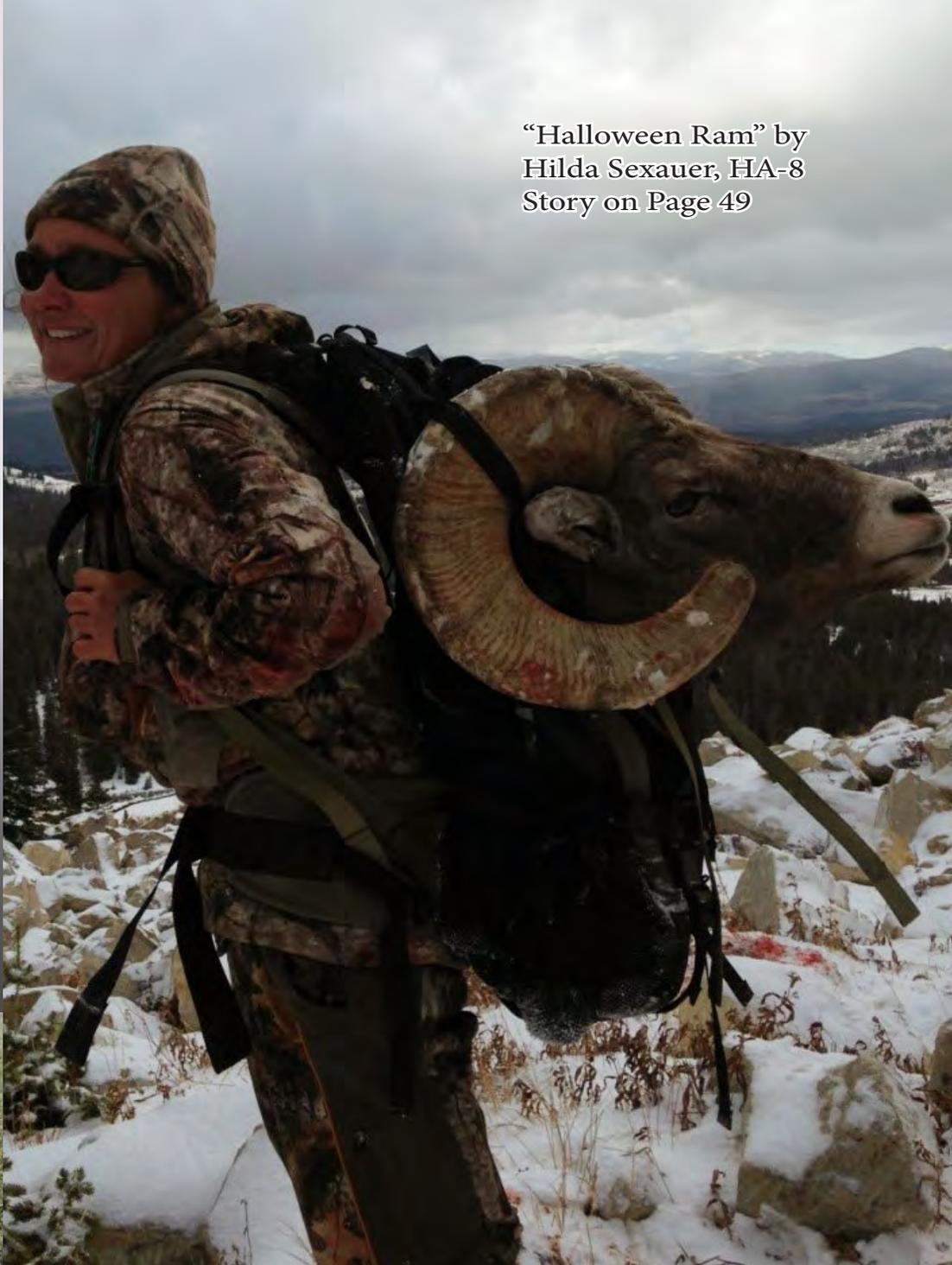


Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Membership Renewal

Your renewal date is listed on the poly bag's mailing label right below your name. If your membership is expired, or will expire before the next issue, renew today at:
www.wyomingwildsheep.org/membership.asp.

**Coming in the
Spring 2018 Issue!**

**Ryan's Mtn Goat
Zach's Dall Sheep
Dale Sims & Ray
Lozier hunt with
Wicked River**



**"Halloween Ram" by
Hilda Sexauer, HA-8
Story on Page 49**

Join us for our winter meeting in Jackson, WY on December 1&2, 2017. Registration information can be found on page 54.

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<http://www.WyomingWildSheep.org>

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