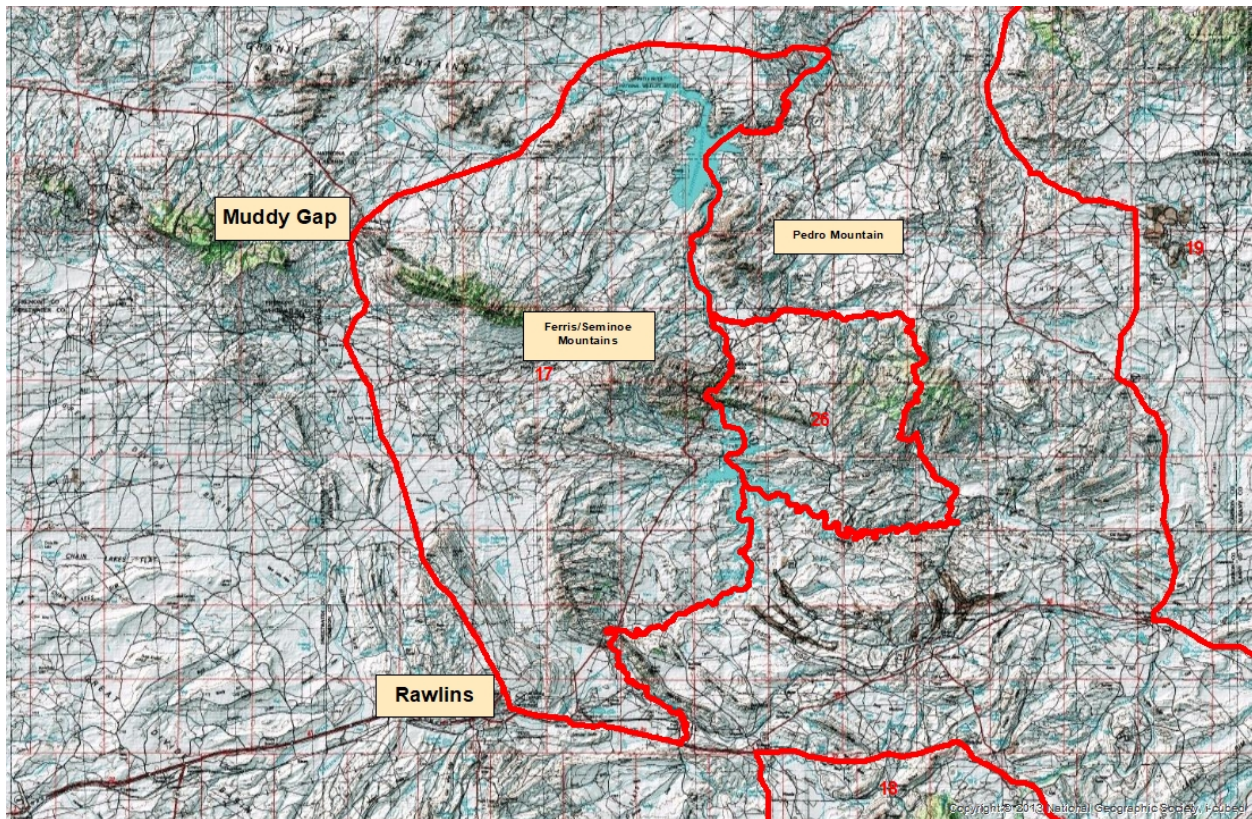


Ferris/Seminole Sheep and the Pedro Mountains

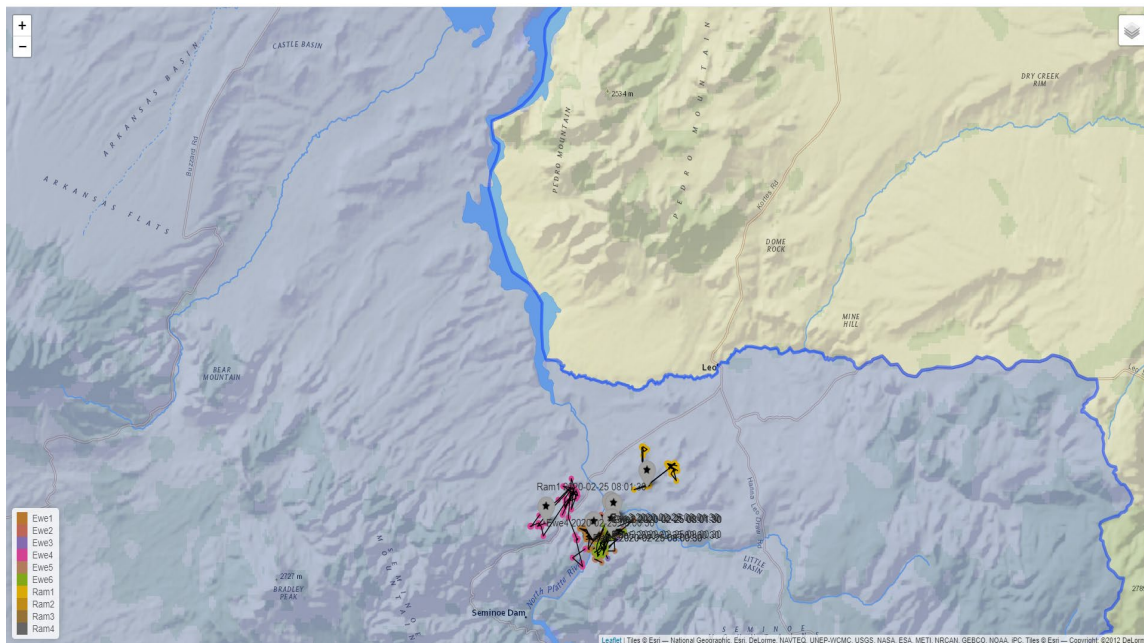
By Daryl Lutz

On Sunday, February 9th, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department coordinated the collaring of ten bighorn sheep (6 ewes and 4 rams) in the Ferris-Seminole Herd Unit. . Bighorn sheep near the Miracle Mile in the Seminoes and on the east side of the River in the Bennet Mountains were collared in response to the recent Pedro Mountain fire that engulfed over 20,000 acres near the Seminoe and Bennett Mountains. As the landscape recovers from fire it may result in ideal bighorn sheep forage areas with grassy, rocky slopes free of timber. These areas are outside of the Herd Unit and in locations where WGFD does not manage for or desire bighorn sheep due to potential disease concerns.



The fire and likely subsequent improved forage may increase the likelihood these bighorn sheep will wander and mingle with domestic sheep. This potential interaction could result in bighorn sheep acquiring harmful pathogens that cause diseases such as pneumonia. These diseases can lead to significant mortality in bighorn sheep. The new GPS collars will give managers prompt warning if any collared sheep move north toward the Pedro Mountains so that preventative measures can be employed to prevent disease transmission and/or interactions with domestic sheep. WGFD personnel are working cooperatively with area sheep producers in the event bighorn sheep wander near their domestic flocks. A great example of collaboration between livestock producers and wildlife managers.

Since February 9th, the collared bighorn sheep have stayed near the Miracle Mile or in the broken country south and east of the Kortess Road. We hope they stay there.



The bighorn sheep were captured, collared, and sampled for pathogens by Native Range personnel who, as always, did an outstanding job! These deployed collars will also provide additional knowledge of bighorn sheep habitat use, movement patterns, and disease/pathogen status. This will be particularly good data to have especially in the Bennett Mountain portion of the herd unit. This project was funded by the Wyoming Outdoor Weekend, the Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, and the Wyoming Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation – Thanks to all!!!