

The **RAMPAGE**

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation

Fall 2015



Read Joel Nirider's story on page 46.
Photo by Mack Miller

2015-2016 Officers and Directors

President: Jerry Galles, 3332 Allendale Blvd, Casper, WY 82601
6/2017 Phone: (307) 234-6100 E-mail: Jerry.Galles@wyobeam.com
Cell: (307) 259-2096

Vice-President: Kurt Eisenach, 55 Crown Drive, Sheridan, WY 82833
6/2017 Home: (307) 673-4928 E-mail: keyes555@msn.com
Cell: (307) 751-6251

Secretary: Dean DiJenno, 36 Appaloosa Lane, Cody, WY 82414
6/2017 Home: (307) 527-7008 E-mail: ddijenno@gmail.com

Treasurer: Joni Miller, 6722 Hwy. 28, Lander, WY 82520
6/2016 Phone: (307) 332-9119 E-mail: tunalp@hughes.net

Director: Scott Butler, 1476 Turquoise Road, Cheyenne, WY 82009
6/2017 Phone: (307) 632-6402 E-mail: doublediamondconstruction@hotmail.com
Cell: (307) 214-6734

Director: Jim Collins, 910 Buchanan Road, Thermopolis, WY 82443
6/2017 Phone: (307) 864-3929 E-mail: sdckjim@rtconnect.net
Cell: (307) 921-0443

Director: Meade Dominick, 2832 Chopper Lane, Cody, WY 82414
6/2016 Home: (307) 587-9885 E-mail: meadedominick@hotmail.com
Cell: (307) 899-1490

Director: Dan Hinz, 540 Road 2AB, Cody, WY 82414
6/2016 Phone: (307) 250-0056 E-mail: dhinz@tctwest.net

Director: Mike Porter, 2321 Easthaven, Casper, WY 82609
6/2016 Phone: (307) 258-7040 E-mail: fullcurl@yahoo.com

Director: James Rinehart, P.O. Box 1130, Laramie, WY 82073
6/2016 Cell: (307) 760-3800 E-mail: james@ranchbrokers.com

Director: Bob Sundeen, P.O. Box 111, Buffalo, WY 82834
6/2017 Cell: (307) 217-1110 E-mail: trailswest@vcn.com

WY-WSF Executive Director: Steve Kilpatrick, P.O.Box 12, Moose, WY 83012
Cell: (307) 413-7249 E-mail: skilpatrick@wyomingwildsheep.org

Wyoming Game & Fish Liaison: Doug McWhirter, 2820 State Highway 120, Cody, WY 82414
Phone: (307) 527-7125 FAX: (307) 587-5430
Cell: (307) 272-7186 E-mail: Doug.McWhirter@wyo.gov

WSF Chapter/Affiliate Coordinator: Becky Layne, WSF HQ, 412 Pronghorn Trail, Suite B Bozeman, MT 59718
Phone: (307) 527-6261 Fax: (307) 527-7117
E-mail: blayne@wildsheepfoundation.org

WSF Conservation Director: Kevin Hurley, WSF HQ, 412 Pronghorn Trail, Suite B Bozeman, MT 59718
Phone: (307) 527-6261 Fax: (307) 527-7117
Cell: (307) 899-9375 khurley@wildsheepfoundation.org

2015-2016 Calendar of Events

December 4-5, 2015

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Winter Fund raiser, Dubois, WY

January 21-23, 2016

Wild Sheep Foundation Convention

Peppermill Hotel/Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, NV

June 3-4, 2016

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Convention/Fund raiser

Parkway Plaza, Casper, WY

Jerry Galles selected for induction into Wyoming Outdoorsman Hall of Fame

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is excited to announce the 2015 class of the Wyoming Outdoor Hall of Fame. This year's inductees include four individuals with varying backgrounds, but who all contributed significantly to Wyoming's wildlife and outdoors. Dr. George Frison, Jerry Galles, Stephen Leek and Dr. Oliver Scott join past inductees, including Teddy Roosevelt, Curt Gowdy and Olaus and Mardy Murie. The induction ceremony will take place in Cody at the Buffalo Bill Center for the West on November 14. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the Wyoming Wildlife Foundation invite the public to come and celebrate this year's class. Tickets and information are available at: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/halloffame>

Jerry Galles is a statesman for wildlife. His involvement in conservation has come at all levels and his enthusiasm and care for this heritage fosters action in others. He has poured himself into efforts supporting all manner of wildlife by giving substantially to groups including the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, the Mule Deer Foundation, Muley Fanatics, the National Wild Turkey Foundation, the Old West Invitational Turkey Shoot, the Natrona County Land Use Committee, the Governor's Big Game License Coalition, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission and in fact the list goes on from there.

Wyoming WSF Board & Membership Meetings

Wyoming WSF holds its winter board and 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

WYOMING WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

The RAMPAGE

FULL COLOR ADVERTISING RATES

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

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

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

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

Donations netting WY-WSF >\$500 entitle donor to a free 1/4-page ad in next 2 issues of The Rampage.

Ads must be received in camera ready .jpg format by 10/5 & 3/5!!

WY WSF President's Message

by Jerry Galles

Greetings Wyoming Wild Sheep members. As we begin to experience the fall hunting seasons, I hope this winter issue of the Rampage finds you all successful and enjoying your hunting endeavors. Whatever the species you are chasing this fall, I wish all the best to you. It is not about the harvest, but the precious enjoyment of being out there enjoying the outdoors.

This summer as most of you know, the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation surrendered Kevin Hurley to the National Wild Sheep Foundation. The Wild Sheep Foundation has moved to Bozeman and they took Kevin and his commanding presence with them. Kevin has driven our organization for many years, directing us towards profitability and prominence in the wildlife community. The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation has become an organization with a strong voice because of Kevin Hurley and our past board members.

With that, I would like to welcome our new Executive Director Steve Kilpatrick. Steve spent many years with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department as a biologist in Jackson, Wyoming. He was instrumental in developing many protocols in wildlife habitat management in Jackson, Wyoming and the western states. His ability to work with local, regional and national folks in their fields of expertise greatly enhanced his knowledge base. Steve retired from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department several years ago. Within a short period of time after his retirement, he took over the reins of directing the Wyoming Wildlife Federation. His tenure there has been very successful. He has helped the Wyoming Wildlife Federation become a stronger voice for Wyoming's sportsmen, women and children. He has helped pave the way for several initiatives developed by a very progressive board of director's. When you have an opportunity, please welcome Steve Kilpatrick and thank him for his work at the Wyoming Wildlife Federation. He will lead us (WY-WSF) into the future concerning sheep issues locally, regionally and nationally.

We must also say thank you to Mike Porter for his time as our board president. Mike kept us on track and focused on the issues. He spent many hours arranging board meetings, working with Kevin on Wild Sheep issues, doing paperwork and putting on an awesome summer and winter meeting every June and December.

On a more somber note, this summer we lost a very special individual. His name was Ron Lockwood. Ron spent many years working for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department as a biologist. Ron was dedicated to Wyoming's wildlife, especially Wyoming's wild sheep. He spent many hours in the field analyzing the habitat, making species specific recommendations for the numbers of animals and how they affected the habitat they live in. Not only was Ron dedicated to wildlife, he was the ever present comedian, father, brother, husband and friend too many of us. During his life he spent many countless hours traveling with his special best friend Kevin Hurley raising money for Sheep, Elk, Mule Deer, and other wildlife. If you weren't laughing during an event with those two men, you just weren't with it. We will miss Ron's humor and his dedication to conserving wildlife and serving people. He was a very special individual.

Lastly, I would like to invite those of you who are able, to attend the Wyoming Wild Sheep winter meeting in Dubois, Wyoming. The winter meeting will be on December 5th and 6th. Steve Kilpatrick (Executive Director), Sara Domek (Director of the National Bighorn Interpretive Sheep Center), Lynn Stewart (Stewart Taxidermy) & Joni Miller (Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation treasurer) have been working tirelessly to ensure that the meeting is informative and enjoyable (please see page 18 for the details). They have planned a couple of nice outings for Saturday and a wonderful meal for Saturday evening.

I thank each and everyone one of you for supporting the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation and putting more sheep on the mountain,

Jerry

From the Editor:

This is my first attempt at filling the big shoes of Kevin Hurley . Please let me know what you like, what you don't, and what is missing from your magazine. I also need your help with articles, pictures, advertisements, and ideas for the next issue.

Contact me at: info@wyomingwildsheep.org or (307)527-7008 See you in Dubois! Dean DiJenno

WY WSF Executive Director's Message

by Steve Kilpatrick

The sights and smells of Fall are upon us and I hope this note finds you off the grid in camp, just out of camp, or planning camp for the hunting season. In addition, I hope you made the time to experience Wyoming's outdoors with friends and family multiple times this past summer. That's why we live in Wyoming - right? All one really has is time and memories. And, the best memories of friends and family involve the outdoors. Take the time to make the best of it.

A big congratulations to those of you with 2015 BHS tags. I know of several folks that have already been successful including Board member Kurt Eisenach. He and others now own the best of those memories mentioned above.

Much has happened since our convention in Casper on June 6. Kevin Hurley has made the move to Bozeman, Mt. to work full time for the national Wild sheep Foundation. The WY-WSF selected me as their new ED. I am honored and excited to attempt to fill the large shoes left behind by Kevin. A special thanks goes to our Board members for stepping up to make the transition as seamless as possible. My hat is off to the best affiliate Board in the Nation!

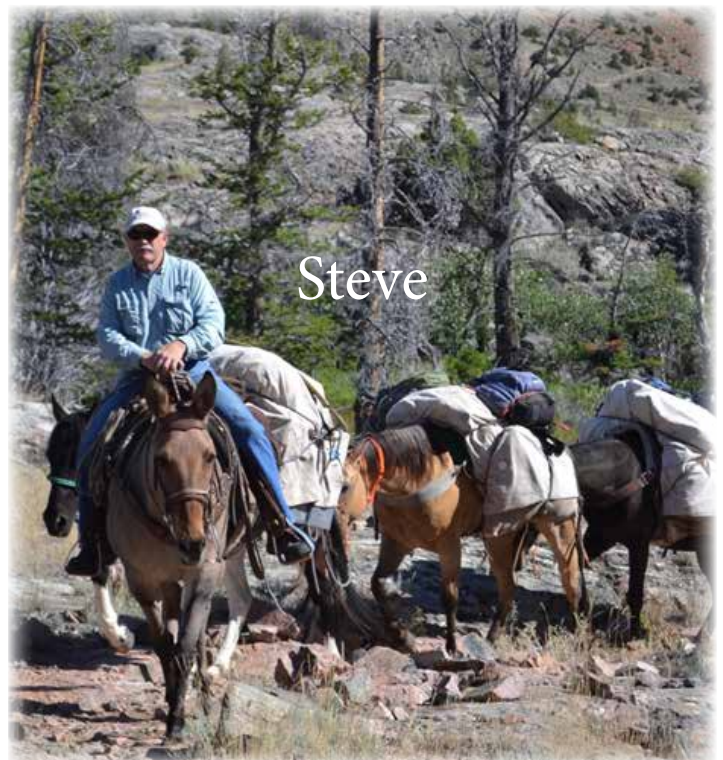
The WY-WSF has been actively engaged in numerous BHS issues and projects. A few of them are covered within this Rampage issue. However, if you want to be made fully aware of statewide BHS issues and management strategies, please consider attending our Winter membership and Board meeting in Dubois, December 4-5, 2015. In addition to multiple presentations on sheep management/research, you will be treated to a tour of the National Bighorn Sheep Interpretive Center and a couple of noteworthy field trips. Bring your camera. As an attendance incentive, we will draw for a free motel room and banquet meal(s).

Please preregister on our web site at: <http://wyomingwildsheep.org/events.asp>

I hope to see you in Dubois, where we can share our BHS passions over a warm fire and stiff drink. Happy hunting and a big thanks for supporting the icon of our high country - Bighorn Sheep !!



Jerry



Steve

Establishment of a Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Conservation Fund

By Steve Kilpatrick

The passion of you folks in the bighorn sheep world never ceases to amaze us at the WY-WSF. Gary Butler, life member #280, recipient of the Ron Ball Award, and former Wyoming Game and Fish Department habitat guru/ bighorn fanatic, approached us with a proposal to establish a permanent bighorn sheep conservation fund. Interest from the fund would be used to finance bighorn sheep conservation in perpetuity. We are elated!!

Gary knows the long-term integrity of bighorn herds depends on the integrity of their habitat and the public's long-term interest in bighorns. Therefore, he emphasized long-term habitat projects like conservation easements, grazing allotment adjustments, and prescribed burns in his proposal. Realizing the importance of humans maintaining a long-term interest in bighorns and the need for more science, he also proposed funding for WY-WSF youth life-time memberships and graduate students studying bighorns.

To kick start the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Conservation Fund, the Butler Family Foundation contributed \$25,000 to the fund's corpus. Amazing! We set a goal of building the fund's corpus to \$250K or more within the next ten years or less. We have already had major contributions. The Ron Lockwood family recently decided to donate Ron's Memorial Fund, approximately \$17K, to the corpus. To top it off, the WY-WSF Board voted to contribute \$5k to the Ron Lockwood Memorial Fund, which will now be funneled into the new Conservation Fund. We know Ron (life member #75) is smiling down on them! Moreover, Jim Collins (LM #10 and Ron Ball Award recipient) made a personal contribution of \$12,500 to the fund.

As you can tell we are quite excited about the Wyoming Wild Sheep Conservation Fund and sincerely hope the Butler, Lockwood and Collins families inspire others in the bighorn world to consider contributing. As the Lockwoods have illustrated, it's a great way to memorialize a passion for wild places and wild sheep.

Details about the new Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Conservation Fund are forth coming on our web site. Please take the time to visit <http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/index.asp>, or call me to discuss donations or endowments to the fund at (307) 413-7249.

Gary Butler expresses his passion for bighorns and thoughts behind the Conservation Fund on the next page. Please tip your hat to the Butler family for initiating the fund as well as the Lockwood and Collins families for being the first major contributors.

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Good Sam Park

Why Bighorns Matter

By Gary Butler

My interest in hunting was molded over a long period of time spent in and loving the high country. Like so many of us during our youth, Dad and several of his buddies took the time to include me in their hunting escapades for turkey, waterfowl, deer, antelope and elk. These were precious times of companionship and a completely new outdoor world was opened up to me that was unbelievably fascinating and exhilarating! After high school I figured out what kind of jobs I didn't want to do for a living: carpenter, service station attendant, oil field, trimming trees, hauling freight, ranch hand, just to name a few. I was drafted and spent an extended tour of duty in Vietnam. I promised God that if he ever got me out of there I would go to college.

Being on the ranch affected me the most. However, I knew I probably would never be able to buy my own ranch, but my love of the out-of-doors led me into the natural resources field. While in college working on a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management and a M.S. in Range Management, I developed a passion for wildlife, plants and habitat, the complexities of the web of life that God had created.

During my 40-year career with the Wyoming Game and Fish, I had the pleasure of working 12 of those years as a habitat coordinator in northwestern Wyoming, living at the Whiskey Basin Bighorn Sheep Winter Range near Dubois. It was there that I gained a complete fascination for bighorn sheep and their habitat. In addition, it was there that I started an annual tradition of making it a point to go sheep hunting with anyone that would allow me to tag along. This year I tallied my 29th sheep hunt and I have discovered that there is probably no other way that one can see so much incredible high country as you will subject yourself to other than by sheep hunting! Our bighorns are truly the canary in the mineshaft when it comes to Wyoming's big game animals. They are extremely sensitive to habitat loss, alteration, and competition from other wildlife and livestock.

Bighorns are truly an iconic big game animal. Only through the help of organizations such as the Wyoming and the National Wild Sheep Foundations, professional wildlife management and land management agencies, and other wildlife-interested people can the importance of these majestic animals and their habitat be sustained.

My career working in the wildlife habitat arena has only intensified my interest in bighorns and the importance of their habitat and management. I have been involved where cooperation between other land management agencies and land users has benefited the habitat resource and the species. Bighorns are creatures of habit. They are not adaptable, like some other wildlife, and are just not able to move over when their traditional home incurs a change. We must advocate for the needs of bighorn sheep and preserve their unique niche in Wyoming's rich, wild high country.

Through the years my wife, Jo, and I have fostered a tradition of camping, fishing, hunting, and enjoying wildlife and the wild country, so that our children, Scott and Toni, and our grandchildren will enjoy it as much as we do. As a family, it is important to us that we invite others to join with us to fund positive habitat projects to improve conditions for and increase our knowledge and awareness of bighorns. It is our prayer that this treasure will be sustained for future generations.



My Area 19 Transplant

By Corey Hamrick

When I looked at my computer screen and saw that I had drawn a bighorn sheep license for the 2015 hunting season I was excited and shocked at the same time. I put in for area 19 (Laramie Peak) for a couple of reasons; one being that my young boys, Cael (10) and Tanner (8) could hunt with me in that area, it was where I grew up, and my parents still live in Wheatland.

I knew there was a good sheep herd there but I learned a whole lot more about it as I started making phone calls and talking to Martin Hicks, the game biologist in Wheatland, who was very helpful anytime I contacted him.

The number of sheep and the quality of rams we saw in that area during our hunt was direct evidence that their hard work has paid off. I archery hunted two different times for a total of 5 days and saw rams every day. I had a couple of opportunities to sneak within range of good rams but was unsuccessful in getting one on an archery hunt.

I was unable to hunt on opening day of rifle season due to my teaching responsibilities but went on the 12th of September with my brother Mark and had a hunt of a lifetime harvesting a great ram that first evening of our hunt. Once we got to the ram we noticed it had small metal ear tags in each ear. It was transplanted from the Paradise Perma Herd in Montana as a yearly ram in 2007. That may have explained the unbelievable mass of his horns.

I had known about the transplant and the good genetics of the Montana herd but I never imagined that I would harvest one of the transplant rams. What an opportunity. As we hunted and saw many rams we did notice that the genetics are being transferred to other generations by the looks of the rams' horns. It is very neat to see the hard work and the risk taking of making something good much better pay off.

Great job to all people and organizations involved in the transplant plans, preparation, execution, and evaluation. I just want to thank, Martin Hicks, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and all the other people that have worked so hard to create a great bighorn sheep herd for the residents of Wyoming. My hunting experience was priceless and will have memories forever.



Proposed By-Laws Change to be voted on at Winter meeting in Dubois

During the semi annual membership meeting in Casper this past June, the membership voted to enact two changes to our chapter by-laws. The first is to amend Article IV, Section 7.

The current language states: “ Section 7. Salaries. No Officer or member of the Chapter shall receive compensation for services rendered. Upon authorization of the Board, Officers and members may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while carrying out assigned duties for the Chapter.”

The proposed new language is as follows:“Section 7. Compensation. The Board may approve reimbursement for Officers, Board members, or members for out of pocket expenses while carrying out Chapter duties. Members may receive compensation for services rendered or monthly work contracted, after approval by at least ¾ of the entire Board . “

The second change is to add section 8 to Article IV and to address Conflict of Interest for Board Members, Officers, and the Executive Director.

The proposed new language is as follows: “Section 8. Conflict of Interest. The Board of Directors, its Executive Director, and its Officers will refrain from using their influence to acquire any goods, services, favors, or other benefits of pecuniary value for themselves or any other person or entity associated with them. “

Your input is requested either by e-mail to: Info@wyomingwildsheep.org or by attending the Winter membership meeting in Dubois on December 5,2015

Youth Galleries



Cayden Collins harvested his first antelope buck. He took this beauty with help from Dad and Grandpa Jim.



Gage Porter, LM 380, with a dandy antelope buck



Hayden Schmer loves to hunt those Rock chucks. His weapon of choice is the .218 Bee. His granddad, Steve Shivy(LM218) says there aren't many 8 year old hand gunners out there! Looks like his brother, Colton, can't wait to get started with hunting with his big brother too!



YOUTH GALLERIES

16 year old Drake(LM460) and 18 year old Sierra Amundson(LM438) made a great brother and sister team when they harvested these two pronghorns this fall.



Looks like John David Tator has had a very successful start to his hunting career. A Turkey, Mule Deer Buck and Pronghorn all taken in 2014.





These photos were submitted by Fritz and Connie Meyer (LMs 14 & 238). Their grandson, **Justin Poppe** (LM 239) seems to be following in the family footsteps. During 2014 Justin harvested a pronghorn, mountain lion, mule deer, and a bison!. Justin just harvested this black bear in September 2015

• **M**embers can submit photos for publication in the RAMPAGE as well as on our website. Please send photos via email to: info@wyomingwildsheep.org



Which way does that diamond go again?
Chance Butler learning how its done.



Chance Butler (LM 393) and Tanner Pace

Taking the long view

By: Jim Collins

For those of you not quite as long in the tooth as myself, our Chapter used to have our major Banquet and Fund raiser on the first Saturday of December. In 1998, I was President of our Chapter and we were holding our Saturday Membership meeting in the Theater room of the Casper Hilton Inn(now the Ramkota). On the agenda was the Washakie Francis Lake allotment. Our Chapter was being asked by a permittee to consider buying out the Washakie Francis Lake allotment and then to waive back to the USFS, the domestic sheep AUM's for closure to help prevent commingling with bighorns, and help the ranching operation stay viable. WY WSF members were well versed on commingling with domestic issues but this was a new twist on how the Chapter and the WGFD were suggesting to approach the issue.

The Washakie Francis Lake allotment is located in the middle of the Southern Wind River domestic sheep Forest Service allotment complex that was comprised of 3 domestic sheep permittees, with more than 20 allotments located on the west side of the southern Wind River Mountains.

The issue was on the agenda to bring to our members attention, and ask for their opinion whether the Chapter and our funding partners should spend over \$30,000 to retire an allotment in the middle of an allotment complex to help prevent commingling of bighorns and domestic sheep when no one had any idea what or if the time frame to address the rest of the allotments could be? WY WSF members discussed analyzed and dissected the issues of commingling on USFS allotments and overwhelmingly voiced their support to take the long view. The Chapter along with our funding partners, National FNAWS, Eastern FNAWS, MN/WI-FNAWS, IA-FNAWS worked with the permittee and the USFS to retire 839 AUM's, nearly 40,000 acres of wilderness, out of the middle of a domestic sheep allotment complex in the Southern Winds.

Looking back I can't believe what a leap of faith we took!

Three years later we were approached by the two remaining permittee's, one who wanted to divest their allotments, while the other saw an opportunity to consolidate their allotments. We worked through a very complex deal to retire 2,369 AUM's and in so doing we moved all domestic sheep use to the far southern portion of the Winds. Our first allotment deal "Washakie-Francis Lake" was no longer in the middle. We put together a extraordinary group of funding partners including National FNAWS, MN/WI FNAWS, Eastern FNAWS, Utah FNAWS, Iowa FNAWS, Lehigh Valley (PA) SCI, Alabama SCI, Detroit SCI, Dallas Safari Club, Dallas Ecological Foundation, and, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Our patience and hard work were showing promise that someday, perhaps, we could have a viable bighorn herd on the Lander Front of the Winds without commingling concerns.

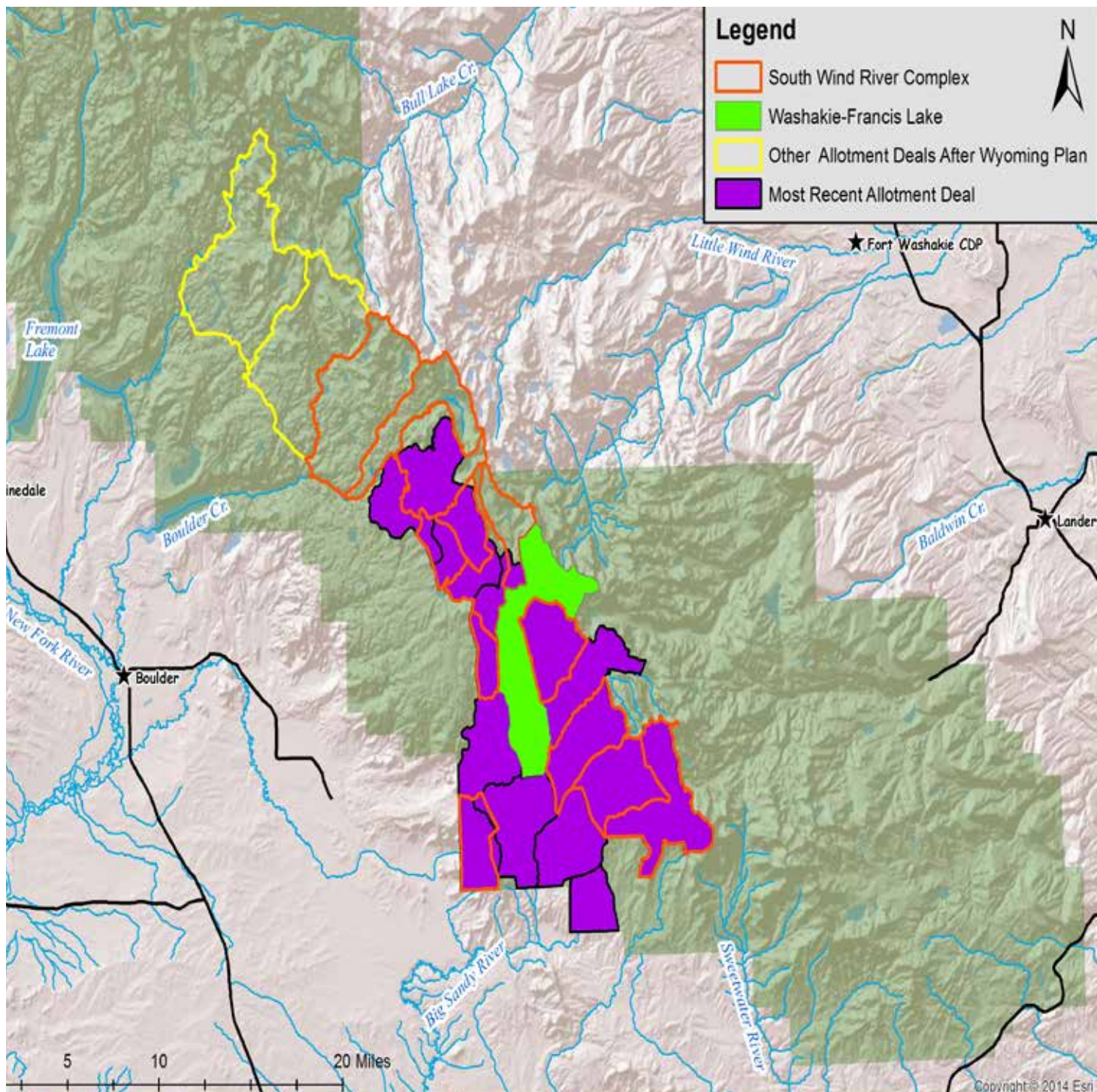
While negotiating this deal the Chapter was a member of the State-wide Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group which meet from 2000 till 2004 and came out with its Final Report and Recommendations, known as the Wyoming Plan. The Chapter was very busy working through how to balance bighorn disease issues with Wyoming's need to have a viable domestic sheep industry. Using the Wyoming Plan frame work the Chapter worked through 9 other allotment deals helping keep willing permittee's viable and improving separation for our bighorns.

Now jump back to 2015 when we were contacted by the final domestic sheep permittee on wilderness in the Southern Winds asking us to help work with him and the USFS to make their ranch operation be more efficient, giving us the opportunity to remove the last domestic sheep. After 6 months of working through all the issues we succeeded in finding a deal that works for the ranch and open the entire "Lander Front" the Temple Peak area, old HA 11. What an extraordinary opportunity for bighorn sheep expansion and additional hunting opportunity.

Seventeen years, hundreds and hundreds of hours of meetings and behind the scenes work , over one half million dollars invested, but if you want my opinion you bet it's worth it.

The weight of making it work now falls mainly on the WY Game and Fish Bighorn Sheep Working Group and the Lander District. Our Chapter will be there to do our share for the transplants, on habitat projects, disease issues and anywhere we can help, but I hope we are reaching the end of taking the long view and will see HA 9 and HA 10 (Whiskey Mountain) connected through the Wind River Reservation and the entire Lander Front as a seamless bighorn herd that is in great demand for the licenses!

We are working now to have Lander region personnel speak at our Winter meeting in Dubois, December 5th to give us their vision on how we move forward on what I feel is possibly the biggest opportunity to increase hunting bighorn rams the state of Wyoming has ever had.





32nd Annual
Convention &
Fund raiser.
Held in Casper
on June 5-6,
2014.
Our fund
raising total was
\$360,575!





Our menu included
A Kevin Hurley roast!



Photos Courtesy of Tara Butler/ Freddie Goetz.



Wyoming WSF 2015 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 6, 2015 banquet in Casper. We thank them for their support, and invite others who might be interested in a Full Curl table for our 2016 fundraising banquet to please contact President Jerry Galles, 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 2016!!

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Janet Marschner



A Ram for Dad

Morning broke early on a tight canyon near Cody Wyoming. The air was cool and we had our sights set on making our way up the valley to Sheep country. The morning air warmed quickly and we found ourselves setting up base camp.

I admit, I was anxious to get up into sheep country and start glassing. Camp was made, the horses were saddled and, we were on our way up the valley. After a few miles and some short pitched climbs we were in position. The valley provided all the essential ingredients that sheep flourish in. After about an hour I spotted a ram on the horizon with my spotting scope. However he was so far up in the head of the canyon I had a hard time seeing him. We lost view of the ram and had to glass closer terrain. It wasn't long after that Chris commented that we had some rams nearly in front of us. The multiplier was on our side that evening as 4 rams turned into 9. We spent the rest of the evening sorting them out and making a plan for the morning.

The second morning was early and cool also as we made our way up the canyon. We stopped short of our previous night's glassing area and the rams were feeding. We made a quick plan which resulted in Chris and I traveling down through the valley to climb the opposing ridge. My wife (Lori Rhyner) and Kurt Moller stayed back and continued to glass the rams. After a short river crossing and some climbing we reached our vantage point and quickly tried to locate the old ram. Patience continued to be the most important factor on this hunt since the old ram continued to avoid us.



After several hours and moving on the ridge to obtain a shot, the wind changed to our advantage. Chris and I worked down a finger on the ridge to within 125 yards. After setting up, and several nervous minutes, I was able to place clean shot in the vitals of my old ram.

I would like to Thank Everyone that helped me on this hunt, especially the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation and the National Wild Sheep Foundation and my father who passed away in February.

This Ram is for you Dad!

Max Rhyner- Life Member #428

Guide: Chris Nielson

Wrangler: Kurt Moller

National Bighorn Sheep Interpretive Center **BIG FOUR RAFFLE**

Drawing November 7, 2015 at the Bighorn Bash!



This year's Big Four prizes are:

- "Light at the End of the Tunnel" Original photograph printed on aluminum capturing the magical light of autumn by Tim Bernard
- Handmade high carbon Damascus steel knife "Smoke & Steel" by Riverton Master Bladesmith Audra Draper with solid brass guard, turquoise spacer and Wyoming elk antler handle
- Full-sized battle-hardened moose antler with a carved bellowing bison and petroglyphs by Dubois Artist Monte Baker
- Redington Topo Fly-Fishing Outfit (rod, reel, line and flies) from Marlow's Fly Shop in Dubois AND a Half-Day Fly-Fishing Lesson in the Wind River Valley with Dubois Guide Leon Sanderson



\$10 per ticket or \$50 for six tickets

- Want to purchase some tickets? Call us at 307-455-3429, visit the Center at 10 Bighorn Lane in Dubois, WY (we are open from 10am-4pm, Monday through Saturday) OR email info@bighorn.org.
- On your tickets, please indicate your preference of prizes with 1, 2, 3 and 4 and use the enclosed envelope in your ticket package to return your tickets. Your tickets will be in the mix for all four drawings.
- You need not be present to win! We will ship to the winners.

Every Ticket Makes A Difference! Thank You for your Support!

Winter Fund raiser/Banquet/Field Tour to be held in Dubois on December 4-5,2015!

Friday December 4th

2:00-5:00 PM Board Meeting, Headwaters Event Center

5:00-9:00 PM Informal Gathering and Munchies, NBSIC

Saturday December 5th

9:00 Meet at NBSIC for tour of Center

9:45 Two tours will be offered: Whisky Basin/Torrey Ridge or

11:00 Brown Bag lunch (\$9/person).

Register on line at: www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store.asp for lunch by Nov. 30th.

2:00 Drive back to Dubois

3:45-5:00 PM WY-WSF Membership Meeting, Rustic Pine Steakhouse

3:45-5:00 PM NBSIC will host children and non-members for educational seminar.

5:30 PM Cash Bar, Raffles, Silent Auction items, Rustic Pine Steakhouse

6:30 PM Pig Roast, Potato salad, Garden Salad, Baked Beans, Rolls, Dessert, Non-Alcohol Drinks) \$18/adult, children 12 and under eat free.

Register on line at: www.Wyomingwildsheep.org/store.asp for dinner by Dec 2nd.

Formal Presentations During/After Dinner include:

- Daryl Lutz - Temple Pk BHS Update
- Greg Anderson - Whiskey Basin BHS Update
- Amy Anderson - Whiskey Basin Habitat Update
- Greg Hiatt/Leslie Schreiber - Devils Canyon/Semino Transplant Update
- Doug McWhirter - 2015 Harvest Update

To make your own lodging arrangements, please call either: Stagecoach Motor Inn (307) 455-2303, \$60 night, 30 rooms blocked or Twin Pines Lodge (307) 455-2600, \$65 or \$75 night, 8 rooms blocked. Both have rooms blocked under :Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation. Room blocks expire on November 30th.



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE 2015 BIGHORN BASH –
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH**

Great food! Drinks! Games! Live & Silent Auctions!



Dear Friend of the Bighorn Sheep Center,

Surprisingly, the end of summer has arrived, and here at the National Bighorn Sheep Interpretive Center we are eagerly looking ahead and planning for our 2015 Bighorn Bash Annual Fundraiser coming up on **Saturday, November 7th**.

The Bighorn Bash is our single largest fundraiser of the year, and we depend on YOU—our Members and Friends—to make the Center successful! Your contributions during the Bash helps keep the doors open and our education programs running, including herd research support and necessary updates to our exhibits. Many projects have been underway at the National Bighorn Sheep Center in 2015 including:

- Installation of a new ewe in our main exhibit hall and a thorough exhibit inventory completed with updates underway including audio-visual improvements throughout the Center.
- Center Board, Staff and Volunteers assisted with Whiskey Mountain herd health, population and habitat monitoring with our Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Forest Service, BLM and other agency partners during spring and autumn research work days.
- Co-hosting "The Sagebrush Sea" film showing at the Dubois Public Library, the "Bighorn Rendezvous" at the Center and the "Trapping the Rocky Mountain Bighorn" Sheepeater Indian outing with the Dubois Museum.

The summer 2015 season has been a great admissions year, with over 3,200 visitors since June. We are excited to announce we have over 80 new and renewing members since January 2015, bringing our current membership to over 177 members, which is 60% of our goal of 300 sustaining members. Join us as a new or renewing member to help us continue to educate the public about bighorn sheep!

We need your support now more than ever in order for us to continue telling the story of wild sheep and the many challenges they face, including disease and habitat loss. By purchasing raffle tickets and making your contribution today, you'll know you are making a difference for wild sheep and the Center!

Contact us at the Center today to purchase your Big Four Raffle tickets and to reserve your spot at the Bighorn Bash in November. **If your reservation is in by November 1st, you are automatically entered in the Early Bird Drawing!** We sincerely thank you for your support, and the bighorns thank you as well!

Sincerely,

Sara Domek

Sara Domek
Executive Director

**You can reach the Center at:
info@bighorn.org, 307-455-3429
Also visit our website at www.bighorn.org
and Follow us on Facebook!**

Devil's Canyon Bighorn Sheep Update

By Leslie Schreiber, Wildlife Biologist, Wyoming Game & Fish Dept.

The acrid smell of burning horn filled our nostrils. The spade bit bored into the left horn of a bighorn sheep while the hunter, Bill Wilson, watched his prized sheep skull anxiously. The product of Bill's blood, sweat, and time was splayed out on the table as I drilled the hole for the "plug", the piece of metal with a unique number countersunk into every bighorn sheep skull legally harvested or picked up. This particular 9.35-year-old sheep was harvested from the Devil's Canyon herd east of Lovell in hunt area 12. The 37" long horn was too big to fit in the custom-made vice used to stabilize the skull while drilling. Four strong, weather-beaten hands held the skull firmly while I lightly tapped the plug into the hole with a hammer. This sheep's 16" horn bases are commonly seen in this herd because of their genetic history. The herd was created in 1973 from sheep transplanted from Whiskey Mountain, Wyoming. The herd held on at about 20 sheep, until transplants from Oregon and Montana in 2004 and 2006 gave it a boost. Ever since, the population has been growing with a high count in 2014 of 212 sheep including 76 rams. The herd resides on a mixture of BLM, National Forest, and private land between Bighorn Lake and the Bighorn Mountains in Bighorn County. A fitting location for Bighorn sheep.

Finished. The plug is in the horn and Bill is smiling proudly again. As the new wildlife biologist based in Greybull, I am charged with managing the Devil's Canyon bighorn sheep herd. I am a novice to sheep management, but I am receiving excellent advice from WGFD sheep experts. In fact, I'm helping here in the Cody Regional Office plugging sheep heads while Cody Wildlife Biologist Doug McWhirter is on horseback checking sheep hunters in hunt area 4. During my first year as a biologist here, I learned that the Devil's Canyon herd has 3 management objectives tied to it: 1) stand as a source herd for transplants, 2) provide ram hunting opportunity, and 3) maintain both bighorn sheep in Devil's Canyon and domestic sheep grazing on the Bighorn National Forest by closely monitoring for commingling between the two.

Transplants – In March 2015, an aerial net-gunning crew captured 25 Devil's Canyon sheep and transported them to a staging area a few miles away filled with WGFD, USFS, and BLM personnel, volunteers, and high-school students. The sheep were carefully checked over, fitted with a GPS collar and an ear tag, sampled for respiratory pathogens, and loaded into "Ewe Haul" trailers. The next morning, those 25 sheep were released in the Seminoe Mountains to the sound of camera shutters clicking and hushed, awed voices. The transplanted sheep are settled into their new home with only one mortality early on caused by a mountain lion. Another transplant is in the process of being approved for March 2016 in which another 25 Devil's Canyon sheep will be moved to the Seminoe area.



Hunting – Since hunting began for the Devil's Canyon sheep in 2008, only 1-2 licenses have been issued each year, with some harvested rams scoring >180. After the bighorn sheep classification survey in 2014 resulted

in a count of 212 sheep, 4 licenses were authorized for 2015. I anticipate 4 licenses being issued in 2016 as well.

Wild/Domestic Sheep Interaction – Part of the delicate balance of managing for wild and domestic sheep in this area is ensuring bighorn sheep do not wander into commingling situations with domestic sheep. Devil’s Canyon is approximately 8 miles north of a domestic sheep stock trail. Cottonwood Canyon is about 3 miles north of the stock trail. Cottonwood Canyon is a “do not cross line” for wild sheep: any wild sheep found south of Cottonwood Canyon are captured or euthanized by WGFD. During the Memorial Day weekend, a citizen on horseback saw and took pictures of a bighorn sheep ewe in Cottonwood Canyon. The local game warden was notified, and he rode into Cottonwood Canyon to find the ewe, but to no avail. The next week, the game warden and I were in a helicopter searching Cottonwood Canyon and the surrounding area for the ewe, but she eluded us. The helicopter flight was part of our intensive surveys during the spring and fall when domestic sheep are on the trail. WGFD and Bighorn National Forest personnel conduct ground surveys before, during, and after the trailing event to ensure that no commingling occurs. We are still on the look-out for the ewe, although it is possible she returned to Devil’s Canyon.

Next steps – Back in 1973 when the first sheep were introduced into Devil’s Canyon, various stakeholders agreed over a handshake that 200 sheep was a good number to aim for. If we have too many, wild sheep may start wandering toward domestic sheep; if we have too few, we can’t meet our other 2 objectives for this herd. Two-hundred seemed just right. From 1973-2014, we never counted more than 150 sheep, meaning that the herd was below objective. We counted 212 sheep in 2014 and 164 in 2015, so now the informal, handshake objective comes into play and was formalized through our herd unit review process in 2015. WGFD solicits input from stakeholders when setting a formal objective. We proposed an objective of 175 bighorn sheep based on a summer aerial trend count, calculated on a 3-year running average. We know we miss some sheep when we count them, so an objective of 175 bighorn sheep would keep sheep numbers at current levels. We presented our classification/trend data, along with our current management strategies and proposed management objective to the public at open houses in Lovell, Worland, Powell, and Cody. Overall, respondents at public meetings were satisfied with the herd. The current chairperson for the family ranch/corporation that controls access to the area where most bighorn sheep occur was very satisfied with the herd and indicated there were “about the right amount of sheep”. The officers and board of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation were also surveyed. They indicated there were “about the right amount” of sheep and were very satisfied. The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation wanted to see either more ram licenses or more ram transplants to utilize the trophy ram resource in Hunt Area 12.



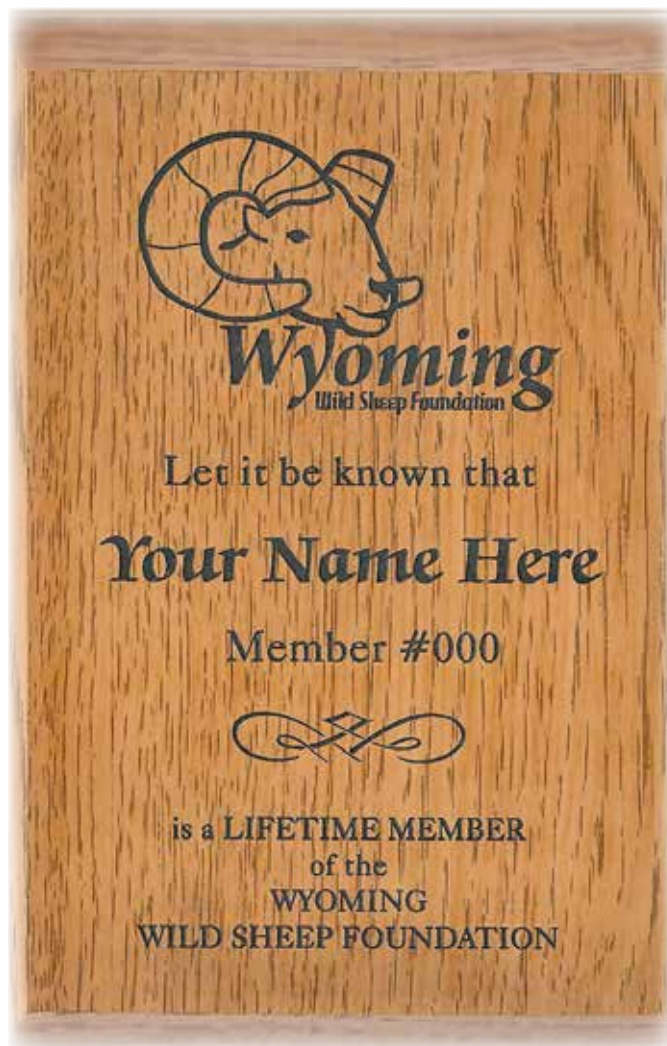
In closing, I wanted to introduce myself to the membership of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation as the biologist on the ground with Devil’s Canyon sheep. I am excited to get to know this dedicated, hands-on group of people. Although I am new to bighorn sheep management (I’m originally from Indiana and my background is with sage-grouse), I promise to work tirelessly to ensure a bright future for the sheep herd I have the privilege of managing.

Wyoming WSF would like to thank, and recognize, Life Members who have signed up since the Spring 2015 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 engraved knife (either fixed- or folding-blade) or plaque. We thank all of our past, current, and future Life Members!!

- 423 D.Heath McBride
- 424 Jason Radakovich
- 425 Joe Whittemore
- 426 Ronn Yellen
- 427 Marvel Cosner
- 428 Max Rhyner
- 429 Kali Keene
- 430 W.Travis Bomengen
- 431 Mark Conrad
- 432 Tera Butler
- 433 Eric Johnson
- 434 Gary A. Younkin
- 435 Luke Michelena
- 436 Anita Kleiner
- 437 Jerry K. Davis
- 438 Sierra Amundson
- 439 Ray Lozier
- 440 John Alexander
- 441 Mark Fear
- 442 Nancy Liebert
- 443 James D. Rice
- 444 Jace Nordeen
- 445 Will Schultz
- 446 Adam Johnson
- 447 John Walker
- 448 Brad Meredith
- 449 Glen Anthony Wyatt
- 450 Cary Wyatt
- 451 Karen Lozier
- 452 Josh Taylor
- 453 Clayton Atkinson
- 454 T.K. Atkinson



- 455 Wyatt Atkinson
- 456 Mark Diebert
- 457 Mickie Fischer
- 458 Lucas Todd
- 459 Kelli Thornton
- 460 Drake Amundson
- 461 Luke Ellifritz
- 462 Wayne Henderson
- 463 Richard Geunzel
- 464 Whitney Ward

Wyoming
Wild Sheep Foundation

FREE Life Member's Only Drawing for a Dall Sheep Hunt!

June 6, 2015, one lucky Life Member of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation (WY-WSF) will win a 10-day Alaska Dall Sheep Hunt. All Life Members of WY-WSF in attendance at our 2015 Fundraiser Banquet will be entered into this drawing for a 10-day Dall sheep hunt with Alaska Wilderness Enterprises for August of 2015 or 2016.

Go to www.wildernessenterprises.com for more information about the outfitter.

Rules

- The winning WY-WSF Life Member will be announced at our WY-WSF banquet to be held Saturday night, June 6, 2015 at the Parkway Plaza Hotel and Convention Center in Casper, WY.
- Only WY-WSF Life Members will be eligible to win this Life Member's Only Drawing at no additional cost.
- All new WY-WSF Life Member must be paid in full before their name will be entered into the drawing.
- The winner will be notified by email and phone.
- The winner will only be able to transfer this Dall sheep hunt to another WY-WSF life member that is present and registered at our 2015 WY-WSF banquet.
- This Dall sheep hunt cannot sell, trade, or exchange this hunt for profit.
- The WY-WSF board reserves the right to transfer this hunt to alternate Life Member drawings on the night of the banquet.
- If the winner is unable to attend the WY-WSF Life Member banquet, WY-WSF will draw three alternate Life Members names at the banquet.
- Alaska Wilderness Enterprises will provide the majority of the hunt details.

- The winner is fully responsible for all tags/licenses, airfare, charter flights, trophy fees for wolves, tips, associated taxes, hotels before and after the hunt, taxidermy and shipping.
- Any Board member, volunteer, Director, or Officer, who is also a Life Member of Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation that is present and registered is eligible to win this hunt.
- The value of this hunt may not be redeemed for cash.
- One WY-WSF Life Membership will be auctioned at the Saturday June 6th Life Member breakfast and

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Life Members, Let us know what Life Member's only drawing you would like to see featured in 2016 by e-mailing your dream hunt to: info@wyomingwildsheep.org.



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Dominick
2014

The Hunt of a Lifetime

Wyoming hunter, Chuck Tanner Draws Bighorn Sheep Tag after waiting 18 Years.

After 18 years of applying and waiting for a Wyoming resident Big Horn Sheep tag, I checked the Internet and success! I had drawn a tag for Area 5 near Dubois, Wyoming.

A million thoughts raced through my head at that point:

Where am I going?

When am I going?

What am I going to do?

I better get in Shape!

I told my wife and kids and close friends and it spread like wildfire to my friends at the Lander Elks Lodge.

I was so excited! Then the work began the exercising, shooting, planning, scouting, the budgeting, and more exercising.

Everybody I spoke with suggested that I hire an outfitter, but before I settled on one I attended the 2014 Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Banquet to help me narrow down my search by visiting with other members and outfitters.

The number one name that kept coming up was Wind River Mountain Outfitters. I eventually settled on them and reached out to Fritz Meyer and Wind River Outfitters about a sheep hunt. Fritz set me up for a ten day hunt in early September with one of his guides. The rest of the long summer was nothing but exercise, sighting in my rifle, and more exercise.

When September finally rolled around I left for my hunting trip. On September, 14th 2014 I met with my guide, Joe Hutchison, in Dubois with only my gear and a heart full of anticipation. We loaded up the trucks and we set out towards the Double Cabins Trail head. When we reached our destination we unloaded our horses and mules and saddled up heading out along the Bug Creek Trail. After several hours of riding and taking it all in, that I was on my sheep hunt, we arrived in camp. After a quick bite from camp wrangler, Nicki Harrington, we all headed up the mountain scoping for my sheep. Joe spotted a few ewes and lambs in the area but no horns. We spent the rest of that day and the next two days hunting around Wiggins Peak, Mount Kent, Blue Creek, Bear Creek and a few other drainages.

After day three, we packed up our camp and moseyed to Bed Springs Meadow and camped there for the night. The next morning we awoke to a bugling elk outside of our camp, this was the start to a good day. We then moved into the Caldwell Creek Camp, had lunch and rode up to Steer Creek Basin Ridge. As we rode towards Steer Creek Basin we passed the Pink Elephant, a rock formation that was pink. While glassing the ridge Joe spotted three rams just below us. I saw him frantically waving his arms at me to get down to him and I hustled towards him, with my heart pumping 100 miles an hour.

When I reached him, I caught site of the rams. I fought the rocks to steady my 270 and worked to calm my nerves. Joe picked out the biggest ram and I set my aim on him. Bang! I connected with the first shot from around 200 hundred yards! After a long chase down the mountain and several more shots, I finally put him down in a small creek basin at the bottom of the hill!

Then the real work began, I stayed with my ram while Joe went back to get the horses. When he returned, he had made my day, bringing with him another pack horse he had acquired from another Wind River Outfitter Guide coming in. After a quick photo shoot we packed up and headed out just before dark set in.



Following a long triumphant ride back to camp I tried to settle into my tent for some shut eye, yet I was restless with excitement. It then began to sink in that I had shot my Wyoming Sheep, I found sleep. The next day I took my second parade ride out, beaming with excitement.

We had covered roughly twenty miles of amazing country in the last five days, I was tired yet full of accomplishment and great memories I will hold forever.

Then, it was home to claim the bragging rights that I had earned. My ram scored around a 160, but that didn't matter to me, it was the hunt, the hunt of a lifetime!

I want to send out a special thanks to Joe Hutchinson, Fritz Meyer, Niki Harrington, Wind River Outfitters, my friends and family, and to everyone who helped me to achieve this goal!



Meet your Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Board Members

As our membership has grown substantially over the past year, it is possible that some of you haven't met all of the board of directors members. We will introduce ourselves to you over the next few issues in this column. Your board of directors are volunteers working to secure the future of wild sheep in Wyoming. Page one of this issue contains addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses for each of us. Please don't hesitate to contact us with ideas, concerns, or for any questions you have regarding your chapter.



Scott Butler, LM 267

I was born and raised in Dubois, WY and lived at Whiskey Basin. My dad Gary worked for the Game and Fish Dept for 40 years is now retired, which led to a move to Cheyenne. My wife of fifteen years, Tara is a vet tech, part time now, and does bookkeeping. My son, Chase, is going on 14 years old and becoming big enough to help with meat packing when the occasion arises.

We own and operate an excavating business in Cheyenne. We visit a few lakes in the summer, do some hunting in the fall and work hard to be able to do it again next year.

“Why did you volunteer for the BOD?”
I wanted to help with more than the fundraising banquet and I want to be involved with helping to sustain the future of wild sheep in WY.

“What is the most important job for the Board?”
Optimizing existing habitat and exploring new habitat options.

“What is your next big hunt?”
A moose hunt with my wife (her tag) this fall and elk hunting with my son. Someday I would like to do a high country mule deer hunt and a sheep hunt.

James Rinehart

Owner/Associate Broker, Western United Realty

25 years of Real Estate experience, 23 of those specializing in the ranch brokerage business.

Education: Bachelor of Science 1986, Business administration, University of Wyoming

Professional certification: Wyoming Real Estate Associate Broker License #2667

Summary: With a desire to stay in Wyoming and being an avid hunter, James obtained his real estate license in 1991 and at that knew his focus would be on rural properties and ranch brokerage. James sought to seek satisfaction through this career by maintaining and improving wildlife habitat and wide-open spaces through the sales of quality hunting and fishing properties utilizing conservation practices. Growth of the firm while maintaining integrity and lifestyle has been vitally important. Over the years the opportunities to be involved in conservation ranch brokerage has grown. James has been involved in approximately 75,000 acres of conservation easement related transactions, either through the sale of eased ranches, the placement of easements after the sale or lands being placed under permanent protection. In addition to conservation practices, James has taken pride in his ability to showcase the details of ranch properties better than most, and to facilitate the due diligence required of buyers by ensuring those details are to the buyers at an early stage in the process.

In his own words: I cannot think of another thing I would rather do than be able to show people, usually from outside of Wyoming, the wonderful attributes our state has to offer. Taking pride in knowing a lot of details about the property have gotten us accolades from sellers and buyers alike. That means a great deal when a seller commends us for our knowledge and what have learned from them or other sources about the ranch. When A buyer knows we can answer any question they may have, either on the spot or after a day, the satisfaction of a job well done means the world to me. And the knowledge that as people around the state talk (Wyoming is still just a small town with long streets don't forget), I will be commended for a job well done with the utmost in honesty and integrity.

Professional memberships and affiliations: Board of Directors, Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, Life member, Wild Sheep Foundation, Board of Directors, First Interstate Bank, Laramie. Life Member, Habitat partner, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation



“A Goal Reached at Last”

Loren Kohlen, Life Member #281, Corcoran, MN

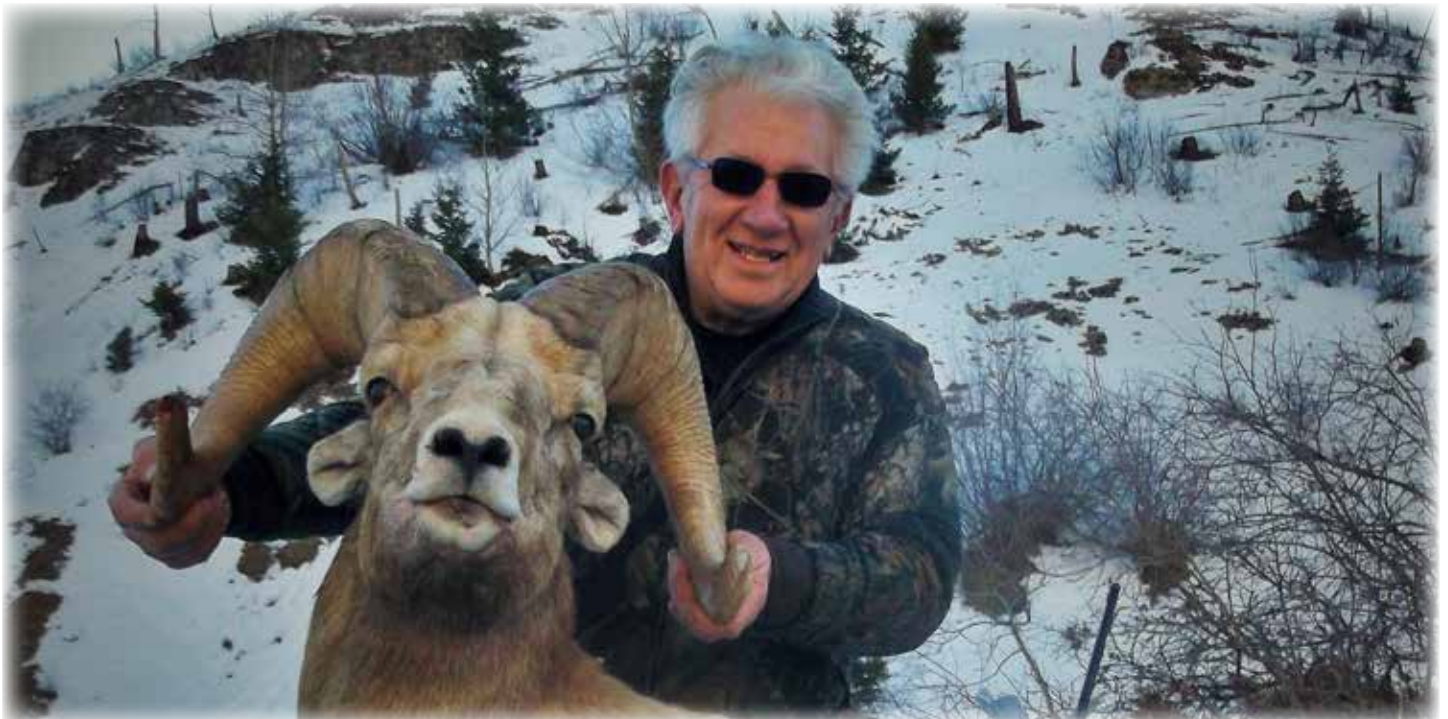
I got a call from my good friend Bo Morgan. He was calling to ask me “Want to finish your third Slam with that Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep you need?” Being from Minnesota, my answer was “You bet!” He responded with “Well, get your stuff together. I have a tag for you. We’ll be hunting in Montana, north of Great Falls.”

Three weeks later I was in Great Falls and was being met by Bo. We stayed overnight and the next morning we headed north and were met by Brendan Burke, another outfitter, and Justin, our guide. All three of the men were from Montana and knew the area well. After about a 3.5 hour drive, we were in the mountains. Both Brendan and Bo said that it should be a fairly easy hunt if my shooting was good. I told them that I’ve been lucky so far. Out of the 32 sheep and goats that I’ve gotten, only one took more than one shot to get the job done.

We saw four rams up near the top of a lower mountain. So up we went. It was a fairly easy climb, although we ended up crawling part of the way. When we reached the top, we were on one side of a canyon and the sheep were on the other, about 400 yards away. We were going to make our move to get a little closer, but then something spooked the rams. It was decided that we would move to another area.

In a few hours, we were at the bottom on another canyon with steep cliffs. Three rams were spotted near the top. The fellows said at the same time, “Take the one in the middle.” The lower half of its body was behind a boulder with about 10 inches of its body showing, and the angle was quite steep; the distance was about 300 yards. So I tried to put the shot about 1 ½ inches above the boulder. I was just getting ready when everyone said “Shoot.” With one shot, I heard that good sound, ‘whap’, and the ram was falling about 300 feet. We rushed over to it. It was a beautiful ram. Handshakes were given, pictures were taken, and congratulations were given on taking my third Slam.

I’d like to thank Bo Morgan, Brendan Burns, and Justin for making it such a great hunt. I’d also like to thank the outfitters for making it possible for me to reach my goal. It all started with Stan Simpson, Frank Simpson, Larry Altimus, Glen Willsie, Kirk and Cole Ellis, Mike and Dixie Hammett, Mike Colpo, Nayo Balderrama, Luke Vince and again Bo Morgan, who has been on many of my hunts, and who actually made it happen. Most of all, I’d like to thank my cousin, Ron Vollrath, my hunting partner for 66 years. I hope that he and I can continue hunting together for many more years. May God continue to bless all of the Outfitters, Guides and Sheep Hunters of this world.



Member's MGallery



Joni Miller, LM 223, also harvested a beautiful buck, with a little help from Pika



Read about Kurt Eisenach's ,LM 410, DIY hunt in the Spring RamPage.



Dick Butler with Outfitter Meade Dominick



Gray Thornton,LM 342, Yukon Goat



Jason Radekovich,LM 424, Alaska Dall



David Rael with Stone Sheep



Kelli Thornton, LM 342, Stone Sheep



Scott Schreve, LM 333, shot this photo on the Shoshone River near Cody.



James Rinehart and Jerry Galles, LM223, both found success in the Yukon



Terry Thompson with his Alaskan Dall Sheep

- **M**embers 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.



Curt Shatzer, LM 220, took this Alaskan Brown Bear with the help of Alaskan Frontier Outfitter, Ben Stevenson



Would you wait 43 years for a chance to harvest this trophy? Don Farrier was patient and he ended up with this HA 19 ram that scored 186 2/8.



Mack Miller, LM 172, with his 2015 Antelope

WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION BOARD INTERN UPDATE

Sierra Amundson

After graduating from high school in May 2015, I returned to the Tom Thorne / Beth Williams Wildlife Research Center at Sybille for my second season. June and July were very busy at Sybille, as I monitored lambs for our on-going respiratory disease research. In total, nine lambs were born and I monitored each pen of ewes and lambs twice a day, in addition to feeding and watering chores. I delivered lambs to the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife Fort Collins lab after they had been euthanized to prevent suffering from the respiratory disease, and assisted Dr. Karen Fox with necropsies to collect histopathology samples that were examined at a later date.



While we have yet to find the answer on how to manage respiratory disease in free-ranging bighorn sheep, our captive research has helped us significantly in understanding the roles of pathogens in disease and the potential for chronic herd infections. Also at Sybille, I began the hand-rearing of three elk calves. These calves have genetic backgrounds that will likely give them a prolonged life despite continual exposure to chronic wasting disease. Hand-rearing will make the calves more comfortable around people and easier to handle in research scenarios. Hand-rearing included bottle-feeding, halter breaking, and walking the calves daily. My years in 4H handling livestock and working with horses on my family's farm helped prepare me for handling the elk calves. Throughout the summer, I also hand-reared a pronghorn antelope fawn, assisted in several necropsies of various species, as well as completed general facility maintenance.

Dr. Mary Wood, Hank Edwards, and I were invited to provide training for an advanced training workshop on bighorn sheep respiratory disease investigation. This three-day workshop was recommended by WAFWA and hosted by the Colorado

Parks and Wildlife Health Program. The national Wild Sheep Foundation provided funding to help conduct the training. The workshop was designed to provide representatives from all western states and Canadian provinces with first-hand experience in field and laboratory techniques to survey for respiratory disease pathogens. The overall goal was to train and help foster more consistent and comparable data collection on regional bighorn respiratory disease investigations across state and provincial boundaries. As a result, having comparable data will serve as a foundation for, hopefully, developing adaptive management approaches to minimize or mitigate impacts on herd health and performance.

In preparation for the workshop, I documented the progressive stages of respiratory disease in bighorns through pictures and short video segments during my work days at Sybille. Photos and videos were utilized to help biologists identify respiratory disease symptoms during the training. I developed professional relationships with veterinarians from across the western U.S. and Canada during the training that will be very beneficial to me during my collegiate and professional work career.

Finally, my first interaction with the national Wild Sheep Foundation Board of Directors and my first official duties as Board Intern began in June when I traveled to Kelowna, B.C. and participated in the Wild Sheep Foundation Chapter and Affiliate Summit VIII. I have been appointed to serve on the Professional Resources Advisory Board (PRAB) and am learning helpful business strategies, as well as making lifelong connections that I will be able to coordinate with in my future career as a wildlife pathologist. In Kelowna, I toured pristine bighorn sheep habitats and learned about Canadian bighorn sheep management issues and programs with board member Kyle Meintzer, who is serving as my mentor.



In late September, I will be going to Washington D.C. with several other board members and wildlife professionals to meet with Congressional delegation to discuss bighorn sheep management issues in the West, and inform lawmakers about the Wild Sheep Foundation and its mission.

I am looking forward to these professional experiences and am thankful for the support of the national Wild Sheep Foundation, Wyoming Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation, and all of their members.

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A SHEEP HUNTER IS BORN

By: Kelli S. Thornton

The <1 Club – a club where national Wild Sheep Foundation members like myself fantasize about the day they will officially be kicked out. The members are comprised of both men and women who have never personally harvested a sheep. These are the dreamers...and many of them are the professional hunters and guides who spend ever chance possible on the mountain making their client's dreams become a reality.

Jack O'Connor said it best - "Sheep hunters are romantics who love high places and solitude. To them the wild ram embodies the mystery and magic of the mountains, the rocky canyons, the snowy peaks, the fragrant alpine meadows, the gray slide rock, the icy dancing rills fed by snow bank and glacier, the sweet, clean air of the high places, and the sense of being alone on the top of the world with the eagles, the marmots, and the wild sheep themselves. The sheep hunter is willing to climb until his lungs are bursting, to walk until his legs are dead weary, to grow hungry and thirsty for great rewards. There is no half way." O'Connor provides profound insight into the heart and soul of those men and women blessed to be inducted into the sheep hunting fraternity. These words evoke a much deeper and more meaningful spiritual message now than ever before. Last month in British Columbia I was blessed with a magnificent harvest, a Stone's sheep surrounded by dear friends and my best friend, and hunting mentor, my husband Gray.

This was not my first trip to British Columbia nor was it my 1st sheep hunt. In August of 2014, just 1 year ago, we booked a Stone's sheep and Mountain Goat hunt with Golden Bear Outfitters. On day one of our hunt Gray harvested an exceptional sheep and on day two I harvested a beautiful billy. I returned home - a "Mountain Hunter" and even though I did not pull the trigger I had hunted sheep! I'd become a "Sheep Hunter"! This past January my husband surprised me with my own Stone's sheep hunt that he booked at the Sheep Show™. For the last several months Gray and I have been training both physically and mentally in preparation for our trip back to super natural British Columbia. Only this time I will be the one hunting the majestic Stone's sheep not only as my first Stone's but my very first sheep. The training has endured a few obstacles along the way, from my foot surgery to an unruly "work" schedule. In spite of it all we managed to get ourselves in better sheep shape than we were the year prior. "Late to bed and early to rise" seems to be my motto these days with so much happening right now in our life. Within just 2 days before we departing to British Columbia we signed papers with a real estate



agent to sell our mountain paradise in Cody, Wyoming. The idea of moving away from Cody is bittersweet to say the least. Wyoming was a choice and a choice that we both made together eight years ago when this little southern gal led by her leading man made her way northwest to a place where notable legends such as Teddy Roosevelt, Jack O'Connor, Jim Zumbo and Lefty Kreh have written about. Snowcapped peaks, alpine meadows, blue ribbon streams and more wildlife than people - a place we have been proud to call home! It has been very good to us! In 2005 I attended my first sheep show convention in San Antonio. It was known as FNAWS then and my knowledge of wild sheep was non-existent. My hunting career was still in its' infancy and sheep hunting was on a whole other level that quite frankly I did not understand. I had only just

completed my 3rd hunting season in Texas but I was blessed to have had the opportunity to hunt Africa. Plans were well underway to travel that next year to New Zealand for Tahr, Chamois and Arapawa Ram.

As I look back on that time I needed to grow as a hunter and as a conservationist before I could even begin to comprehend the fascination of sheep hunting and the extreme limits that men and women will go through for the privilege to stalk and harvest these magnificent creatures. Years later here I am! I am one of those insane sheep hunters. I have evolved not only as a mountain hunter but also more importantly as an active steward. It was a process I feel that I needed to go through in order for me to appreciate just how special this fraternity is. And so, the long awaited sheep hunt begins and life as I know it will be changed forever.

On August 12th my sheep quest began filled with mixed emotions on so many levels. As we drove away from our home I began to cry. These were not the tears of sadness rather tears of being overwhelmed with excitement and the unknown. I cried all the way to Bozeman. I could not believe this moment had come. I suddenly found myself questioning my mental and physical abilities. Why? I had trained and trained hard, I had all the right gear and mentally I was ready for this exciting adventure. I had pushed myself towards this incredible challenge and yet somehow at that very moment a surreal sense of calmness embraced me. There were many calls from special friends we received that morning wishing me a successful and safe hunt. I could not believe this moment had come. Driving through the mountains that morning was a spiritual time. It became a time of reflection and appreciation. An opportunity for me to not only thank God for the many blessings he had bestowed but also to reflect back on the road traveled and the amazing journey that had finally led us to this point.

We departed from Bozeman early that next morning and arrived in Juneau around midday. It was overcast and started to rain shortly after our arrival. We booked an overnight accommodation at a quaint hotel that used to be a bed and breakfast back in the day. We freshened up and were off to downtown Juneau to the Red Dog Saloon where we enjoyed the local Alaskan brew and our favorite piano man. We finished off the evening with a lovely dinner and a Pinot Noir at an exceptional restaurant, SALT, before heading back to the hotel. Early that next morning we shuttled over to Ward Air, a private air charter company that would fly us in to British Columbia. Usual Juneau weather caused for some delay but nonetheless we eventually were given clearance to take off and we landed around noon into Tatsamenie camp to kickoff this long awaited adventure. We were greeted by our British Columbian family, Greg and Fay Williams of Golden Bear Outfitters, their daughter Melissa, son & guide Blake and his wife Kelsea, granddaughters Mercedes and Novah, and camp companion "Tuffy".

We spent the rest of the afternoon organizing our gear and hunt details. The plan was to pack for six days. Blake had just gotten married in February and his new bride, Kelsea, would be joining us on the hunt. Greg's plan was to fly us out in the morning to another lake and we would hike/climb in from there. This was going to be a true backpack hunt. Knowing that everything you will need for the hunt will be on your back it was critical that the pack was not only well-planned but that you ensured it was strategically structured for optimum travel. Some tough decisions had to be made. The majority of gear brought to B.C. included an entire arsenal of photography equipment including collapsible reflectors, multiple batteries, tripod and a 400mm lens. I decided to leave behind the 400mm lens and other misc. items. I weigh barely a 100 pounds and my pack in relation to my body weight was getting quite heavy. That evening we enjoyed an Alaskan King Crab Feast that Gray and I brought with us from Juneau. It was an incredible evening of fellowship and celebration for the exciting and life-changing hunt that was about to begin. The next morning we awoke to blue skies and crisp alpine air. We had a quick breakfast, gathered up our gear and began to load Greg's Piper PA12. Greg decided to take Blake and Kelsea first and then he would return to take Gray and me. It was a beautiful morning to fly and we saw an incredible population of mountain goat along the way. As a board member of the Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance, it was wonderful to see such thriving and healthy billys, nannies and kids. A testament to the great work British Columbia has done managing this resource.

By the time we all arrived at the drop off location it was mid-morning. Blake suggested we scale down our packs and leave enough food for two days in a game bag that he would secure in a tree. It was now time to begin our climb. Over the next six hours we would do a near-straight vertical climb gaining over 2000 feet in elevation over

some of the most gnarly and treacherous rocky shale. The one thing I had not truly trained myself for especially with the extra weight from a heavy pack. There were many areas along the way that challenged my balance and surefootedness. This was not a race. The best thing for me to do was to take my time and to be very selective with which rocks to climb. We eventually made it to the top. It was a vast alpine plateau not unlike a boulder-strewn moonscape with intermittent grasses and glacial fed runoff. As we hiked across this plateau we came upon periodic seeps caused from glacier melt – an excellent water resource for not only sheep but for us as we adventured into their mountain top realm. We decided on a nearby sandy patch to set up our camp. As we begun organizing our tents we noticed off in the distance about 400 yards was a feeding group of ewes and lambs. For the next thirty minutes or so this group continued to get closer to our camp. I grabbed both the binoculars and camera so that we could sit and enjoy glassing and photographing the sheep. The sheep continued to get closer and eventually came within 10 yards of the tents. There were two young heavy based rams approximately 3-4 years in age that you knew in a few more years would be an outstanding trophies. The herd continued to move on and we stood in awe as they faded in the distance. These sheep had never been hunted so there was no human pressure or fear. We were living amongst them and this was such an incredible opportunity that had presented itself. With a few more hours of light and well beyond the 6 hour minimum B.C. same-day airborne wait, Blake asked us to gather our packs, binoculars and for me to grab my gun. I was reluctant to follow his instructions. What if we see a legal ram this early into the hunt? My hunt would be over but I wanted to experience Sheep Camp and at least for more than just one day! Yes I was there to hunt sheep but it is so much more than pulling a trigger. This is what I read and dreamed about. Despite my hesitation, I grabbed my Kimber .308 and we officially started the hunt. We hiked west of camp for about 500 yards and climbed over a couple of grassy knolls where we stopped to glass down into a couple of draws. You would think there would be sheep but did not see any signs of sheep. It was getting much cooler and the sun was beginning to go down so headed back to camp for a quick freeze-dried dinner and off to an early sleep.

We arose to a beautiful sunrise, brilliant blue sky and crisp alpine air. Blake had boiled water for coffee and tea. The mornings are what I loved most. I could feel the adrenalin high building inside me, the warmth in my hands from the fresh brewed cup of tea and the sweet smell of maple brown sugar oatmeal. After breakfast we gathered our gear and packs (making sure not to forget my <1 Club shirt) and started day 2 of the hunt. We started out hiking back towards the draws we had glassed the evening before and continued east to basically make a loop around our camp. Blake could see a group of rams that were pretty far away and thought we should probably get a closer look. As we walked across a scree field we literally bumped into the ewes and lambs we had seen the prior day. It became a stand off of note with 100 yards between us. We stood still for what seemed like hours praying that this group would somehow carry on. Finally they gave up on us and wandered off without causing any disturbance to the group of rams we spotted previously.

We hiked in a single file line to minimize as much exposure as possible. Unbeknownst to us there was a shallow valley that had another group of rams that we were not able to see. It wasn't long before Blake spotted them. While glassing this new group the first group left their beds and joined their brothers. There were now a total of 18 rams about 600+ yards away. We wanted to get in closer. We got in another 150+ yards but there were so many rocks there was no way we could be confident that the shot from barrel would have a clear path. Gray and Kelsea decided to stay back as Blake and I belly crawled until we got to a spot that I was confident would have a clear path and a firm rest. We ranged our location to be 375 yards. There were 2 rams we were watching. One was a 9-year old white ram with very nice extended lamb tips but he had thinner bases. The second 11-year old ram had a dark beautiful coat, and beautiful twisting horns. Blake wanted me to shoot the white ram but both rams were superb.

The two began to spar, their heads collided and the sound of the impact echoed in the valley. Tears ran down my face as I watched this incredible act of nature. Blake leaned over to me and said "take the shot when you are ready". I took a deep breath with more tears running down my face, I said to myself "just squeeze the trigger" and I pulled the trigger. It was a perfect shot, I quickly reloaded and the ram spun around, I pulled the trigger once more and the sheep fell immediately to the ground. As I looked through my scope I began to cry. Blake said those words I remembered hearing a year ago but this time he was speaking to me, "You just got yourself a Stone's sheep"!

Yes, I did! But it was not just my Stone's sheep it was our ram. Each one of us played a pivotal role in the hunt. There were many tears, hugs, and excitement. As we walked towards my sheep the 17 rams stood beside him waiting for a new dominant ram to emerge. My team allowed me an opportunity to privately give reverence and thanks to God and as I kneeled down beside the sheep I gently stroked the hair on his back with my tears falling on his coat. I thanked him for the experience and for the nourishment from his body that we would receive from this harvest. Within a few moments my team joined me for beautiful photos and together we field dressed our ram and carried him back to camp; which amazingly was only about a ½ mile away. We had truly hiked and camped within their mountain realm.

It was late and darkness was approaching soon. We had a superb Mountain House dinner and Kelsea served a wonderful dessert, raspberry crumble. After dinner the sky lit up with the Northern Lights, something I had always heard about but had never seen. Kelsea said to me "Kelli, God is congratulating and blessing you with the Northern Lights". It was a wonderful way to end such a special and spiritual day. By the next morning the weather had rolled in and we quickly broke down camp following breakfast and loaded up our gear. I was determined to carry our sheep off the mountain. My pack was brutally heavy and the weight was certainly slowing me down. I carried all my gear and equipment I initially brought in plus the horns and cape. Gray, Kelsea and Blake divided up the meat among their packs and we headed down the mountain. The descent was terrifying and the added weight became a real challenge. There were moments of blood, sweat and tears on the way down and they were times when I needed my husband to just talk me through it. I soldiered on and by the grace of God I carried our ram off the mountain and it took three (gratefully) weather delayed days to recover to where I could finally move my body without pain and depart again for Gray's goat hunt.



It is a life-changing experience only a sheep hunter knows and understands. The commitment you made to yourself is fulfilled. You have a greater respect and appreciation for the species and their habitat. With my husband, Gray, by my side, my guide, Blake Williams and his beautiful bride Kelsea, I pushed myself to limits I never thought imaginable. Our ram taught me more about myself than I realized. I became a better person up on that mountain that day!

“It is a life-changing experience only a sheep hunter knows and understands. The commitment you made to yourself is fulfilled. “

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation

2016 Wyoming Game & Fish Commissioners License Raffle

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4th Prize: Nikon 13 30X50 ED Field Spotting Scope

5th Prize: Ruger Magnum Hunter 300 Win. Mag. Rifle

6th Prize: Ruger AR 556 .223 Rifle

7th Prize: Sony Cyber Shot DSC-RX100 Camera

8th Prize: Nikon Monarch7, 10X30 Binoculars

9th Prize: Apple I Pad Mini 2 with WI-FI

10th Prize: Ruger .22 Charger Pistol

Drawing will be held June 4, 2016 at the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation annual banquet in Casper, Wyoming. Winners need not be present to win. For information, and to order tickets on line, please visit the WY-WSF web site: <http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org> , Phone: 307-527-7008, Email:info@wyomingwildsheep.org

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

Living on the Edge: the Targhee Bighorn Sheep Herd

Aly Courtemanch, Jackson Wildlife Biologist, Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Peering through a spotting scope from the top of the tram at the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, cold wind whipping across the hardened snow, I saw them.... a group of ewes and lambs hunkered down against a cliff on a far peak. This was February, the temperature was hovering around zero, and these sheep were bedded down above 10,000 feet in the Teton Range.

Although this lifestyle looks extraordinary, the Targhee bighorn sheep herd, which numbers around 125 animals, does this every winter. While sheep from the neighboring Jackson herd migrate down to lower elevations in the Jackson Hole valley to winter, Targhee sheep move higher and higher into the mountains, seeking out small patches along windswept ridges to eek out their living. Thanks to the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation and other partners, a multi-year study was launched from 2008-2011 at the Wyoming Coop Unit that asked: how do these sheep survive?

In the early 20th century, permanent settlement around Jackson Hole, including construction of houses, roads, and fences cut off traditional migration routes for the Targhee sheep herd. Widespread domestic sheep grazing also impacted bighorn sheep forage and habitats. By 1950, the Targhee sheep herd had ceased migrating, and instead, spent the summer and winter at high elevations in the Teton Range. Needless to say, wintering at 10,000+ feet is not easy. We now know that sheep survive by conserving energy and living off the fat stores that they accumulated over summer. Also, they move down to mid-elevations in spring to catch the first vegetation green-up on south-facing slopes. This is the first time this type of movement has ever been documented for an ungulate species.

Most of these spring habitats are located on the west side of the Teton Range, in areas formerly occupied by domestic sheep allotments. Thanks to the efforts of the WyWSF to buy-out permittees on a willing-seller/willing-buyer basis, the entire western slope of the Teton Range is now closed to domestic sheep grazing. This not only reduces the risk of pneumonia transmission from domestic sheep to the Targhee herd to nearly zero, but it opens up large areas of habitat for bighorn sheep. We have learned that these areas are critical for bighorn sheep during the spring, especially for pregnant ewes that in their last trimester. And, GPS-collars and aerial surveys have shown that bighorn sheep are using these former domestic sheep allotments more and more during the spring (Figure 1). During an aerial survey in March 2015 (funded by WyWSF), we observed an exceptional group of rams in a former allotment (Figure 3).

Although the Targhee herd remains small, efforts by the WyWSF have opened up new habitats and given bighorn sheep managers and land managers a much better understanding of how to conserve this herd into the future.



Figure 2.

An 8 year old ram harvested in Hunt Area 6 in 2015.

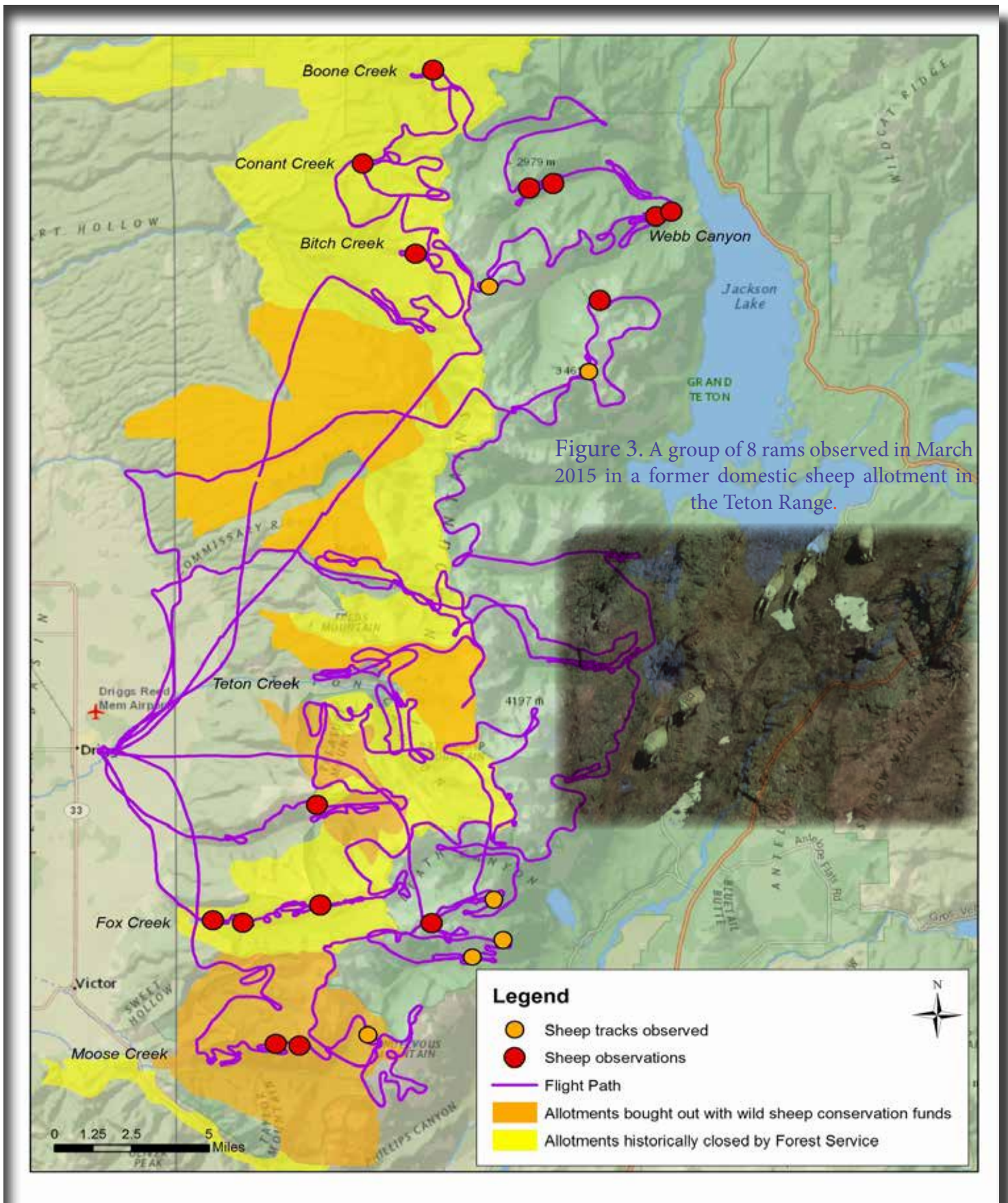


Figure 1. Locations of bighorn sheep (red dots) and bighorn sheep tracks (orange dots) from the 2015 Targhee survey. Many bighorn sheep were observed utilizing former domestic sheep allotments that were bought out with wild sheep conservation funds (orange shading) or livestock allotments historically closed by the Forest Service (yellow shading).

Wyoming Loses a Great Supporter of Wildlife

By

Kevin Hurley, Bozeman, MT (formerly of Cody, WY) (WY-WSF Life Member #20)



This summer, the state of Wyoming lost one of its biggest supporters of wildlife with the premature passing of Ron Lockwood (WY-WSF Life Member #75) of Kemmerer, WY. At the all-too-young age of 55, Ron lost the long battle he'd been fighting, leaving behind his brother Dan, sister Mary, three grown children (Sam, Jessie, Amy), a precious new granddaughter, and an untold number of friends and wildlife colleagues.

Ron was my best friend, for a very long time. We not only worked together, we spent a lot of our personal time together, too. We hunted together, we took pack trips together, we watched and helped each other's kids grow up, we tried to help each other through good times, and bad.

Many of you know, together, Ron and I emceed dozens and dozens of wildlife fund raiser banquets, for a lot of different groups, from NWTf to RMEF, MDF to WY-WSE, and other wildlife organizations like The Wildlife Society, the Wyoming Wildlife Federation, the Wyoming Hunting & Fishing Heritage EXPO, and the Wyoming Outdoor Hall of Fame. Many months, for years, we'd spend 2 or 3 weekends together each month, traveling across Wyoming,

and beyond, to have fun, raise \$ for wildlife, and spend time, together. Those who knew us both well often wondered, how can two guys who are so un-alike, be the best of friends?

Ron was a very deep thinker, but most knew him as the "funny guy" who liked to dress up, do skits, poke fun at and with people, but he was never mean to anyone, at least that I ever saw. Well, he was mean to me, as the straight man to his comic routines. Just kidding! Ron would hatch some hare-brained idea for a skit, I'd ruminate on his idea for a while, then we'd put our heads together and come up with something outrageous, and it usually brought the house down.

We never kept track of the \$ we helped raise for wildlife, but it might have been in the millions...we just did it 'cause we enjoyed it, and we had fun, together. Ron got me to do things that no one else could have ever gotten me to do. We helped each other during some very hard times, too; we knew and saw that side of each other's character, and we knew each other's troubles and vulnerabilities.

From huffing and puffing up a lot of mountain slopes, chasing Wyoming bighorns, to skinny dipping in the Yellowstone

River, and from pack trips to banquet stages, over 25+ years, Ron and I spent a lot of time, together.

Ron loved wildlife, and Ron loved Wyoming. Ron loved his family, and much of our time together was spent talking about his family or mine. Ron loved kids, and he did so much to help get them outside and experience some of what he knew so well. Ron loved his friends, and he loved nothing more than spending time horseback in the hills or floating some Wyoming river.

Ron loved people, and he was truly fascinated by their life experiences and the paths they had followed, to arrive at where they were. Ron was a good son, a good brother, a good father, and recently, a good grandpa.



So many of his friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and fellow wild lifers have said, “Ron, we’re damn sure gonna miss you...” I know that I will miss my little buddy, my hunting partner, my best friend.

Ron, I loved you, and I’m damn sure gonna miss you. Rest well, my friend. Light a big campfire, so I can find you along the trail; I’ll bring the bear spray, and the ketchup.

Footnote: at the request of Ron’s family, memorial gifts were directed to the Ron Lockwood Memorial Fund which the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation established shortly after Ron’s death. To date, over \$18,000 has been raised in Ron’s memory; funds will be used by WY-WSF to fund bighorn sheep projects in Wyoming that Ron would have been proud to have his name associated with. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Ron Lockwood Memorial Fund, or know someone who would, please go to <http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store.asp>, and help us honor our friend, who was so proud to have been a WY-WSF Life Member.

Tag 3, Day 4

By Joel Nirider

My story began with a phone call from a friend, Mack Miller. He didn't say hello or how's it going or anything like that, he just said, "Nirider, you are the luckiest son of a b-----I know. You drew another sheep tag!" I had drawn a sheep license in 2010 and harvested a nice ram with the help of Mack and Joni, Tom Reed and Opey Hlavnicka. I also drew a sheep license and harvested a ram in 1979. Now here it is 2015, my first year to reapply and sure enough, we are going sheep hunting again. We made plans and before long we were headed into sheep country. We only had a day to scout before the season opened due to our work schedules.

Opening day didn't produce any rams of any size. A few small rams above camp was about all we saw. Day two was about the same, just found a couple small rams. Day three, we located a ram on another mountain about 1 ½ miles away. With the wind blowing my scope, I couldn't decide on this ram. That evening we talked to some hunters that harvested a nice ram in the same drainage as the ram we had spotted that morning. We made plans to ride into that drainage the next morning.



So, Day four is here and we are finally on the trail a little before daylight. We had a 1 ½ hour horseback ride over this canyon and so far it seemed like nothing was going right. My horse had somehow unsnapped his lead rope and left camp in the dark with my saddle on him. We found the horse not far away. I switched lead ropes and we headed out down the trail trying to make up for lost time. A half hour later I discovered I had left my binoculars in camp while trying to find my loose horse. Mack and Joni reassured me that day four was a lucky day. Joni and another hunter Jason had both harvested their rams on previous hunts on the 4th of September.

Finally, we get to the mouth of the canyon and start looking for sheep. As we were riding along the top edge of this steep narrow gorge, Joni spotted a ram in the bottom coming off the creek. At a glance he looked like a pretty good ram. Things started happening fast; the ram was climbing into some pretty gnarly country as I was trying to find a place to tie up my horse. I grabbed my rifle and was wondering how far away he was... how would the horses react to a rifle shot... how we were going to get the ram out of this hole... and what exactly I was going to shoot from? At the same time Mack was telling me he's a good ram at 196 yards, and he insisted I look at him and decide for myself. We argued about this for a second and I grabbed his binoculars for a quick look, but I already knew I wanted to shoot this ram. I somehow made the shot straddling a little pine growing out of the side of the trail; it was not a good rest. But the ram dropped, slid over a cliff and almost rolled to the bottom. It took some time to get down to him, but when we did I was a happy camper. He was a nice broomed 10 ½ year old ram. After some high fives, we took pictures, boned him out and were back at camp around 2 pm that afternoon.

Day 4 was the lucky day after all and it didn't matter that I had left my binoculars in camp. We even brought along a pack horse that day. How many times do you harvest an animal with a pack horse handy?

Thanks so much to Mack and Joni Miller, Tom Reed and Opey Hlavnicka for making this hunt a success. A big thanks to Joni for all the great meals, and spotting the ram we could have easily rode by. And a big thank you to Mack, who hunted this ram as if he were filling his own sheep tag.

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Ferris Mountains Ready for Bighorns

By Ryan Amundson, Statewide Habitat Biologist and Bighorn Sheep Working Group Co-Chair



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

I recently spent a day in August in the Ferris Mountains with BLM range and wildlife resources personnel from the Rawlins Field Office assessing habitat conditions following large scale wildfires that occurred in 2011 – 2012. Things couldn't look any better, so yes, it's time to get serious about putting bighorns "on the mountain" in 2016. As you have read from WGFD Cody Region personnel, the Devil's Canyon herd continues to perform well and can continue to serve as a source herd for in-state transplants.

Post-wildfire, the BLM monitored vegetative recovery and even lent Mother Nature a helping hand and completed aerial herbicide applications to control cheat grass infestations. Livestock fences were re-built and modified to allow for safer wildlife passage, and burned mountain pastures were rested from grazing for two years. This allowed for excellent perennial, native vegetation re-establishment.

As part of our field tour, we discussed water availability on the mountain range, and are currently making plans to propose construction of guzzlers in key locations in the coming year or two. A portion of the Ferris Mountains is designated as a "Wilderness Study Area", which does limit ground disturbance activities and use of mechanized equipment. The wildfires of 2011-2012 burned the eastern one third of the mountain range. While in the infancy stages, we are cooperatively discussing the use of prescribed fire to enhance potential bighorn sheep habitats in the western two thirds. Many parts of the Ferris's meet the criteria for escape and lambing habitats for bighorns based on steepness of slope, but their values are compromised due to the level of conifer cover. Carefully managed fire can result in "instant sheep habitat" being created.

We'll keep the Wild Sheep Foundation posted on our progress, and we'll all keep our fingers crossed that we'll see 25 bighorns making the Ferris Mountains north of Rawlins their new home in 2016.

The Peek-A-Boo Rams of HA-12

By Tara Berg



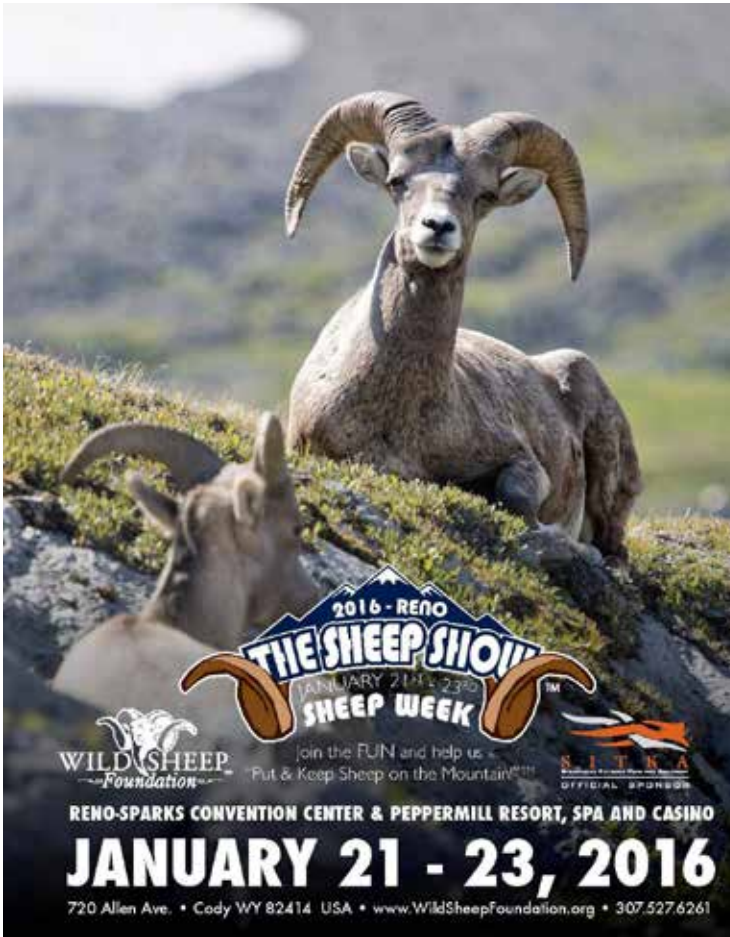
21 years of putting in for a sheep license paid off this year and I was fortunate enough to draw a sheep tag in Hunt Area 12 which I could only describe as unbelievable. It would not have been possible without the landowners on the Bischoff Ranch allowing hunting on their property.

Over a two day span we saw 32 rams – some as close as 50 yards. At dusk of our first night of hunting we discovered 12 rams settling in for the evening. At 500 yards it appeared that there were several nice rams but as darkness settled in we decided we would come back tomorrow and get a better look. As we were heading back to camp, 2 more rams eased out in front of us across the sagebrush flat.

At daylight we proceeded to where we left the rams the night before – only to discover they are no longer there. It turns out that this is a good thing because it allows me the opportunity to see a variety of other rams disbursed among small bunches. As we drive down through a large draw, we stop and get out to view the remains of a dead ram. As we drive away Brett discovers a small bunch of rams looking down on us from approximately 100 yards. Not too excited about us being there, they get up from their nap and proceed to graze along the hillside. As we proceed on down the draw another 75 yards, we spy another ram. After walking about another 100 yards, we get to a bunch I refer to as “The Peek-a-Boo” bunch. They literally peeked over the ridge at us until we were within 80 yards, then proceeded to get up and saunter off. While there were some nice rams in the bunch, we decide to continue our scouting.

Late in the afternoon and getting into the lower country, enjoying the afternoon sunshine, I glance up to discover 3 rams looking down at us. After looking at over 20 rams during the morning, and with the excitement I hear in my husband’s voice, I know this is the ram we have been looking for. As we get out to assess the best way to approach, they lay down. Knowing they won’t be getting up anytime soon, I am able to get a good rest on a rock, shooting uphill at 202 yards, I harvest my HA 12 ram of a lifetime.





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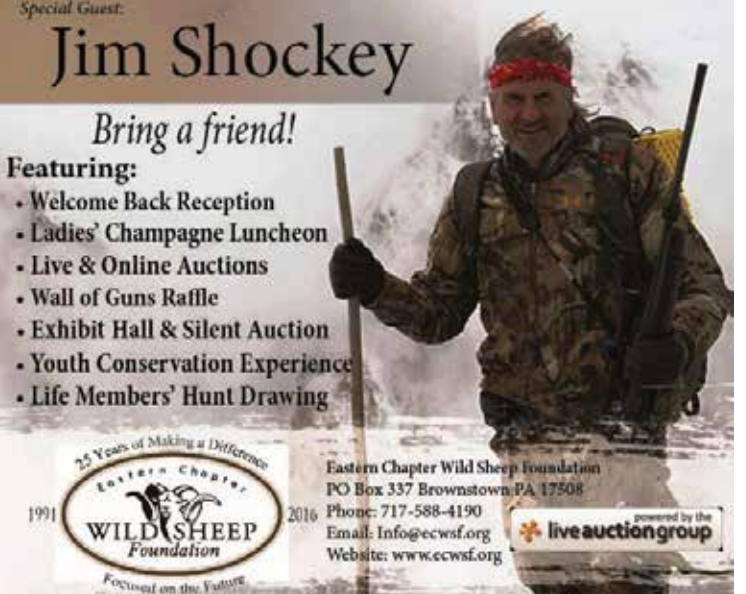
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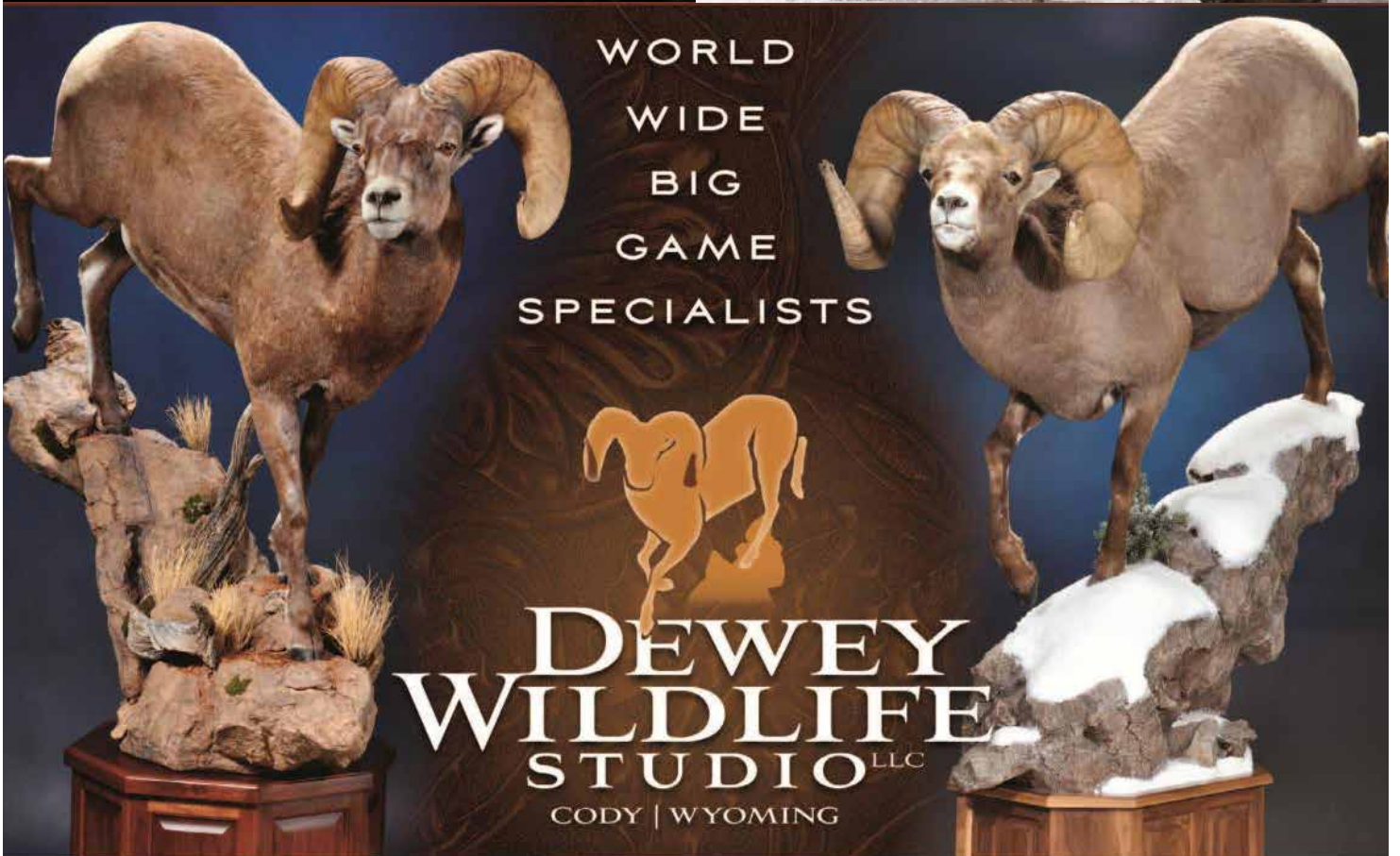
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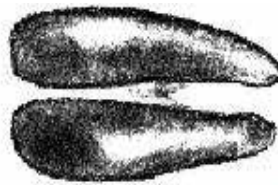
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