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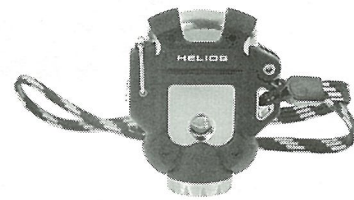
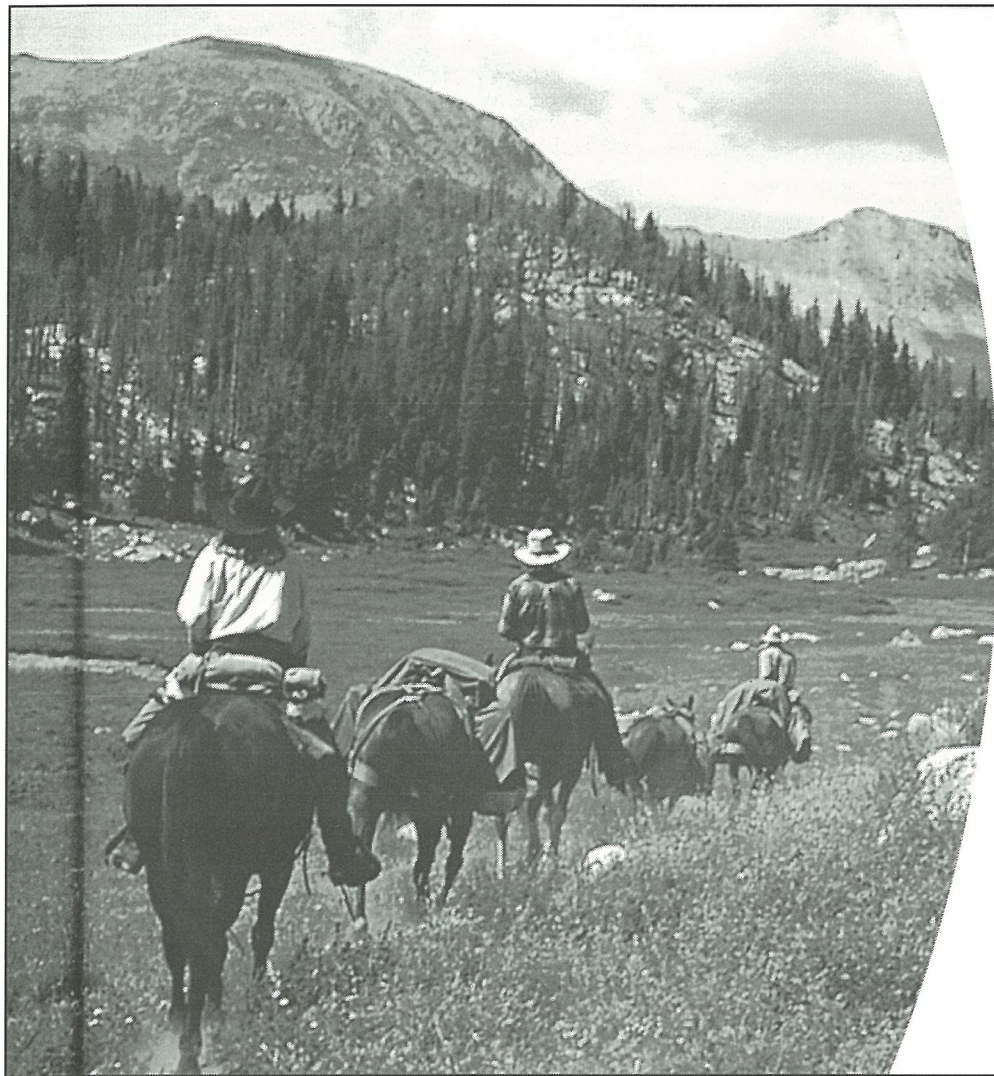
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Wyoming Chapter FNAWS

WINTER 2003



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Wyoming FNAWS Board Meetings

Wyoming FNAWS holds its winter board meetings on the first Saturday of December. The general membership meeting is held the first Saturday in June at the Wyoming Chapter's annual fundraiser. Details and locations will be posted on the Wyoming Chapter Web site.

Funding requests for consideration at the winter board meetings are due no later than November 1st. Requests for consideration at the summer board/general membership meeting are due no later than May 1st. The mailing address is Wyoming FNAWS, P.O. Box 845, Dubois, WY 82513.

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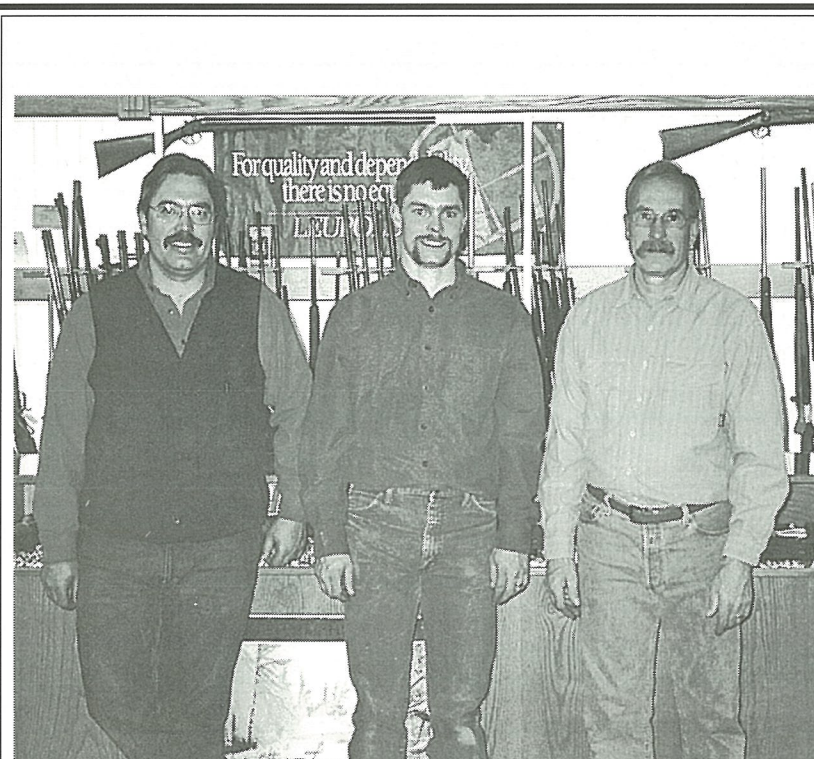
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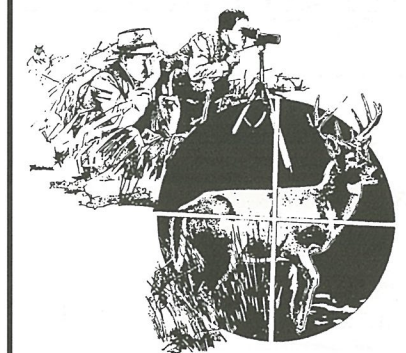
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From left to right, Luke, Adam and Dave

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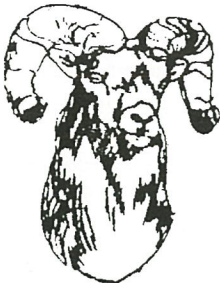
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, what a great year. We received moisture in the early summer, and even though it was very hot, we had a lot of grass. Wildlife in our area of northeast Wyoming looks very good with a lot of fawns on the deer and antelope. We've taken a lot of coyotes out of here in the past three years.

Speaking of coyotes, we're in our first year of trying predator control on Whiskey Mountain to see if we can cut down on the coyote population and increase the lamb crop. This is a three-year project and is off to a good start with proof from autopsies that these coyotes on Whiskey are eating bighorn sheep.

Another big accomplishment for Wyoming FNAWS was the Moose Creek allotment waiver, which Jim Collins worked very hard to achieve.

Hopefully, the biggest step forward this year was the Wyoming FNAWS Board—Wyoming Game & Fish meeting at our family cabin at Burgess Junction. We met with 20 of the main G&F employees who work with and make the decisions for our bighorn sheep. Our goal was to move our sheep program ahead and place more emphasis on bighorn sheep. This two-day meeting, July 14th-15th, was a great success. Many goals were set, and another follow-up meeting in the summer of 2004 will see how many accomplishments have been made.

Your board is spending many hours and days working for our membership and bighorn sheep. We can always use your help. Look forward to seeing all of you at our June 4th and 5th convention.

Cole Benton

Editor's Notes

Congratulations to our friend and Wyoming G&F Biologist Steve Kilpatrick of Jackson.

Steve was recently awarded with the inaugural Craighead Wildlife Conservation Award. He works tirelessly for the Wyoming Chapter and all of us would like to congratulate him on this well-deserved honor.

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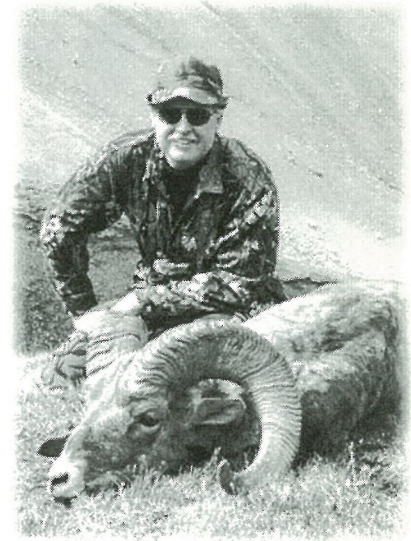
H U N T R E P O R T S

Life Member Brenton Scott Shares His Alberta Hunt

August 29th found me boarding yet another aircraft... Fortunately, instead of yet another business trip, this one was taking me to Calgary, Alberta, Canada for a Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep hunt. Alberta, the land of legendary bighorn hunts. Man, like a dream come true to have this opportunity. I was met in Calgary by my outfitter & guide, Edith and Pat of Edith Nagy and Pat Dueling Outfitters. We went to base camp at the Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch the following day. All was made ready for the trip in the next day and Sunday morning, we were headed for sheep camp. It's a nine-hour horseback ride in (29 miles). This is a no motorized vehicle area. Needless to say, that first day was long and grueling. How much stock does it take for a hunt like this? Eight horses, two pack dogs, one guide, one outfitter and one hunter. What a crew! The weather was incredibly hot most of the hunt. As a matter of fact, the hot weather held until the morning of the trip out, when it snowed on us through the night to make it another tough go on the way out.

Edith Nagy runs a great outfit and I can't say enough great things about Pat Deuling, my guide. I'd wanted to hunt sheep with Pat for a long time. I had gotten to be friends with him many years ago when he was guiding for cats with Marc Hubbard in the Okanagan of B.C. Pat is, of course, the same guide so well known to many sheep hunters from his years with Arctic Red. People that hunted with him there will remember fondly his pack dog Charli. Charli has gone on to the hunting grounds in the sky, but I had the pleasure of have her daughter, Heidi, and her granddaughter, Chuck (so named because she's so much like Charli), along as pack dogs on this trip. They do a great job keeping bears out of camp and are superb company in the wilderness! To say that both Edith and especially Pat, being my guide, gave 120% effort would be grossly short changing them. The horseback ride in aggravated a previous knee complaint, so Pat was careful to be sure that I didn't cripple myself to the point of not being able to climb. As we glassed and glassed and rode every day, Pat would remind me he was saving me for one big climb when the time came. The time came on Sunday, the 7th of September.

We'd seen a 12-year-old that was magnificent but who had apparently read the Alberta game laws and broomed himself back beyond 4/5ths to make himself illegal. Sneaky sheep. It was sad to watch that old warrior for three days and know he'll never be legal and end up as wolf chow. On the 7th, Pat and I were hunkered down at the bottom of a blind canyon. We were talking about the hopes that some sheep from the south had moved into this area where we were seeing ewes and two particular rams every day (the 12-year-old and a younger ram still far shy of 4/5ths). Prayers were answered when rams were spotted on the skyline. Pat felt that at least one of the rams of the four was legal; maybe two were. So up we went. The warm day cooled and became overcast with a bit of occasional drizzle during the climb—what a blessing! Through the kind of shale where you take a one foot step and slide back 9 inches, slow, tedious and tiring, but up we went, step by step. My wheels held up and Pat had me hunkered down just below one ridge line. The ram he felt was surely legal was probably not 40 yards from us on the opposite side of the ridge we were pinned down on by this ram's 10-year-old companion. That 10-year-old had taken the "brooming class" also and appeared to be right on the borderline of legal/illegal. Considering the fact that you lose the ram and get hit with a \$1,000 fine if the ram doesn't go 4/5ths as measured by the game department, that 10-year-old is also still on the mountain. After waiting for our ram to move to the opposite slope, sitting through rain, thunder and clouds (yes, we got it all on the mountain that day) it finally happened. He moved up to join the 10-year-old and Pat motioned me to his side. We talked, made sure the ram was legal and when Pat gave the word, my trusty 7mm Remington Magnum put one bullet in that ram from less than 100 yards and he never moved again. Handshakes and smiles showed how pleased we both were that things had worked out for us. When we got to the ram for pictures, the sun came out and gave us great light. What a day, what a hunt. We worked so hard for that ram; he means a ton. I recalled the stories of so many friends about tough Alberta hunts (not to mention multiple unsuccessful ones). This had been my first bighorn hunt and we'd beaten the odds. And I'd been able to do it with a guide I've admired for years and whose company I greatly enjoy. This ram brings me 2/4ths of the way to a Grand Slam and 9/12ths of the way to an Ovis World Slam. I'm getting there. The words of Dennis Campbell about not getting down, being mentally tough, sticking it out, etc. were in head day after day and kept my head straight.



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Don't forget that the Wyoming Chapter has a Web site at www.wyomingfnaws.org. Visit us often for project updates, the latest news, links and contact information, upcoming events, membership renewals and sign-ups and much, much more.

HUNT REPORTS

Frontier Creek Monarch

By WY FNAWS Member David Amos

After returning home from crappie fishing in early May 2002, there was a message waiting for me from Jim Collins of Sand Creek Outfitters. I had hunted antelope and deer with Jim several times in the past and I wondered what he could want. Then it dawned on me—maybe it had something to do with my bighorn sheep tag application. I had been applying for a tag for so many years I had almost forgotten about ever drawing. There were several times when I almost decided to get my money back and give up on the idea. But Jim had insisted on applying every year and as it turned out, I'm glad he did.

A fast call to Jim confirmed my hope. "Dave, you drew Area 4. Better be in shape—it's a long way in and high."

Time passed quickly that summer as I tried to get in sheep shape, shoot a bit and go over my packing list. Knowing that as a 50-something Kansas flatlander, I might need to be in better physical condition to really enjoy this hunt, I hired a personal trainer to help get me ready. Despite the sore muscles, the preparation paid off.

August 29th found me flying into Riverton, Wyo., where I was met by Jim's better half, Cindy and Tex, our wrangler/cook. We then trailered the horses to Dubois, where we met Jim and his daughter Bree, who had just returned from partially setting up camp. The next day, Jim, Tex and I, along with six pack horses left the trail for the 5½ hour ride into the Absaroka Wilderness. I can't say the personal trainer did much to prepare me for this part of the trip. Although I thought I was in pretty good condition, my backside was mighty sore after that ride.

On opening day, we were up and out early. We spent the day up high, glassing large canyons and mountainsides. Jim kept glassing sheep that I could never see. He would say, "There's a ram...but not what we want." Toward evening, however, we did see two good rams heading out of our sight. Jim said, "Tomorrow, let's see if we can find where those rams are going."

We were out early on day two and again in the high country. After glassing several more rams ("not what we want"), we headed off to another area—Frontier Creek. Jim spent more time glassing and finally said, "There's a decent ram...not great, but not too bad." By then, I wasn't exactly excited about the prospect of spending more time in the saddle searching for another sheep. So I said, "Well, if he's an O.K. ram, let's put a stalk on him and see what happens."

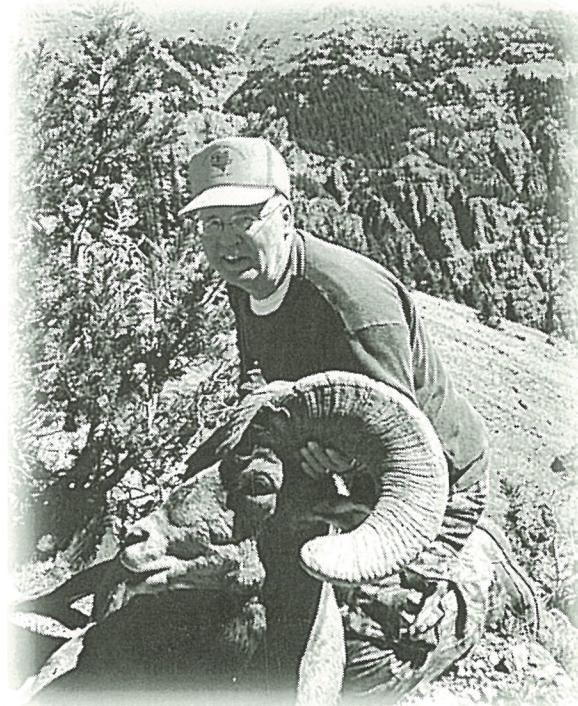
It took a two-hour ride and a difficult climb, but Jim brought us out directly above the ram, which was now lying down. Jim helped me set up on the ram and said, "Take your time. He doesn't know we're here." I set the scope of the .270 on the ram's left shoulder and fired. The ram went down immediately and never moved.

All of the sudden, Jim was up, whooping and hollering. "Jim, what's gotten into you? I thought this was an average ram!"

"Dave, this is a great ram! It's not the one I was glassing. I never saw this ram."

After some celebrating, photos, skinning and packing, we reached camp at 8 p.m. We were both dead tired and slept well that night. We spent the next day relaxing and telling lies. As most of you know, Jim has a few opinions about almost any subject, which he is happy to share!

After packing out, we took the ram's horns to Lander. The biologist aged him at 10½ years. He was heavily broomed, but still scored 165-2/8. What a thrill! Many thanks to Jim, Cindy, Tex, Bree and the state of Wyoming for making this hunt possible.



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Whiskey Mountain Predator Control Effort Update

This narrative is a report of Wildlife Services activities conducted on the WY FNAWS/ADMB Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Project. Field activities started on March 17, 2003 with aerial and field activities conducted during the months of March, May, June, July and August. Wildlife Services effort on the project included 68.39 staff days or 637 hours of staff time and 9.8 hours of aerial time. WS personnel involved in the project were Craig Acres, Jim Pehringer, Tracy Frye, Arnold DeBock, Ted Jensen, Merrill Nelson and Rod Krischke.

We didn't have the opportunity to use the helicopter, so more effort was directed to ground work. Presently, we have spent \$17,215 of the \$20,250 in our agreement. The original plan had to be modified as DeLyle Rowley, who we had intended to do the summer field work, was injured in a horse accident and not available. We covered with existing personnel Craig Acres(123 hours) and Jim Pehringer(58.6 hours) borrowed from other WS programs and District Supervisor Nelson (290 hours).

WS removed 31 coyotes from the project area, 24 of these came off Whiskey Mountain and seven more were taken on Shale Mountain. Aerial methods removed 14 coyotes and ground methods, ie. trapping, calling and shooting, etc. removed 17. The bulk of the coyotes taken were adults in their prime; there were only two yearlings and four pups taken among the total.

According to Supervisor Nelson, "We spent most of our time on Whiskey Mountain due to the high number of coyotes and the length of time the sheep spend in that area. In doing so I thought that we may have an impact on the local population that doesn't or hasn't produced very many lambs. On July 21st 6 adult ewes and 5 lambs were observed south of Whiskey Mountain where 2 coyotes had been removed. Another coyote had been released by a hiker in this area. We noticed that when we located the sheep we also found coyotes. We found that on Shale Mountain there wasn't much coyote sign, one family on the north and another pair on the southwest side of the mountain. The first time we spent a night at Simpson's cabin we noticed several ewes and lambs on Square Top south of the cabins above the Lake. About a month later we came back to work the country and when we rode to the south end of Shale Mountain we found eight ewes with no lambs and there were two coyotes following the sheep. The sheep were located a mile east of where we saw the ewes and lambs earlier. The pups of that pair must have been located at some distance away from this site, because the coyotes did not demonstrate aggressive behavior. We caught an adult coyote male not far from where we saw the sheep and coyotes."

Coyote stomachs examined showed bighorn sheep to be a significant portion of their diet. Insects and marmots were also observed but sheep remains were frequently observed. Other predators or sign observed in the area included red fox and badger one wolf track observed on the north drainage of Shale Mountain. There were no observations of or sign of cougar or bear on the study site during control operations. Coyotes numbers in the upper part of the project were less than in the lower elevations. This could be due to lower prey numbers in the higher elevations.

On November 26th District Supervisor Merrill Nelson returned to Sheep Ridge and Torrey Rim to survey coyote presence. On Sheep Ridge he observed 14 ewes, 5 lambs, 1 yearling and 2 rams and on Torrey Rim there were 50 ewes, 19 lambs, 3 yearling and 12 rams. Tracking conditions for predators was poor due to weather conditions and no sign was observed.

The plan for the rest of this year's agreement which ends Dec. 31, is to survey for coyote activity in the winter range and conduct additional aerial hunting if weather allows.

The roughness and inaccessibility of the terrain underscores the need to fly the summer range during the late winter/early spring time frame while still under snowcover. If (Wyoming) FNAWS determines to continue the project, a new workplan for the coming year should be developed.

Please let us know when you receive results of the sheep surveys. If you have any questions please feel free to call either DS Merrill Nelson or myself.

Thanks for your cooperation and support.

Rod Krischke
State Director



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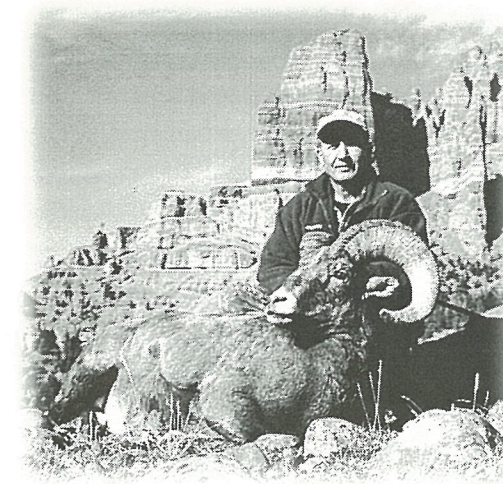
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H U N T R E P O R T S



Steve Nelson Shares His 2002 Governor's Sheep License Hunt

I was the successful bidder on your donation of a Governor's sheep license. I want to thank everyone at your Chapter for allowing sportsmen like myself to participate in your program.

I just got back home from B. Joe Coy's Yellow Creek Outfitters and we had a fantastic time. I started hunting bighorn sheep in August and hunted three different units, Area 10, Area 3 and finally ended up harvesting this nice 8½ year old 160 class ram.

We saw a lot of rams and a lot of wildlife. I hunted a couple of weeks with Doc Thurston and what a joy he was to have in camp. It was interesting to hear about Doc's dad and their hunting.

With this bighorn, I am at a ¾ slam. I did it the hard way. First, I got my Dall with Bill McKenzie, then my desert with Carlos Hermosillo in Sonora and now my bighorn with B. Joe Coy. I did not get a chance to go to Randy McGee's for my Stone this year as the calendar filled up quickly with hunts. Randy was great and rebooked me for 2004.

It all goes well, I am hoping to harvest a Fannin at Jim Finks' camp in the fall of 2003. My son and I were the successful bidders at National FNAWS Reno 2001 for the father-son hunt that Jim Finks donated. The trip will be special because if successful, my son Mike will harvest his first sheep and I will finish my first slam. That will be a thrill for both of us! We are looking forward to a great trip.

Back to my bighorn hunt. B. Joe and Lori run one of the best camps around. B. Joe is a hard-working outfitter and he hunts with a lot of pride. He finds a lot of game and he makes sure the hunter is comfortable and having a good time.

WY FNAWS Member Robert Nolt Talks About 'Friends'

On Labor Day weekend of 2002, me and friend Ed Knudtson loaded our ponies and headed for Meeteetse, up the Greybull River, to look for a good ram.

I say good ram because I was lucky enough to draw a sheep tag some years back and pulled one out of the same drainage. It was a ¾ curl, but not exceptional in size. Naturally, this one had to be bigger.

We saw several good rams as well as ewes, lambs, elk and three separate grizzly bears. One of the rams appeared to be good enough, but we never got close enough for a good shot. Finally, after three days, they pulled out and so did we; heading home to Buffalo, Wyoming.

I returned to work for a couple of weeks when my friend Gary Roebing (a WY FNAWS life member) called up and mentioned that he had the upcoming weekend free and maybe we should take a run over to Meeteetse. Naturally, my bags are still packed and waiting by the front door.

We get to Meeteetse on Friday, right around dark 30 and oh yes; the "we" has grown to three of us as our friend Jim Gripp has asked to come along. But of course, the more eyes the better. As we pull into Meeteetse, we call yet another friend (and WY FNAWS life member) Mike Crocker and he suggests that we stay at his house and the four of us will go for a walk up the Wood River in the morning.

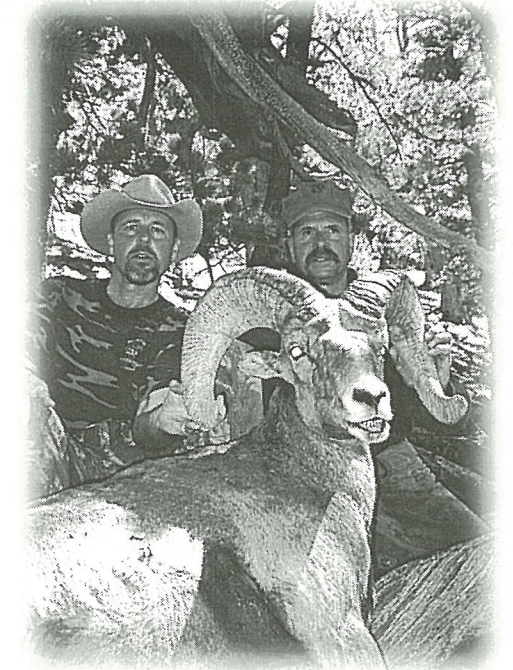
That evening, we made our plans for the next days hunt, sitting under the stars, soaking our bodies in Mike's hot tub, enjoying an adult beverage. Nothing like camp life! The next morning early, we are on the Wood and decide to split up with Jim and I talking one side, Gary and Mike, the other.

We all agree that six hours later, we'll meet back at the pick up. The wind started to blow some clouds in and out, but not before Jim and I spot close to 20 rams; Gary and Mike, a few more. The day is winding down fast and we decide to ease on back. While glassing from the pick up, we spot a couple of sheep here and there, but the cloud cover hinders us.

About sundown, the clouds clear out and Gary spots two rams high above the tree line. We jump from the truck to set up Mike's super spotting scope and decide that one ram especially is worth going after. A quick stalk now with the light fading every minute—or come back tomorrow morning? Decisions, decisions! The ram laid down just above timberline. I've decided to wait until morning. Back to the hot tub.

Next morning, we are on location and as luck would have it, we spot the rams at the same spot. We make our plan, choose our route and walk on out. Five hours later, we are waling back out with the ram's head, cape and meat. He's a very nice ram—should score around 168.

After 20-some years of hunting in Wyoming, this was one of the most rewarding and most fun hunts. For that, I would thank my friends. After all, what is hunting without good friends? Semper Fi!



HUNT REPORTS

Cole Benton finds success in British Columbia

I had the great privilege of hunting stone sheep in British Columbia this fall with Bradford and Company and harvested this beautiful ram. I don't have anything but good to say about Myles, Sherry and their family, and the way their operation is run. This ram put me ¾ of the way to a grand slam. I hope to hunt desert sheep yet!



Bree Collins takes her first elk

Bree Collins, daughter of WY FNAWS board member Jim Collins and WY FNAWS member Cindy Collins, took her first elk—a nice six-point bull—this hunting season. The opportunity presented itself while she was helping to move cattle on the family's Sand Creek Ranch in Alcova. The teenager, who has been participating in WY FNAWS since she was 5 years old, has had an extra special year—she was also selected as Homecoming Queen in her senior year at Natrona County High School. Congratulations, Bree!



A 30-Year Wait for a Spectacular Trophy! By WY FNAWS Member Doug Carlson

It is hard to believe that after such a long wait, my turn finally came up to draw a Wyoming bighorn sheep permit. I applied for Area 5 and in July of 2002, I received a letter from Kevin Hurley with "congratulations" written on the envelope. I was quite excited.

As you know, after the permit is drawn, you are only half way there. Without a good outfitter, your chances of success are slim. My next stroke of luck was choosing Jim and Cindy Collins, Sand Creek Outfitters, to help me attain my goal. Jim was my guide and Cindy fed us one great meal after another. Our young enthusiastic wrangler, Shawn, was not only very anxious to learn the ropes, but proved himself quite useful. I was confident this would be a successful hunt.

We saw rams every day. Day three was an especially long one. We left camp at 6 a.m. to take a look at some sheep we had seen the night before. By 4 p.m., we located the rams and decided to make a stalk. After a 1½ hour climb, and unbeknownst to us, the sheep were making their way up the other side of the ridge that we were on. This resulted in a nose-to-nose experience and a blown stalk. They wasted no time disappearing! Jim and I made a mad dash down the mountain to find the horses before dark and we made it back to camp by midnight. On day four, we stayed in camp till noon. Jim sent Shawn up the drainage that the camp was in and we rode off in the opposite direction. Upon returning to camp that evening, Shawn was excited to tell us he had glassed five sheep that were within an hour from camp.

At sun up, we made the short ride to the head of the drainage. It was a climb of about 2,000 feet and I appreciated the sure-footed horses' agility. It didn't take Jim long to locate the rams and for us to make the decision to go after them. After a short stalk of duck walking and belly crawling, we peeked over the ridge to see the rams hot-footing it out of there. Fortunately for us, their curiosity made them stop and look back. A fatal mistake for one ram. A 230-yard shot and my 30-year wait was over.

Another highlight of the trip was seeing so many bears—13 grizzlies in one day! Watching the bears on the shale slides, pawing over rocks, looking for hatching moths was similar to the Alaskan bears grabbing salmon during the spawning season. It was quite a sight!



Two Outstanding Raffles – Limited Tickets Available!

2004 Governor's Sheep License

For the first time, Wyoming FNAWS is raffling a Governor's Bighorn Sheep License. The winner can hunt in the open sheep hunt area of choice and enjoy some of the most beautiful country to boot!

Only 300 tickets are being sold for \$200 each. The drawing will take place April 26, 2004, so don't wait. Buy your raffle ticket for a chance to win and help support Wyoming's bighorn sheep.

2004 Commissioner's License

The grand prize is a commissioner's license to hunt elk, deer or antelope in the open hunt area of choice.

Other prizes are:

2nd Prize: 300 Weatherby Mark V Deluxe

3rd Prize: 270 WSM Winchester M70 Featherweight

4th Prize: 25-06 Remington M700 Mountain Rifle

5th Prize: 7mm Ruger M77 Stainless

6th Prize: Zeiss 3x9x40 Rifle Scope

7th Prize: Brunton 10x42 Eterna Binoculars

8th Prize: Nikon 16x47x60 Spotting Scope

9th Prize: Zeiss 10x30 Binoculars

10th Prize: Leica 800 Laser Range Finder

Tickets are \$100 each and only 300 will be sold. The drawing for the commissioner's license will be held at WY FNAWS' annual fundraiser and banquet on June 5th in Lander.

To purchase tickets by check, send your check made payable to Wyoming FNAWS to Bob Sundeen, P.O. Box 111, Buffalo, WY, 82834. To pay by Visa or MasterCard, contact Administrative Assistant Sheri Howe at (307) 455-2094.

Raffle winners must purchase regular hunting licenses.

'Bring Your Own [Iron] Horse' Weekend

Save the dates of August 7th-8th, 2004 for the Wyoming Chapter's annual BYOH weekend!

For the past 7 summers, chapter members have participated in horse/pack trips into various bighorn sheep hunt areas, to familiarize themselves with management issues and opportunities for Wyoming's wild sheep. A new twist is being investigated for the 2004 trip, to look at potential bighorn sheep habitat in the Devils Canyon/Porcupine Creek area in the northern Bighorn Mountains. Instead of packing into the backcountry, participants will be based out of a frontcountry camp site (details being worked on), complete with Friday and Saturday night cookouts. An all-day ATV trip (participants provide their own ATVs) will be taken on <date to come>, to look over a potential transplant site. Details will be fleshed out in the coming months, and will be provided in the Spring 2004 Wyoming Chapter FNAWS newsletter.



A report from WY FNAWS President Cole Benton

Tim Hockhalter and his staff of Timbercreek Outfitters hosted WY FNAWS' 2003 Bring Your Own Horse. The July 18th-20th pack trip started at the Pilot Creek trailhead. Several of us met Tim the afternoon of the 17th and helped him take camp into the site. The rest of the group came in on the 18th.

Pilot Creek is in Sheep Hunt Area 1. About 30 WY FNAWS members and Wyoming Game & Fish employees took part in this year's event. There was a lot of bighorn sheep "medicine" made during the three-day trip. All of us seem to have plenty of advice for the G&F.

During the stay, some of the group took a tour on horses while others walked into the country to look at sheep and other wildlife. As this country was burned badly in 1988 and a lot of the trees are falling across the trail, so we also cleaned a lot of them out of the trail while we were there.

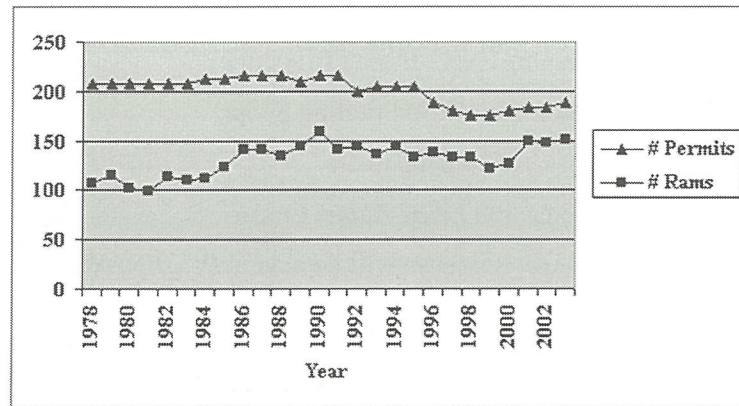
This event was very special to me. I took my first bighorn sheep in this area in 1981. From where Tim had camp set up for us, you could actually see where I took the ram. I hunted elk for several years afterwards on Pilot Creek, but had not been back since it burned during the Yellowstone fires. If there is any doubt about the

good fire does, here was proof. This country is better now that the fires have cleaned it up.

**Bighorn Sheep in the Absaroka Range
Hunt Area 1-5 Summary
Doug McWhirter, WGFD Wildlife Biologist-Cody**

The Absaroka Mountains have always been a stronghold for bighorn sheep in Wyoming. When populations plummeted elsewhere, the remote backcountry of the Absarokas was able to sustain a core population of bighorns. Of the total estimated 6,500 bighorn sheep in Wyoming, over 4,000 bighorns are currently found within the Absarokas.

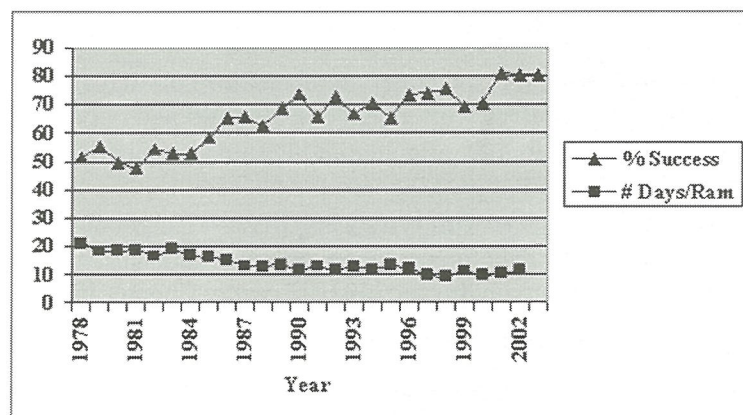
The abundance of sheep in the Absarokas translates into the best sheep hunting opportunities Wyoming has to offer. Hunt Areas 1-5 consistently have contributed over 75% of Wyoming's sheep hunting and sheep harvest. In 2003, 192 hunters pursued sheep in Hunt Areas 1-5, constituting 78% of all sheep hunters in Wyoming. These 192 hunters took a total of 151 rams, or 83% of the total statewide harvest of 182 bighorn sheep.



Bighorn Sheep Hunt Areas 1-5, 1978-2003.

More rams are being taken with fewer permits because hunter success has increased (Figure 2, below). Along with a steady increase in hunter success there has been a decrease in hunter effort; that is, it takes fewer days to kill a sheep now than in the past. Figure 2 illustrates these trends in hunter success and hunter effort.

Figure 2. Hunter success and hunter effort for Bighorn Sheep Hunt Areas 1-5, 1978-2003.



So what has caused hunter success to increase and hunter effort to decrease? This can be largely explained by increased bighorn sheep numbers through time within the Absarokas, but can also be a result of recent management changes to an "any ram" regulation, rather than a ¾-curl limitation. Under an any ram regulations, hunters and outfitters can focus on the stalk rather than worrying if a good-looking ram is long enough or "legal", and biologically this strategy makes sense. In addition, illegal kills and citations for "short sheep" have all but disappeared. If permit levels are set appropriately, any ram seasons will allow increased hunter opportunity while ensuring that plenty of mature rams are in the population.

You may be thinking, if any ram is legal, then hunters will kill younger rams and there won't be many older rams. This has not been the case. Based on sheep that have been plugged from any ram areas, usually 10% or less of harvested rams are less than ¾ curl. The average age of rams taken has also steadily increased through the years (Figure 3, right). It is evident that hunters are still selecting for, and finding older, mature rams. We will be monitoring these herds in the future to ensure that sheep populations, and sheep hunting opportunities in the Absarokas remain plentiful.

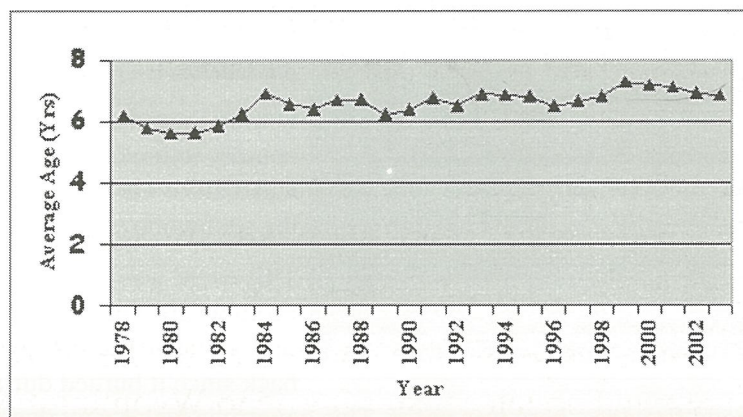
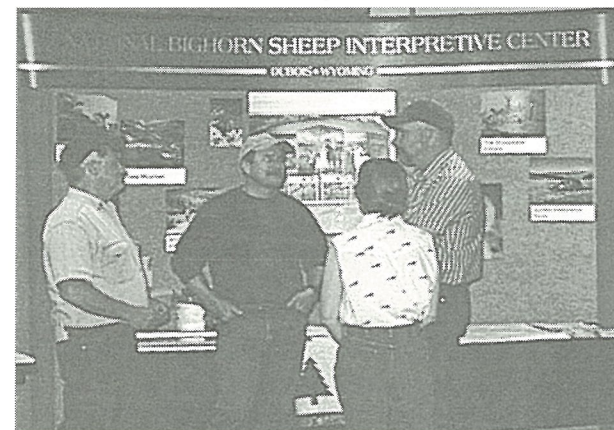


Figure 3. Average age of harvested rams from Bighorn Sheep Hunt Areas 1-5, 1978-2003.

**2003 Fundraiser
A Good Time Was Had By All**

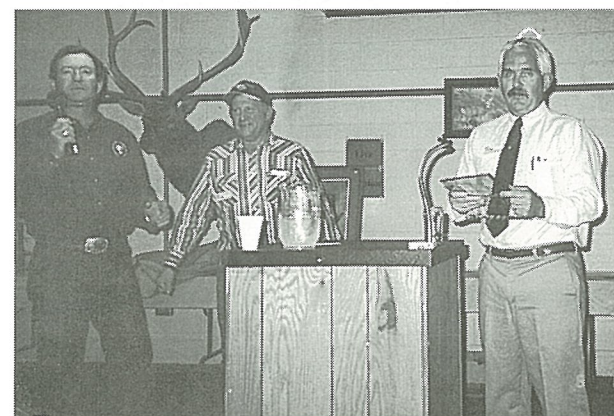
The Wyoming Chapter's 20th Annual Fundraiser was held June 13th at the community center in Lander. The day began with the second annual life member breakfast followed by a general membership meeting.



The day continued with several sessions, including an orientation for successful bighorn sheep license applicants, a Wyoming FNAWS project update and a presentation on wolves and bighorns. Following a wine and cheese party, the fundraiser banquet began.



Attendees enjoyed a prime rib and shrimp dinner and entertainment provided by G&F Biologist Ron Lockwood and G&F/WY FNAWS liaison Kevin Hurley. A live auction, a silent auction and raffles also took place.



The Wyoming Chapter netted \$21,423. Thanks to everyone who participated—we're looking forward to next year!

2004 Fundraiser Slated for June in Lander

The Wyoming Chapter has set its 2004 fundraiser for June 4th, 5th and 6th at the Lander Community Center.

The banquet and auction will be held Saturday evening, June 5th. Several events, including the third annual life member breakfast and general membership meeting will also take place throughout the day

Watch for details on our Web site at www.wyomingfnaws.org and in the next issue of the *The Rampage*. More information will also be sent to all Wyoming FNAWS members through the mail as the fundraiser draws closer.

Funding requests to be considered by the Wyoming Chapter Board of Directors must be submitted no later than May 1st to Wyoming FNAWS, P.O. Box 845, Dubois, WY 82513.