

# The **RAM**PAGE

## Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation

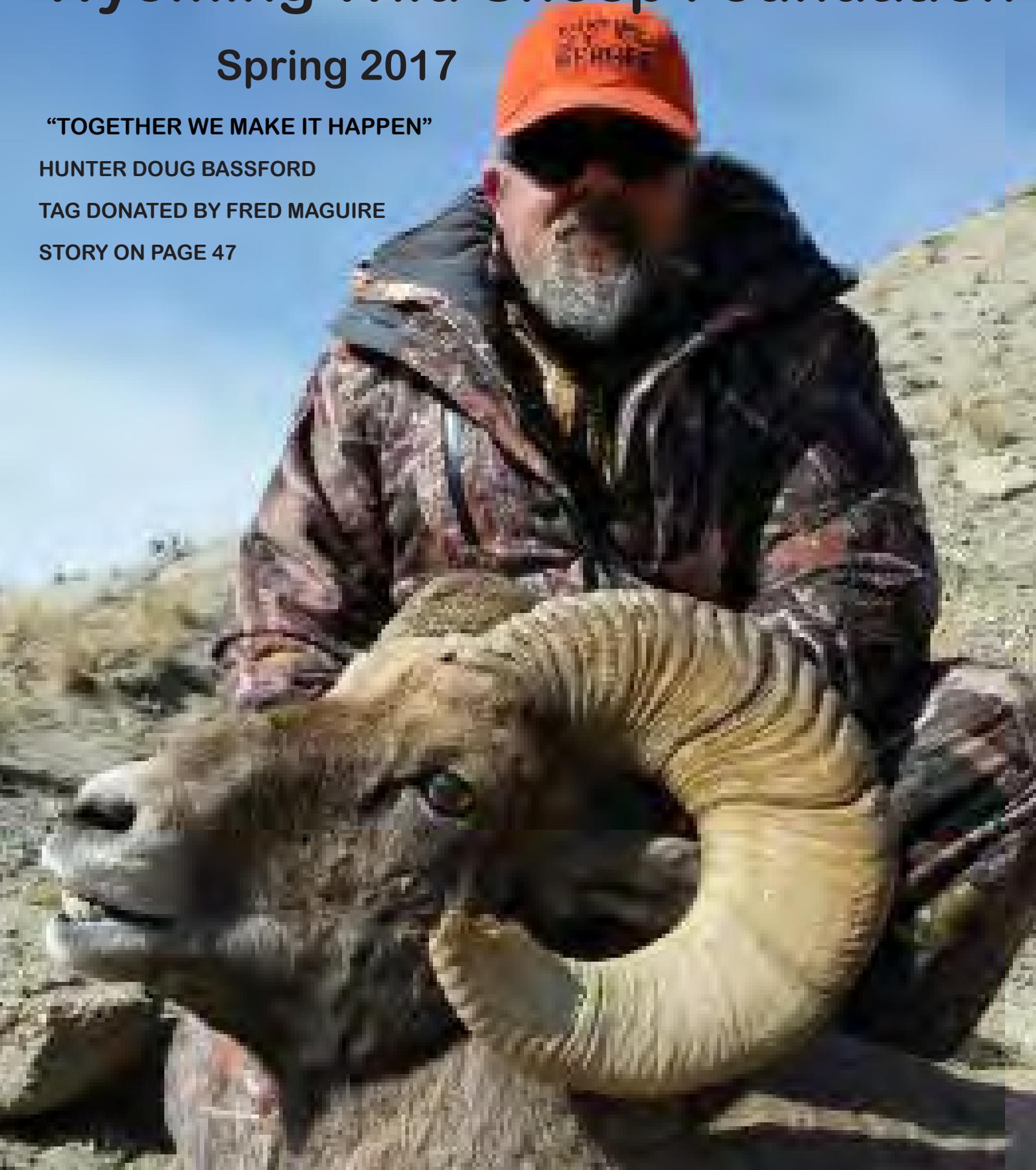
Spring 2017

“TOGETHER WE MAKE IT HAPPEN”

HUNTER DOUG BASSFORD

TAG DONATED BY FRED MAGUIRE

STORY ON PAGE 47





2016 SUPER TAG  
BIGHORN SHEEP WINNER  
JEFF CAMPAGNA



2015 SUPER TAG  
BIGHORN SHEEP  
WINNER RICH DAHM



2016 SUPER TAG  
TRIFECTA WINNER  
RUSSEL ELMS



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**WYOMING'S SUPER TAG RAFFLE OFFERS  
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**New for 2017!** For every five Super Tag raffle tickets, or every two Super Tag Trifecta tickets an individual purchases, their name is entered into a raffle to win a complete hunting gear package from KUIU, Swarovski, Weatherby, and Leupold. Purchase more tickets for more chances to win.

**Deadline to apply is July 3, 2017**

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

# The **RAM**PAGE

## Spring 2017

### Board of Directors:

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Jim Collins  
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Mike Porter  
James Rinehart  
Bob Sundeen  
Steve Kilpatrick-Executive  
Director

### Contact us at:

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

### Wyoming WSF Board & Membership Meetings

Wyoming WSF holds its winter board membership meeting on the first Saturday of December and summer convention/ board/membership meeting the first Saturday in June. Details and locations are listed in the Calendar of Events, and on line at: [www.wyomingwildsheep.org](http://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](http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org).  
Contact address:  
Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation  
P.O. Box 666  
Cody, WY 82414  
E-mail: [info@wyomingwildsheep.org](mailto:info@wyomingwildsheep.org)  
[www.wyomingwildsheep.org](http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org)

# Features

- 13** Montana Area 680 with Ryan Amundson  
*It's a Missouri River breaks hunt of a lifetime, odds to draw? 1/4000+*
- 22** Wyoming Late Season Bull by Eric Johnson  
*Eric hunts with Josh Martoglio in the Cody area late in November.*
- 25** Grant in Aid Updates  
*WY-WSF Has supported \$181,620 in grants during FY 2015-2016. Check out this section to keep track of how our grant monies are being utilized.*
- 36** Proud Papa by Ryan Amundson  
*Ryan's daughter, Sierra, draws the coveted Area 38 moose tag and together they find out hunting is not just about getting big horns.*
- 39** Sheep Hunting Memories by Steve Kilpatrick  
*Steve gets to go hunting with life long friend, Jack Welch.*
- 44** "Rocky Mountain High" by Doug Meduna  
*Life Member Doug Meduna overcomes all the obstacles on a DIY hunt.*
- 47** "I Won What?"  
*Doug Bassford sacrificed for his country. Now it was time for Hunting with Heroes, WY-WSF and a team of caring Wyoming folks to help give back to him.*
- 51** "You've gotta be f\_\_\_ kidding me!"  
*Ron Nading got the call at last year's convention, and he couldn't believe his ears. Read how his "give back" hunt turned out.*
- 55** Taylor's Hunt  
*12 year old Taylor Fazio thought she was lucky when she won the youth cow elk hunt donated by Grizzly Outfitters, Cole & Elaine Benton, at the 2016 Convention. But thats just the beginning of her adventure.*



### Address Changes

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

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

### Advertising Rates

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

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

# 2017-2018 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 2-3, 2017

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Convention  
The Ramkota, Casper, WY

June 15-16, 2017

Wyoming Big Horn Sheep Summit  
Burgess Junction, WY

June 22-23, 2017

WSF Chapter and Affiliate Mtg  
Kalispell, MT

July 21-23, 2017

Ferris Mt's Guzzler Projects  
The Ferris, See page 24

December 2-3, 2017

Winter Meeting  
TBD, WY

January 19-21, 2018

Wild Sheep Foundation Convention  
Reno, NV



Wyoming WSF would like to thank, and recognize, Life Members who have signed up since the Fall 2016 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](http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/content/life-members)

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

490	William Logan
491	James Abbott
492	Jack Welch
493	Joe Kondelis
494	Zack McDermott
495	James Penzien
496	Terry Dieren
497	Zeke Stanton
498	Bill Chitwood
499	Kalvin Eisenach
500	Megan Hutchison
501	David Rael
502	Gary Boltjes

*Blast from the Past (page 42) Answer- That smiling young face belongs to WY-WSF board member, and life member #267, Scott Butler. We have been told that this was Scott's first elk taken on the National Elf Refuge while hunting with his father, LM# 230, Gary Butler. We won't embarrass him any more by revealing the year the photo was taken.*

# Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation 2017 Annual Convention and Fundraiser

## June 2-3, 2017 – Ramkota Hotel, Casper

Join us for our 34th Annual Convention and Fundraiser! Friday evening kicks off the weekend with a social (cash bar, munchies), games, live music by “Just Fiddlin Around”, and other activities. Saturday events include a complimentary breakfast for WY-WSF Life Members, the general membership/business meeting, Ladies Sip N Paint Function, informative seminars after lunch, no-host happy hour, and pre-banquet games. A photo contest will also be held, bring your favorite hunting or wildlife-related photos to enter. Enjoy a delicious dinner, then get ready for an exciting live auction, which will include hunts, trips, artwork, and much more. Proceeds go toward Wyoming WSF’s goal of “putting and keeping kids and sheep on the mountain.”

Friday, June 2th

9:00 am - noon Board Meeting, Ramkota Hotel, Natrona Room (Including funding requests)

6:00-9:00 pm Social (cash bar), games, North Ball Room

Saturday, June 3th

7:15-9:30 Life Member Breakfast, North Ball Room (Life members only; reservations required by May 26th).

10:00-11:30 Membership/Business Meeting (including funding requests), Wyoming Theatre

11:40 Break for Lunch (on your own)

1:30 Ladies’ Sip N Paint Function in the Remington Restaurant (Reservations needed by May 26th).

1:00-3:45 pm Seminars (TBA) Wyoming Theater Room

5:00-6:30 pm Happy Hour (Cash Bar), Games, Raffles on the Terrace

6:30-7:45 pm Prime Rib Plated Dinner

7:45-10:30 pm Fundraiser Auction

A room block has been reserved (\$83/night/room) at the Ramkota Hotel (307-266-6000). Make reservations by May 19th and mention you are with “Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation” to receive the convention room block rate. Please visit the WY-WSF Events page on our website <http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/events.asp> for on-line registration, purchase of Gun Board, and other raffle tickets. Alternatively, our attendees may continue to complete the registration form and mail: Wyoming WSF, P.O. Box 666, Cody, WY 82414. Send payment by May 26th to be eligible for the early bird drawing for \$100 auction credit! Questions? Call Dean DiJenno at (307) 213-0998, or e-mail [info@wyomingwildsheep.org](mailto:info@wyomingwildsheep.org). Your registration packet/envelope will be available for you to pick up during Friday evening’s social, or Saturday from 4:00 to 5:00 PM.

## Live Auction

(call Steve Kilpatrick at (307) 413-7249 for phone bidding information)

- The final 2017 Wyoming Governor’s Big Horn Sheep license
- 2017 Commissioner’s license for Elk/Deer/Antelope from Richard Klouda and Hunting with Heroes
- 2017 Commissioner’s license for Elk/Deer/Antelope from Mark Anselmi and the National Big Horn Sheep Interpretive Center
- Full Day of Float fishing for two on the North Platte River
- 2 day/2 hunters cow elk on private ranch in the Sheridan area
- 3 day turkey hunt for two people on Hidden Valley Ranch
- 10 day Canadian Moose hunt in British Columbia for 2018 with Wicked River Outfitters
- Musk Ox hunt in Greenland
- Talarik Lodge- 7 days of fishing on Lake Iliamna, lots of bear watching opportunities
- New Zealand Hunt-5 day hunt for 2 with \$1500 trophy credit included
- Cabo Fishing trip for 4 people for 2 days with Red Rum
- Cooper Model 92 Backcountry rifle in 6.5x284, fully engraved
- One day of fly fishing for 2 in the Big Horns
- Self guided 6 day Caribou and Moose hunt in Alaska for two in 2018
- Area 58 cow elk hunt for 1 person for 3 days with Meade Dominick
- WYO Backcountry Décor table lamp with Ram horn
- 7 Gun cabinet with Rams Head stain glass door by The Log Guys



Register  
today!

# WY WSF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

## BY STEVE KILPATRICK

Yep, it's been one of "those" winters, like the ones our forefathers and old timers tell us about. There is no doubt that some wildlife species have taken a hit. However, as of the end of February, Wyoming Game and Fish Biologists Doug McWhirter and Aly Courtemanch indicated wild sheep were doing well. Radio collared sheep are not exhibiting unusual mortality rates. We will find out more in mid-March when the WGFD and UW conduct captures in the Cody, Jackson and Dubois areas for the body condition-disease research study. In May, the WGFD also conducts sheep survival flights. So, they will be able to fill us in on the results at our Casper banquet/fund raiser on June 3, 2017. We will be having several folks providing informative talks on wild sheep that afternoon. Please come. Because of your avid support, we have accomplished much since you read the last issue of the Rampage. We funded about \$80K in Grant In Aid projects at our winter meeting in Saratoga. Projects ranged from research to guzzler installation. We are proud of our efforts to keep and put kids and sheep on the mountain. I encourage you to see where your money is invested by visiting our web site at <https://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/grants.asp> I hope everyone's hunting season provided you with the best of memories. Mine always does, and I'm so grateful to live in a state where amazing hunting opportunities are just out the back door. We are so fortunate. Some of the most heartwarming stories came from the two wounded veteran hunts we partnered

in sponsoring with Hunting With Heroes. Their stories are featured in this issue. If you want a warming sensation traveling through your bones, take a read. Our goal is to continue rewarding our wounded veterans with similar hunts indefinitely. My hat is off to the sheep tag donors. They define graciousness. Our winter meetings are quite low key with lots of open discussion and socialization coupled with a field trip, business meeting and a nice meal. We have a small silent auction to offset event expenses. We held our meeting in Saratoga, this year and got to view bighorns within the Douglas Creek herd unit on our field trip. Lee Knox and Will Schultz provided interesting current and historical information on the two herds. Will's campfire-lunch provided a great opportunity for socializing and strategic planning. Please try to attend next year. The Reno Sheep Show in January provided its usual overdose of inspiration. The Wyoming Governor's sheep tag brought \$92,500, An all-time record! Total attendance was up about 6%, to around 8,100 folks and the net revenue generated was up 15%, to about \$1.566M.

Over 1,200 folks attended the final banquet supper. A young wounded Marine, Kirstie Ennis, captured the crowd with her presence. WY-WSF will be partnering with Hunting With Heroes and outfitter Josh Martoglio to acquire a donated sheep tag and provide her with a Wyoming wild sheep hunt in 2018. You can listen to her story at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udUltUG2WXI> Oh, and a second Governor's tag brought \$76,000 at the Eastern Chapter WSF in Lancaster PA. Moreover, our WY-WSF Conservation Fund is up to about \$123K! And, the list of positive activities and deeds continues for putting and keeping kids and sheep on Wyoming's mountains. All because of you! Thank you!



Steve



# Wyoming

## Wild Sheep Foundation

2017 Wyoming Game And Fish Commissioners License Raffle  
License donated by Commissioner Keith Culver

*Only 300 tickets! \$100.00 each*

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

- 1st Prize: WG&F Commissioners 2017 license
- 2nd Prize: 7 day Caribbean Cruise or \$2000.00
- 3rd Prize: Kimber Classic .338 Win Mag Rifle
- 4th Prize: Nikon 13 30x50mm Field Scope
- 5th Prize: Ruger Precision 6.5 Creedmore Rifle
- 6th Prize: Ruger Redhawk .44 Mag Pistol
- 7th Prize: Sony Cyber Shot DSC-HX300 Camera
- 8th Prize: Nikon Monarch7, 10x42 Binoculars
- 9th Prize: Bushnell 14mp Trophy Cam HD
- 10th Prize: Ruger American .45 ACP Pistol

Drawing will be held June 3, 2017 at the the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation annual banquet in Casper, Wyoming. Winners need not be present to win. For more information, and to order tickets online, please visit our website <http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/>

OR

For tickets, contact: WY-WSF, P.O. Box 666, Cody, WY 82414.  
(307) 213-0998 - [info@wyomingwildsheep.org](mailto:info@wyomingwildsheep.org)



**Wyoming**  
Wild Sheep Foundation

## 2016 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 4, 2016 banquet in Casper.

We thank them for their support, and invite others who might be interested in a full curl table for our 2017 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 2017!

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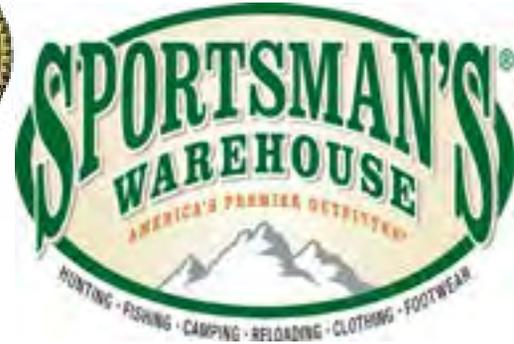
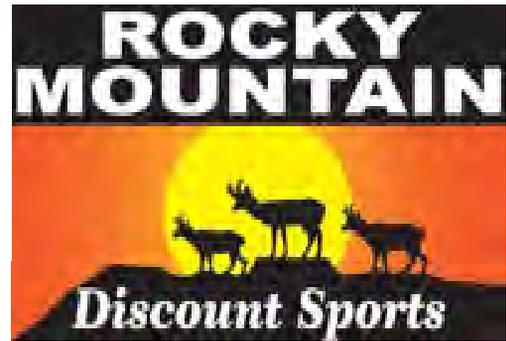
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Adam Johnson

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# Conservation Fund Raising Contest

Our conservation fund's operating agreement specifies that our chapter must raise \$250,000 over the next ten years (for the full operating agreement go to: [www.wyomingwildsheep.org/agreement](http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/agreement)) to meet our goal. By achieving this lofty goal we will ensure that grant in aid projects will be funded for years to come using the interest generated by the funds principal. A contest will be held to assist with raising the funds needed. Donors will receive one chance for each \$100 contribution to the Conservation Fund. At the 2017 banquet we will draw award the Grand Prize, the Winchester Jack O' Connor Model 70 in .270 in a handmade wooden presentation case which is lined with sheep hide. You need not be present to win and may donate as many times as you wish. Tickets can be purchased at all of our events and on line at: [www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store](http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store).



The legendary Jack O'Connor is considered by many to be the father of the .270 Winchester caliber. His passion and dedication to the caliber and the game animals he pursued is evident in this custom tribute rifle. Its hammer-forged, featherweight contour, polish blued barrel is free-floating for extreme accuracy and sports a target crown to prevent damage to the rifling. The Pre-64 action features a classic three-position safety and M.O.A.™ Trigger system for increased versatility. AAA, high-grade, French walnut stock has an ebony forearm tip and shadow line cheek piece that draws directly from Jack's original rifle. The floor plate and grip cap are artistically engraved and Jack's signature is written in nickel on the trigger guard. Checkered metal butt plate resists slipping when shouldered.



# Conservation Fund Update

Scott Butler

## Did you donate?

The first year and a half has been exciting and productive for our Conservation Fund.

68 supporters of Wyoming's Wild Sheep (see page 11) have stepped up and helped seed the investment for future projects. The principle corpus totals \$114,860 invested up to date and has earned interest in excess of \$7800 .

The Board of Directors can use interest earned, at their discretion, to do various wild sheep related projects in Wyoming. This includes transplants, habitat improvements and conservation easements. It will not stop there. Youth development and research development are also in the future workings. We want the younger generation to

be included and get involved. Yearly the board will be awarding a WWSF Life Membership to youth <14 years of age! With a GIA request, funds can also be allocated for scholarship/ grant opportunities for graduate students working directly to benefit wild sheep in Wyoming.

In December the Conservation Fund assisted with its first on the ground work, helping supplement the Ferris Mountain burn and Ferris Mountain guzzler projects!

Moving onward and upward, your WWSF board is seeking further investment in the Conservation Fund and will be implementing a few new programs in the near future including a memorial endowment, and a monthly donor program to help generate

interest to "Put and Keep Kids and Sheep on the Mountain".

Don't forget about your chance to win the very special Winchester Jack O'Connor Model 70 in .270 by donating \$100 or more to the fund. The gun will be awarded to the winner in a beautiful handmade pine display box which is lined with a Wyoming Big Horn Sheep hide. The drawing will be held at our June banquet.

Further information can be found at:  
[www.wyomingwildsheepfoundation.org/foundation.asp](http://www.wyomingwildsheepfoundation.org/foundation.asp)

Contributions can also be made on line at: [www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store](http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store) or contact executive director Steve Kilpatrick at: [skilpatric@wyomingwildsheep.org](mailto:skilpatric@wyomingwildsheep.org) (307) 413-7249

# MEET THE CHALLENGE

THE FIRST \$25,000 IN DONATIONS TO THE CONSERVATION FUND THRU JUNE 4, 2017 WILL BE MATCHED BY THE BOARD OF

DIRECTORS!



KEEP KIDS AND WILD SHEEP ON WYOMING'S MOUNTAINS!

Join the Conservation Fund, Invest in the Future  
Thank you Donors!



Photo Credit: Mark Gocke



Desert Sheep \$100+  
Jack Welch  
Casey Tiltrum  
Christopher Otto  
Craig Kling  
Dave Hill  
Dean DiJenno  
Diane DiJenno  
Don Chase  
Edwin Brolyer  
Erica Flomm  
Erik Alberts  
Gary Keene  
Hank Alexander  
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James Schroeder  
Jerry Galles  
Jim Collins  
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Michael Van Biema  
Mike Brownwell

Desert Sheep \$100+  
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Sam Lockwood  
Sara Domek  
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Paul Dona  
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Terry Dieren  
Larry Irwin  
Edward R. Sifford, Jr.  
Dan Hinz

Stone Sheep \$500+  
Adam Johnson  
Buddy DuVall  
Cole Hansen  
Kevin Hurley  
Kurt Eisenach  
Sam Lockwood  
Scott Williams

Dall Sheep \$1000+  
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Cole Benton  
George Law  
John & Patty O'Brien  
Len Camp  
Marvel Cosner  
Mike Thomas  
Rice Family Foundation  
WY-WSF

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



# GUN

# RAFFLE

**DRAWING TO BE HELD JUNE 3, 2017**

**TICKETS ARE \$50 EACH OR 5 FOR \$200**

**WIN YOUR CHOICE OF:**



**Rock River A4 Varmint .223/5.56**



**Winchester Model 70 Coyote Light 22-250**



**Benelli Vinci 12ga Shotgun**



**Kimber Hunter 7mm-08**



**Marlin Big Bore 45-70 Guide Gun**



**Weatherby PA 08 12ga Pump**



**Mossberg MVP Tactical .308**



**Ruger American All Weather 30-06**



**Smith & Wesson  
M&P 9C 9mm  
With Laser Sight**



**Ruger SP 101  
357 Mag**

**NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN - MUST BE OVER 21 AND PASS FFL BACKGROUND CHECK,  
SHIPPING IS THE WINNERS RESPONSIBILITY**

# MONTANA'S MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS SHEEP HUNT 2016

By Ryan Amundson (WY WSF Life Member #384)

I've had the privilege of working for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, conserving wildlife and serving the people of this great state for 21 years. In that time, I've been able to dedicate a significant portion of my time to the conservation of bighorn sheep and enhancement of bighorn sheep habitats. My supervisors, Gary Butler and Bill Gerhart (now both retired), supported my interest in bighorns and encouraged me to get involved when and where I could. I joined the Wyoming Chapter of WSF over 15 years ago and instantly found a group of people that are dedicated to bighorns, which fueled my passion for the specie and the wild, rugged, and untamed country they inhabit. I've been applying for sheep licenses in Wyoming, Colorado, and Montana for years, and as luck would have it, drew the most coveted bighorn sheep license in the West in 2016, the Missouri River Breaks (Area 680). The odds of drawing are just plain

ridiculous, 1 / 4,000+. Tired of playing the points game, I was very close to not applying this year as I studied the odds for Montana, but sure glad I did at the last minute!

After receiving the "successful" notice from Montana FWP, I began my frantic researching of the hunt area, purchased BLM maps, cruised Google Earth for hours, and talked to previous tag holders and Montana FWP employees. In mid-July I took this info and made a dash to The Breaks. I spent 4 days hiking The Breaks, looking for access points and looking for needles in haystacks. Temperatures in the upper 90's and winds gusting over 30 mph made the country feel pretty inhospitable and I questioned more than once what I was doing there. I still managed to see 20 different rams and over 60 ewes and lambs. A big thunderstorm cut my summer scouting trip short, as every person I visited with prior to going said The Breaks are no place to be if it's wet. If you

like driving on roads with the consistency of a bottomless pit of mashed potatoes I guess you are probably OK, but otherwise it is best to get outta there!

My Fall schedule was really full, as my daughter Sierra drew a Wyoming - Area 38 moose tag (see story on pages 32-34). She harvested a great bull at the end of September, giving me the rest of the Fall to focus on fulfilling a 25 year quest to harvest a bighorn sheep. I fit in an antelope and backcountry elk hunt and filled both tags, and then in mid-October I returned to The Breaks with my Dad, friend and former WGFD supervisor Gary Butler, and friend John McCleary from Iowa. We hunted for 10 days, seeing 8 - 12 rams per day, with at least one B&C qualifying ram observed every day. Small herds of ewes and lambs with younger rams were seen throughout each day, and larger rams were still largely off by themselves. We spent a lot of time behind the optics, picking apart the millions of folds in the landscape. The



drainages we hunted in looked a lot like a combination of Wyoming's Goshen Rim and Dubois Badlands. Slopes were very steep, and averaged 600' from the valley floor to the bench tops. Loose soils made traversing the slopes difficult, especially with a little moisture, making the slopes greasy. On Day 11, fresh troops came to camp, including friends Martin Hicks (WGFD Biologist - Wheatland), Chadd Hartwig (Wisconsin), and Ian Tator (WGFD - Cheyenne) and his young son, John David.

Over the next 5 days, rutting activity really started to pick up, and the number of rams seen per day jumped to 25 to 30, with several record book rams seen each day. Everybody took lots of photos, videos, and enjoyed watching the bighorns traverse the steep hillsides. Amazingly, the bighorn sheep were not very nervous, and after an initial scurry up the cliffs, they would often return to foraging as close as 200 yards away. On several occasions we glassed bighorns that were sleeping the day away, as close as 100 yards away. The larger rams were now making the rounds visiting the herds of ewes and lambs, but would also spend portions of the day with ram bands, 8 - 10 in a group. Seeing these large ram bands helped us to compare rams and get a better estimate on their horn score. We watched a lot of posturing, head butting, and pushing each other around on steep hillsides jockeying for the best place to display and show dominance over the other rams.

There almost was a mutiny in camp by Day 13, as my hunting partners began to think I had completely lost my mind. "What's wrong with that one?"

"Isn't he big enough?" "How many rams are we going to look at before you pull the trigger?" "Give me your gun!" We saw many rams that were 5 - 6 years of age, that would score from 175" to the low 180"s. I had to keep reminding myself that I was in "The Breaks", and that there was the real potential for a giant ram to show himself at any time. Setting lofty goals for a 190" ram helped to prolong the hunt, and to be really honest, we were having way too much fun hunting and watching bighorn sheep, and I was not really looking forward to the hunt being over too quickly.

On the evening of the 15th day, we located a band of rams mixed in with over 20 ewes and lambs on a bench across the canyon. I spotted a ram in the group that caught my eye from a distance of over ¾ mile, and decided I'd head back there in the morning for a better look. My wife, Cindy, showed up to camp that night, to experience the hunt with us for a couple days. We made our way to the top of the rim where we last glassed the sheep the night before. We put the glasses on the herd, milling around about 350 yards away, and the largest ram in the group stood to the side, tilted his head back and did a big ol' lip curl as he stared down the ewes and subordinate rams surrounding him.

---

I looked at  
Cindy and said,  
"That's the ONE".

---

Everything changed in that instant, and I immediately

contracted a really bad case of "ram fever". There were eight rams in the herd, and they were constantly changing places and challenging each other, butting heads, and fighting for position in and amongst the ewes and lambs. I tried to steady for a shot and couldn't keep track of the ram I wanted to shoot, so decided to get closer. We crossed a deep draw out of sight of the herd, closed the distance to 250 yards, and I set up again for the shot. Shaking like I had just finished 20 cups of coffee for breakfast, I still couldn't steady for the shot. When you want something so bad, 25 years of waiting for your chance and it's right there in front of you, it just seemed.....overwhelming. A long stringer of tall sagebrush was out in front of me, so decided to belly crawl closer to the herd. I peeked through the sagebrush and could see the herd at 120 yards. I studied the rams one by one, and finally found my target. I could now see a glob of white bird poop on the top of his left horn, which helped me to identify him as he played musical chairs with the other rams, weaving in and out of the herd of ewes and lambs. The ram stepped out to the side of the herd for a second, and I fired a shot from my .270 WSM hitting the ram squarely. He took off on a dead run for the steep breaks behind him, and I fired a couple more shots to anchor him before he went over the cliff edge.

Cindy caught up to me and we made our way over to the ram. The #1 specie on my bucket list for the last 25 years was now lying at my feet. The 7 ½ year old ram sported a full curl, measuring 41 3/8" in length with 16" bases, and carried

mass throughout, grossing right at 190". What a feeling to put your hands around something so magnificent! After lots of photos, I caped the sheep for a full body mount. As I bent over working on the ram, numerous sheep wandered around the grass bench foraging and watching me with curiosity. My team helped me pack out the ram and we made our way back to camp, where we celebrated for the rest of the day and into the wee hours of the night. Looking back on the 16 days spent hunting, I am confident that I harvested the largest ram we had seen. After the 60 day drying period, the ram officially scored 188 7/8", and has been entered into the Boone

and Crockett record books.

I'm not sure God could have made better sheep habitat than what he created in the Missouri Breaks. Never-ending escape terrain, a great mix of cool and warm season grasses, sagebrush and other mixed shrubs, supported by winter wheat fields adjacent to the steep cliffs, elevations ranging from 2,400' – 3,000' above sea level, a fairly mild climate by our western standards, and an annual precipitation range of 15" – 18". All of this combines to make a real paradise for bighorns, and they are thriving there. The Montana Governor's Bighorn Sheep tag holder hunted in Area 680 again this year (\$340,000 auction tag),

killing a ram scoring 200 6/8", capturing the Gold Award at the WSF Convention in Reno. My ram ended up being the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest taken in the area of the 26 harvested in 2016.

I am thankful that I was able to share this hunt experience with so many family and friends, and grateful for the passion for bighorns that was instilled in me by Game and Fish co-workers and my friends in the WY WSF organization. Getting to experience this once-in-a-lifetime hunt has topped off my tank. I am refueled, committed, and ready to continue to work for the benefit of bighorns in Wyoming and the West for many years to come.



# Ladies Function Sip N Paint

Join us from 1:30 -3:00 on Saturday, June 3 in the Remington Resturant at the Ramkota Hotel in Casper for our annual ladies function.

This year we are going to snack on finger foods while we sip wine(non alcoholic beverages also available) and make a small painting with the help from the Casper Sip N Paint professionals, "Artisan Alley".

No experience is needed in order to participate in this fun event!

Register by May26, Tickets are \$40. More Info? Call Joni (307) 332-9119



# LIVE AUCTION ITEMS

JUNE 3, 2017 AT THE RAMKOTA HOTEL IN CASPER

(CONTACT STEVE KILPATRICK AT (307) 413-7249 FOR PHONE BIDDING INFO)

- The final 2017 Wyoming Governor's Big Horn Sheep license
- 2017 Commissioner's license for Elk/Deer/Antelope from Richard Klouda and Hunting with Heroes
- 2017 Commissioner's license for Elk/Deer/Antelope from Mark Anselmi and the National Big Horn Sheep Interpretive Center
- Full Day of Float fishing for two on the North Platte River
- Two day/Two hunters cow elk on private ranch in the Sheridan area
- 3 day turkey hunt for two people on Hidden Valley Ranch
- 10 day Canadian Moose hunt in British Columbia for 2018 with Wicked River Outfitters
- Musk Ox hunt in Greenland
- Talarik Lodge-7 days fishing on Lake Ilimna, Alaska
- New Zealand Hunt-5 day hunt for 2 with \$1500 trophy credit included
- Cabo Fishing trip for 4 people for 2 days with Red Rum
- Cooper Model 92 Backcountry rifle in 6.5x284, fully engraved
- One day of fly fishing for 2 in the Big Horns
- Self guided 6 day Caribou and Moose hunt in Alaska for two in 2018
- Area 58 cow elk hunt for 1 person for 3 days with Meade Dominick
- WYO Backcountry Décor table lamp with Ram horn
- 7 Gun cabinet with Rams Head stain glass door by The Log Guys
- 3 Day South Dakota Pheasant hunt for 2, 2-4 more can come for \$2200 each.





# Wyoming

Wild Sheep Foundation

## Life Members Drawing for a Mountain Goat Hunt

On June 3, 2017, one lucky life member of Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation will win a Mountain Goat Hunt in British Columbia. All life members of WY-WSEF in attendance at our 2017 banquet will be entered into this drawing for a Mountain Goat outfitted hunt with Wicked River Outfitters during 2018. This hunt was fully donated by Wicked River Outfitters.

Go to: [www.wickedriveroutfitters.com](http://www.wickedriveroutfitters.com) for more information on this outfitter.

### Rules

- The winning life member **MUST** be registered for the banquet and present at the 2017 WY-WSEF banquet on June 3, 2017 in Casper, WY.
- All new WY-WSEF Life members will be entered once at the cost of a Life membership of \$500.00.
- Every WY-WSEF Life member registered and present will have their name entered once into this drawing at an additional cost.
- All new WY-WSEF Life memberships must be paid in full before their name will be entered into this drawing.
- The drawing will be held at the conclusion of the live auction.
- The winner will only be able to transfer the Mountain Goat hunt to another life member that is paid up, present, and registered at the 2017 banquet. The hunt may be donated to the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation to further chapter fundraising efforts.
- The winner of the Mountain Goat hunt cannot sell, trade, or exchange this hunt for profit.
- The WY-WSEF board reserves the right to transfer the hunt to alternate Life members drawn the night of the banquet, if the first winner attempts to sell or trade this hunt.
- In case the winner is unable to go on this hunt or unable to gift this hunt to another WY-WSEF member attendee, WY-WSEF will draw three alternate Life members names at the banquet.
- Wicked River Outfitters will be notified by WY-WSEF of the lucky hunter.
- The winner is fully responsible for all transportation, airfare, charter flights, tips, and associated taxes, hotels, buses and after the hunt, incidental, 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 released for cash.
- One WY-WSEF Life membership will be auctioned at the Saturday, June 3, 2017 Life member breakfast and one WY-WSEF Life membership will be auctioned at the live auction in the evening. Both of these Life memberships will be auctioned and must be paid in full prior to the drawing for this Mountain Goat Hunt.

Visit our website at: [www.wyomingwildsheep.org/membership.asp](http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/membership.asp) to purchase a life membership, or call Dean Jensen at (307) 213-0098.



# WICKED RIVER OUTFITTERS



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# Hunting in Canada with Booker at Wicked River Outfitters

By Dale and Jacque Sims

We started our trip by deciding to drive thru Canada instead of flying, what a beautiful drive!!!

With only a few hours left before getting to Hudson's Hope BC, we got a phone call from Booker. We were already excited to get there, but what he called for was to ask how prepared we were to get our meat from our moose back to the states. His question was: "What did you bring to take your meat home? Did you bring coolers or a freezer?"

Now we were really excited! It was more than obvious that he knew we were going to get our moose. WOW! We planned this trip to get a moose and if it worked out, we would get a goat, but the moose was most important to us.

We stayed in a motel the night before going to the lodge, then first thing in the morning, there was Booker and we were off! The lodge is an hour barge (boat) ride down the Peace Lake. There is only two ways in, boat or plane. With all of our gear along with the other hunters to be there this week we enjoyed

a great ride with beautiful scenery the whole way there.

The lodge is warm, smells of fresh baked bread and had Booker's wife Amber and the staff waiting for us. Coffee and fresh treats were waiting for us in the lodge. We stowed our gear into our rooms. Then introductions all around as we now had some new friends, then Booker discussed with all of the plans for the week. We met our guide, Del, where again we made our plans to begin early the next morning. I, Dale, have a bad knee but Booker was extremely accommodating, so we hunted from the lodge. The other hunters packed out on horse or were flown into a drop camp for their hunts.

We hunted hard the few two day, but did not see moose. We did see eagles, bears, wolf tracks and many other animals. There is so very much land to cover, we traveled a lot on ATVs. This was great because covered lots of different areas and water holes. What was amazing was our guide. Traveling along on the ATV we wondered if we were missing

some of the moose. But several times, while riding along, Del would stop the vehicle, back up and get out. While traveling at about 20mph he would spot tracks on the road or along the side. We would get out and follow them for a while to try to find the moose. Absolutely amazing!!

By the third day, we were still being told not to worry, moose were everywhere and we were still going to get one. On the fourth day, with three of the other hunters already having gotten their moose, they sent out other guides to ensure we got ours, covering more areas all at once. After lunch we were beginning to think we still would not get our moose, but luck was with us this day and around 4 pm one jumped out of nowhere and we got him! Not the biggest moose, but big and beautiful! What fun!

We did look for goats and boy did we see a lot of them, but with my bad knee, we decided to postpone this until next year and come back again. This was a great hunt, great people and a beautiful place to stay. The views are breathtaking! We will come back again and again. Thanks to Booker, Amber and all the staff. This is a great place to hunt.





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### In Memoriam

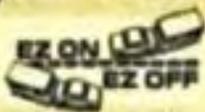
Orville "AL" Benton, father of Cole Benton passed away February 5th at the age of 90. He served in WWII in Japan and the Korean Conflict. For over 65 years Al paid his respect for fellow veterans who have passed by taking part in the Military Honor Guard. He was honored last fall as the Grand Marshall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

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# Wyoming Late Season Bull November 2016

By Eric Johnson

Over the years I have heard that late season bull elk hunts can be fun, challenging, and successful, especially when the winter snow comes early. I came to the WWSF annual banquet in Casper with the hopes of being able to bid on and purchase one of the Wyoming Commissioner Elk tags that were being auctioned that evening. I was successful in this endeavor and booked with Josh Martoglio of Shoshone Lodge Outfitters. I would be his last hunter for the season.

Josh called the weekend before Thanksgiving and said I should come a few days early and glass with his brother Jordan. Snow had come to the units around Cody and he thought the bulls would start showing up and he should be able to quickly find one for his current hunter.

Jordan and I glassed a large ridge from several miles away for 2 days while Josh was hunting another area and having luck finding several good bulls but just not being able to seal the deal.

The 3rd morning I glassed up 4 bulls moving from some

private land up into a canyon right on the forest border.

Jordan and I could see that one of the bulls was exceptional,



and another just a bit smaller. We could see that they bedded in a stand of cottonwoods. The question was if the cottonwood stand was on public land.

A few hours later Josh came by and took his hunter all the way around to get above those bulls and find out if they were on public land. Once in place they were able to find the bulls and determine they were on public, but before they could get set up for a shot a coyote came by and spooked them back onto private land.

It was nearly 3pm in the afternoon

at this point and we continued glassing. Jordan and I found another group of 4 bulls migrating over the ridge that were on the forest and

one of them looked pretty good. We called Josh and told him to reposition further down the ridge and try to intercept them.

We were able to watch the stalk unfold through our spotting scopes and see the bull get harvested. It ended up scoring in the upper 350s.

Now it was my turn, the next morning I went with Josh to another area on his UTV with snow tracks. Josh glassed up a bull he had seen several times before that was in the 350+ category, but it was in a spot that would require a long pack out on foot, so we decided to pass at this point in the hunt.

We checked with Jordan who was glassing the same cottonwood stand from the day before. He said he saw a couple bulls go up in that direction that morning. We decided to head back over to that area.

We got above the cottonwood stand in the early afternoon and immediately we saw 3 sets of tracks going in, and then we could barely see 2 of the bulls. We spent at least an hour double and triple checking our GPS units to make sure we and the bulls were on public land. We all were 100% sure, the question was what direction would the bulls go once they got up.

Once the shadows formed over the cottonwood stand and the sun was getting lower in the sky, one of the bulls got up and started walking further into the public land and closer to us. I was set up and waited for the bull to get into the open and turn broadside. Josh said it was an old bull with good mass and great 3rd and 4ths but weak backs. Josh gave me the range 390 yards and ok to shoot. Two shots dropped

the bull just 200 yards from the closest forest service snowmobile trail. The old bull had 9" bases and his 3rd and 4ths were 20" long.

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We ended the day with a beautiful sunset and an easy pack out and we all were able to make Thanksgiving dinner with our families the next day!

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## 2017 Photo Contest

Bring your favorite photo to the banquet and win Auction credits! Color or black and white, no larger than 11 X 14, put your name on the rear of the photo, no frames please. Sponsored by Freddie Goetz.

Photo by Mark Gocke

## Winter Meeting 2017-Saratoga, WY

A crowd of loyal Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation supporters made the trek to Saratoga, WY in December 2016 to participate in the annual mid winter meeting. Old friendships were rekindled, and old topics discussions revisited. The accommodations at the Hot Springs resort and spa were outstanding and many enjoyed soaking in the hot tubs. On Saturday a sheep viewing tour was held and the members were invited to tour the A Bar A and State Line Ranches. A nice bonfire was build to warm everyone during our lunch. Several wild sheep and many deer were seen during the tour. For the full minutes of the membership meeting or to review the results of our financial review, please visit our web page at: [www.wyomingwildsheep.org/meetings.asp](http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/meetings.asp).



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Photo credits: Top: © Bruce Thompson, Photographer LLC. Bottom left to right: John Dular, Matt Heilmeyer

This advertisement is made possible by the generous support of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation.



Photos from bottom left: Tayen Wakkuri loves fishing.  
Top right: Matthew Wakkuri on a turkey hunt.  
Middle Right: Thayne & Logan Rutherford with Jon David Tator.  
Bottom right; Jax Taylor on a coyote hunt.

Thank You Members! More Youth Photos can be found on pages 49 & 50 of this issue, as well as at: [www.wyomingwildsheep/members](http://www.wyomingwildsheep/members). Submit your photos to [info@wyomingwildsheep.org](mailto:info@wyomingwildsheep.org)



# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Volunteers Needed Ferris Mountain Guzzlers Installation July 21-23, 2017

This summer, WY Wild Sheep Foundation members will be asked to volunteer to help install four wildlife guzzlers (Ferris Peak, Garden Creek, Sand Creek and Miners Creek drainages) along the spine of Ferris Mountain (east of Young's Pass). Each guzzler is a dome-top rectangular design with walk-in steps, 142" x 68" x 32", holding 1000 gallons, with a 25' by 23' precipitation catchment apron located upslope, connected with a pipe to add additional water captured to each tank. Implementation/construction will occur July 21-23, 2017, utilizing hand crews that will hike into each site. Two sites will require hiking and an

overnight spike camp on the mountain. The other two sites will require a shorter day hike into and out of the locations. A BLM helicopter in Rawlins will deliver all materials and hand tools needed to each site in June, ahead of the construction event.

Water developments on top of the mountain are designed specifically to help newly augmented populations of bighorn sheep on Ferris Mountain. Recent population augmentation releases have occurred in 2016 and 2017, along with recent multiple year releases of bighorn

sheep on nearby Seminoe Mountain, part of the same herd unit. Wyoming's thriving Devil's Canyon bighorn sheep herd has been the source herd for these transplants and are settling in to their new habitats very well. In addition to bighorns, the guzzlers will be utilized by mule deer, elk, and other wildlife.

Construction activities will include hand labor with shovels to prepare each site for the guzzler, apron, and short pipeline connecting the two, along with placement of rock on the apron and around each tank so they will blend into the landscape. We are hoping to have teams of 7 – 10 people, BLM and WGFD personnel and volunteers, assigned to each guzzler site. WY WSF will provide meals and drinks on the mountain, and a great bbq at the end of the event for all of the people that can help.

Ridge top water developments, in open terrain, will reduce the need for bighorn sheep to travel off the mountain to seek water. Placing the proposed developments in steep, rocky, open, ridge top areas is intended to increase the survivability of bighorn sheep by allowing them to utilize habitat close to desirable escape terrain and lambing areas.

If you would like to volunteer to be a part of this conservation effort, please notify Ryan Amundson, WGFD Statewide Habitat Biologist, at [ryan.amundson@wyo.gov](mailto:ryan.amundson@wyo.gov) or (307) 331-0787 by June 15.



# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Hunting with Heroes Update - Its Been 5 Years

By Nelda Currah

Five years. It's been five years since US Army veterans, Colton Sasser and Dan Currah, met for the first time at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. It's been five years since that first conversation took them both back to big game hunting in their beloved state of Wyoming. Five years since their first hunt together. Five years since they committed to give back to our nation's disabled veterans by doing everything they could to enable hunting experiences for the brave men and women who served in our armed forces, and gave more than any of them should have given to protect us, our friends, our families, our children. 2017 marks Hunting with Heroes' fifth hunting season.

The program continues to grow substantially, and they couldn't be more pleased. Partnering with the Wyoming Game and Fish, dozens of other organizations including the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, and hundreds of volunteers, Hunting with Heroes has been able to change some lives, open some doors, have some fun, create lifelong friendships, facilitate some healing – and fill some freezers! Since their first hunt in 2013, Hunting with Heroes has hosted close to 400 hunts including elk, mule deer, white tail deer, antelope, turkey, big horn sheep, bear, mountain lion, and even one buffalo – impressive given they hosted nine hunts in 2013. They

welcomed their first WWII veteran in 2016. Hunting with Heroes continues to work with veterans from all conflicts – from WWII to Afghanistan. They've welcomed veterans from more than 30 states, veterans ages 21 to 91 – all with unique personal battles they continue to deal with long after they've returned home. During one of their post-hunt dinners this year, a veteran leaned over and quietly shared with one of the founders, “I was on the brink of suicide before I came here, but after

this weekend, I'm going home to my family to make it work. I hope I can come back to help, even if I can't hunt. I need this.” He was very young. This isn't an isolated comment. Another veteran stood up and said, “You've given me something I thought I'd lost forever. You've given my dignity back. I didn't think anyone cared about this old man. I just have one question. May I come back?” He was in his 70's. Incredible people pitch in all over the state to help out. In 2013 the program operated out of Casper, but since then Chapters have started up in Riverton (North Portal), Lysite, Thermopolis, Cheyenne, Gillette, Big Piney and Black Hills, bringing their Chapter total to eight at the end of 2016. More communities are eager to get on board and form additional Chapters now. Jim Collins, Thermopolis resident, rancher, and Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Board Member, was instrumental in getting the Thermopolis Chapter up and running this past year. He offered his personal thoughts about the 3-day event.

“On September 30, 2016 volunteers gathered at the Thermopolis Gun Club to assist with sighting in hunting rifles for the antelope hunt to start October 1st. The gathering was the accumulation of work done by the Hunting with Heroes Thermopolis Chapter, VFW Post #2281, local landowners and many volunteers – both businesses and individuals – to put licenses in the pockets of ten disabled veterans to



Hero John McArdle — 2016 Thermopolis Chapter Antelope Hunt

# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

hunt pronghorn in the Thermopolis area. Planning began early for the three-day event. Starting earlier in 2016, landowners purchased their antelope landowner licenses for donation back to Hunting with Heroes to transfer to these veterans. Many landowners granted permission for the veterans to hunt their ranches. We welcomed our guests to town and guides assigned to each hunter helped them sight in. Then the guides and their hunters headed to the Days Inn, who graciously donated three nights lodging for all of our veterans. Later that evening, all met at the VFW where the guides, hunters and other guests enjoyed a pre-hunt get together with a great meal. Early Saturday morning ten guides and hunters hit the field with great success. Several bucks green scored fractions from Boone & Crocket. After great comradery, backslapping and good-natured fun, the group sat down to dinner, once again put on by the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary. This time a large part of the community, volunteers, landowners and many others joined our veteran guests. Sunday offered fishing on the river with the help of the Casper-based Project Healing Waters team. The Gun Club and Pheasants Forever sponsored trap shooting. (Note: Jim didn't

mention this here, but on Sunday evening the Collins' opened their home to the veterans, guides and other guests, served a delicious dinner, and gave all one last chance to visit and share stories about the weekend). A big thank you to Days Inn, Wind River Processing, Thermopolis Gun Club and Pheasant Forever, Project Healing Waters, all the guides who gave time to help, landowners, volunteers, the VFW and Auxiliary, Hunting with Heroes, and everyone who donated and gave their time. Let us not lose sight that the real thank you here is to our disabled veterans."

In addition to the programs hosted by Hunting with Heroes Chapters, many organizations have stepped up to help provide "hunts of a lifetime" for some of these disabled veterans. In 2016, the Wyoming Wild Sheep

Foundation partnered with Hunting with Heroes to get two lucky Heroes (one in-state veteran and one out-of-state veteran) in the field near Dubois to hunt bighorn sheep. (Note: See articles about Doug Bassford and Ron Nading in this issue, and again, many thanks to Fred Maguire and Chris Sandmark who donated the precious tags. Unbelievable generosity!). Young and "not so young" men and women with one common bond – they served their country with pride, and they came home disabled. We can't do enough to thank them. We can't give enough to help them heal, but Hunting with Heroes has figured out one way. It's been an incredibly rewarding five years for the Hunting with Heroes team. Please visit their Facebook page, [Hunting with Heroes Wyoming](#), or the website [huntingwithheroes.org](http://huntingwithheroes.org) to see how you can help give back to our nation's disabled veterans.



Hero Larry Baker and his wife, Adrian — 2016 Jackson Elk Hunt

# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Capture operation sends bighorn sheep to new home

By SUSAN OLP [solp@billingsgazette.com](mailto:solp@billingsgazette.com) Feb 18, 2017

EAST OF LOVELL, Wyo. — The rhythmic wop, wop, wop of the rotors in the distance signaled the doorless blue helicopter was on its way, four attached canvas bags swaying gently below.

Once the aircraft arrived at the staging area, the pilot slowly decreased the bird's altitude and gently deposited the four bundles on the ground. A team of nearly 60 people rushed into action.

Crews of three to four people jogged over to remove the sedated bighorn sheep from the bags and carefully carry the animals to one of four inspection tables. The animals were blindfolded and hobbled before the flight for their own safety.

Then, like clockwork, teams quickly and quietly checked each ewe or ram or lamb in preparation for its journey to a new home. Afterward the animals were placed in horse trailers for transport to the release site, all restraints removed, to allow them to rest and move around.

The activity was part of Saturday's bighorn sheep capture east of Lovell coordinated by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The goal of the net-gunning operation is to transplant as many as 40 bighorn

sheep from the Devil's Canyon herd in northern Wyoming to the Ferris-Seminole herd in the south.

Altogether 20 ewes, three rams and one male lamb were rounded up Saturday. A second sheep capture is planned for Wednesday.

The day began with a helicopter crew from Native Ranger Capture Services of Elko, Nevada, capturing the sheep about five miles north of the staging area, said Leslie Schreiber, Game & Fish wildlife biologist who

to catch one of the animals.

"And then they drop a mucker off to hobble and blindfold the sheep and put it in a bag so it can be ferried back here, the staging location," she said.

Schreiber spent months coordinating the bighorn sheep capture.

"We try to make sure that everything's in order for this morning because it happens quick when it does," she said.



Saturday's crew included the helicopter crew, Game & Fish veterinarians, wildlife biologists and rangers. Also on hand were volunteers from the Bureau of Land Management, the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation and the community.

This is the third year in a row Schreiber

works out of Greybull, Wyo.

The company owners and the pilot are all from New Zealand, even though the outfit is based in the U.S. Schreiber said. They work across the country and around the world.

The pilot works with two others, called muckers. The muckers shoot the net out the side of the helicopter

has coordinated a helicopter capture involving the Devil's Canyon herd. Twenty-five animals were gathered each of the last two years.

"The Devil's Canyon herd is doing very well," she said. "At our last count in July, we counted 263 sheep and we try to keep it around 200."

The goal for the Ferris-Seminole

# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Devil's Canyon Capture/Transplant

herd is 300 bighorn sheep and the population now is estimated between 130-150 animals. So the transfer helps the herds reach their optimum size.

Wildlife biologist Greg Hiatt, from the Rawlins area, works with the Ferris-Seminole herd. This is just the latest transplant, he said. Since 2009, two groups of bighorn sheep from Oregon and two from the Devil's Canyon herd have been transported to the Seminoe Mountains.

"And then last year we took 24 from here and put them into the Ferris Mountains, which is where this group is going," Hiatt said, while waiting for the helicopter to return with more animals.

Before these most recent efforts, attempts to transplant bighorn sheep to the area were not successful because the animals came from higher elevations, Hiatt said. The ewes lambed in June, too late to take advantage of the lush vegetation, which kept them from nursing their lambs.

The sheep from Oregon and from the Devil's Canyon herd come from an elevation similar to their new home, he said. They lamb a month to six weeks earlier, when vegetation is green and high in protein, which helps with milk production and lamb growth.

"I think our ratio was about three lambs for about every five years this year and it was a little better than that last year and that's remarkably good for bighorn sheep," Hiatt said.

The health of the animals is always a concern, and one reason the Devil's Canyon herd has been used for transplant is the good health of the animals.

Hank Edwards, Game and Fish wildlife disease specialist out of Laramie, was on hand for Saturday's operation. Samples are taken from all of the animals, he said.

Teams at each of the tables quickly take multiple swabs and a blood sample from most of the sheep to be tested back at the lab.

"In a nut shell we're checking the health of the herd, and we have checked almost all of the herds in the state," Edwards said. "It's been a five-year effort and we have checked all but two."

Tonsil and nasal swabs help detect respiratory disease in the bighorn sheep. The fecal sample uncovers internal parasites and lung worms.

A blood sample helps with a mineral analysis, testing for exposure to respiratory viruses and to confirm pregnancy. Mary Wood, state wildlife veterinarian, also used a portable ultrasound machine on Saturday to discover which of the ewes were pregnant,

and nearly all of them were.

"This is a very productive herd," she said.

Wood also provided assistance when needed during the operation, to keep the animals' stress to a minimum.

Also on hand Saturday was volunteer Dean DiJenno, secretary of the 700-member Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation. The non profit's goal is to raise money to help boost the population of indigenous sheep in the state.

It contributed \$20,000 to Saturday's operation, DiJenno said.

"What a blessing to be able to come out and see the fruits of our labor," he said. "It's exciting that we have an expanding range of wild sheep in Wyoming."

*(This article was reprinted with permission from The Billings Gazette and Susan Olp. Photo credit : Hannah Potes)*



# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Iron Mountain Burn enhances wild sheep habitat in SE Wyoming By Chris Otto, BLM High Desert District Fuels Specialist

The Iron Mountain/Limestone Ridge prescribed burn was completed during late October 2016 utilizing Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation funding as well as a variety of other partners for funding and implantation. The treatment was part of a series of prescribed burns designed to improve wildlife habitat, increase enhance rangeland vegetation health, reduce hazardous fuels, and open areas to grasses and forbs and new, more palatable and nutritious shrubs. The project area provides extremely important habitat for bighorn sheep throughout the Iron Mountain/Indian Guide area, a series of rugged uplifts southwest of Chugwater, Wyoming. The area is also important seasonal habitat for mule deer and elk. Additional benefits from the project were increases in amount and quality of livestock forage and reduction of fuels available for wildfires, important benefits to the cooperating and adjacent landowners and the grazing permittee.

Around 590 acres of mountain mahogany, bitterbrush and sagebrush on public and private lands were treated within a total project area of 11,000 acres 30 miles northwest of Cheyenne along the Albany/Laramie/Platte County lines. This was another treatment opportunity in a project that was initiated during the spring of 2010 and included the Iron Mountain and Middle Canyon prescribed burns. The Limestone Ridge treatment was the final target unit to be completed in the

overall project. The landowner and BLM grazing permittee, DSS Holdings, had done a great job managing livestock use through the summer and left a significant amount of standing forage to carry fire through the shrub stands. Although there were some exciting moments due to dry fine fuels and shifting winds, containment of the burn was completely successful.

The cooperating landowner deserves a lot of credit for patiently managing livestock throughout the entire process to provide fine fuels to carry fire and also to provide recovery periods to the units after treatment and defer livestock use so that vegetation could re-grow which can be a significant impact to grazing and ranch operations.

Proponents of and partners in this treatment include the associated private landowners, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition (wild sheep, mule deer, and elk funds.) Personnel and equipment from the Albany County Fire Department, the United States Forest Service (Laramie, Saratoga, and Douglas Ranger Districts), the Chugwater Fire Department, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Bureau of Land Management (High Desert District from

Rawlins and Rock Springs, High Plains District from Casper) and services from several private contractors assisted and took part in implementation operations.

The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation and its members deserve a huge amount of credit and thanks for their support, funding, and just as important, their patience and faith that the project would be completed, despite a long time-frame and several false starts. This was a great project that will continue to provide habitat for bighorn sheep and serves to expand wild sheep populations across the state and into previously occupied habitat. Also, Wyoming Game and Fish Biologist and WWSF Life Member Ryan Amundson merits a huge thanks and pat on the back for his continuing hard work and commitment to this and other projects that benefit wild sheep and other wildlife across Wyoming.

# GRANT IN AID UPDATES



A controlled burn was conducted on Iron Mtn to enhance Wild Sheep Habitat



A Big Horn Ram at the guzzler on Elk Mtn in the Black Hills

# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Wyoming bighorn sheep genomics update Sierra Love Stowell, PhD; Holly Ernest, DVM, PhD

Here at the Ernest Lab at the University of Wyoming, we're in the middle of our second year of a three-year project assessing the genetics of bighorn sheep in Wyoming. We're using a combination of traditional genetic and next generation genomic methods to identify unique populations, describe genetic diversity, and quantify population size. This information will enable managers to better understand movement, disease risk, and population trends in one of Wyoming's most charismatic species. Support from the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation is crucial to achieving our project's goals.

This fall, we received a flood of samples from around the state as tissue samples from hunter kits were returned to us. With the help of our undergraduate researchers Erin Bentley and Abbey Ernest-Beck, we assembled and distributed over 1,000 kits during the summer. Game wardens and biologists with the Wyoming Department of Game & Fish used the kits to take tissue samples at hunter check stations from many of Wyoming's ungulates, including more than 120 bighorn sheep. As animals are harvested, packages of filled kits are sent back to us in Laramie. Getting the packages with the samples feels like Christmas for biologists! The dirt, data, and comments on the kits stickers tell stories of successful hunts and provide invaluable genetic and geographic information.

In addition to the hunter kits, the blood samples from winter and spring captures are also starting

to arrive. Did you know that in mammals like humans and bighorn sheep, the red blood cells that make up most of the volume of blood don't have nuclei? The nucleus of a cell contains most of the genetic material; during red blood cell production, the nucleus is lost so that the cell is streamlined for carrying oxygen and squeezing through narrow blood vessels. For our lab, this means that we have to take extra steps when we get blood samples to ensure that we get as much DNA as we can. If the blood is really fresh, we can spin it at high speed to separate it into red blood cells, white blood cells, and plasma. Then we can harvest the white blood cells, which do have nuclei, and extract DNA.

One of the applications of our genetic assessment that we're really excited about is investigating the genetic outcome of trans locations. Trans locations are an important tool for bighorn sheep management. Introducing new individuals can be used to bolster declining populations or to found new populations. Beyond increasing population size, trans locations introduce new genetic material. By sampling both source and recipient herds, we can track what happens to trans located individuals and their genes. In combination with information on population size and disease history, we can test whether trans location increases genetic diversity and population health. Our statewide genetic assessment will tell us about the source and recipient herds for within-state transplants. Our next steps are to work with our collaborators to get samples from the source herds

outside of Wyoming, including Idaho, Oregon, and Montana.

Overall, we are very grateful to Wyoming Wild Sheep for their funding support, for the hunters that allowed their animals to be sampled, and to the Wyoming Department of Game & Fish for assistance with sampling and all the great work they do. In upcoming months, we will be gathering genetic information from additional sheep and analyzing where on the landscape genetic clusters can be found. Next time you're in Laramie, stop by our lab and see what we're doing.



Hunter Kits



Blood Separation

# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Factors influencing trends in horn size of mountain sheep ~ Project Update January 2017

Project Overview – Factors influencing trends in the size of horn-like structures of North American ungulates is a controversial topic, with varied sociological and biological implications. Horn-like structures are important indicators of individual fitness and play a role in social dynamics and sexual selection. Trophy-sized animals also are highly valued, and sought by many hunters. Past research on this topic has shown widespread, but subtle declines in size of exceptionally large trophy specimens through time for many game species. Mountain sheep in particular show variable patterns in horn size that was thought to be related to changes in the age structures of populations due to intensive hunting pressure. However, research conducted in Alberta indicated that under harvest regimes that were intense and highly selective, selective harvest leads to a genetically-based reduction in horn size over time. Because of this, more research is needed to truly understand trends in the horn size of mountain sheep across different areas and with varying harvest regulations. Understanding these trends will help to shed light on the relative roles of harvest, environment, and population characteristics on horn size in mountain sheep. This project will work to create a long-term, multi-region harvest dataset of bighorn and thinhorn sheep throughout western North America. The primary objectives include:

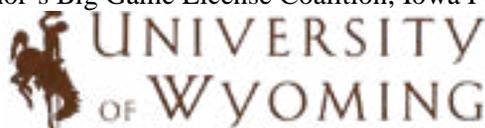
1. Evaluate trends in horn size and age of harvested mountain sheep in North America.
2. Identify underlying factors influencing trends in size by assessing environmental influences and harvest pressure.
3. Identify how interannual variation in environmental factors influences annual horn growth.
4. Identify the use and relevancy of record books as tools in wildlife management.

Project Update – Currently, our efforts are focused on analyzing harvest data from state and provincial agencies. We currently have data from Alberta, Arizona, British Columbia, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. We are still working with biologists and managers in Colorado, California, Idaho, Montana and Alaska on obtaining harvest records from their states. Initial analysis of these data began in November of 2016, focused specifically on Wyoming herds and will continue into the spring semester of 2017, with the goal of having preliminary state-wide results by the summer of 2017.

Additionally, we are currently writing a manuscript that is focused on the validity of using trophy records to assess trends in horn and antler size through time. Our goal is to evaluate the biological relevancy of trophy records by comparing trends within two record books with different minimum entry requirements. If the biological relevancy of trophy records is affected by minimum entry requirements, we expect trends in size between record books diverge (*sensu* Festa Bianchet et al. 2015). Specifically, we will evaluate the prediction that a record book with lower requirements for entry (Pope and Young Records Book) will be a better representation of the population, and thus is more likely to exhibit a trend of greater magnitude (whether positive or negative) through time when compared with a records book with high entry requirements (Boone and Crockett Records Book). With this manuscript, we aim to compare the trends in size of horns and antlers of animals recorded in the Boone and Crockett and Pope and Young Records Books to evaluate the similarities and differences in magnitude and direction of trends. Understanding the validity of using record books as a tool for biological assessments is critical because they could provide a wealth of information as one of the longest standing datasets for game species in North America, and their use as a biological tool for assessing effects of management strategies and conservation success was the primary intention established by the founders of the Records Programs. In addition to the Boone and Crockett and Pope and Young Record Programs, we are hoping to work with the Safari Club International Record Program to incorporate data from their Record Books into our analyses; including data from a third record program will help to strengthen our work. The methodology and majority of the analyses for this manuscript has already been completed; and our goal is to submit the manuscript by the end of the 2017 spring semester.

This project began in August of 2015 and is led by Tayler LaSharr, a Master's student in the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Wyoming, under the direction of Dr. Kevin Monteith (University of Wyoming), and co-investigators Dr. Ryan Long, Mr. Jim Heffelfinger, Dr. Terry Bowyer, Dr. Vernon Bleich and Dr. Paul Krausman, with collaboration from biologists and managers throughout mountain sheep range.

Funding provided by: National Wild Sheep Foundation, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, California Wild Sheep Foundation, Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, Alberta Wild Sheep Foundation, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, Iowa Foundation of North American Wild Sheep



# Wyoming Hunt Area 3 Ram

## By Dan Clifton

Wild Sheep Foundation;  
Hell, finally froze over.  
A ram for Alice.

On Tuesday May 10<sup>th</sup> my stepson Casey Edmunds called me at work to congratulate me, I had to ask him why, he told me that I had drawn a bighorn sheep tag. I was only slightly in shock; I had been watching my points for a few years, and was very close to drawing in 2015, but it looked

1993 I had an area 2 tag, with a successful hunt then, that tag only took 16 years or so to draw it. I contacted Mike Wakkuri; Elk Mountain Outfitting, the decision to go with them was not too difficult, Mike and his team had guided me on my 93 hunt, my mom on her 98 hunt, my wife on her 02 hunt. Arrangements were made with Mike's team; Tom Buller and Brad Thompson, from the Cody; Powell

We packed into the upper Blackwater area, we saw some fantastic country; but only a few small rams, we did see nearly 100 ewes and lambs on the first day of season. After several days of hunting this area, we decided to back out and come back later in the season, or even hunt on call since I live only 220 miles away in Casper. The hunt began again in full speed for the last week or so of the season.

We stayed in campers at the elks' fork campground; the weather was still hot and dry; the little bit of moisture did not last long. We hunted a different trail every day, and split up to cover more territory, we saw lots of ewes and lambs, and some 2-year-old rams, but no mature rams. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of October Brad and Tom were getting a little concerned about not seeing rams, they loaded the horses and mules into the trailers and drove around to come into the area from the south fork side. 5 hours later we were back to the trail head with my ram, he is not the biggest ram on the mountain; but he was hard earned, and when he is on the wall he will be remembered fondly as Alice's ram; as well as the experience and all the country that Tom and Brad took me into while hunting sheep; these guys never gave up on me.

I can't wait for my next opportunity to hunt Wyoming's bighorn sheep; if it takes me another 23 years to draw a tag, I'll be nearly 80, I don't think that is too old for a sheep hunt; I hope Elk Mountain Outfitters; Mike and his team are still around to guide me.



like a sure deal for 2016, unless there were a lot of high point claim jumpers moving to area 3. I checked the Wyoming GFD website to see it for myself. It had been 23 years and a lot of applications waiting for this event, but this was not my first Wyoming sheep permit in

area would take on the challenge, they have been guiding for Mike for many years, and love to sheep hunt. The first trip was for the opening of season, My mother in-law had passed away on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August and the service was opening day, I had so hoped to get a ram in her memory on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September.

# Sierra's Moose Hunt - The Trophy Is Not Always Measured In Inches

## By Ryan Amundson, WSF Life Member #384

My daughter, Sierra (WSF Life Member #438), hit the jackpot in 2016 by drawing the Snowy Range (Area 38) moose license on the random draw with only 5 preference points in the bank. Odds of 1 / 600 seem astronomical, but as they say..... "somebody has to draw it"..... and "you can't win if you don't play"!

As soon as Sierra received the tag, we began planning how we were going to tackle this once in a lifetime opportunity. Sierra was working a full time job at the State Vet Lab in Laramie, and also taking summer classes at UW, so it was hard for her to get away to scout. I spent 12 days scouting on foot and horseback in the month of August on weekends and evenings, with Sierra accompanying me when she could.

Sierra decided early in the summer that she wanted to extend her hunting opportunity by hunting in the archery season. Sierra was introduced to archery at a young age, but had gone several years without shooting, and had never hunted with archery equipment. In June, she picked up a bow and tried to draw it back, with no luck. We had to turn the poundage down to less than 40# to get her started. Sierra worked hard all summer long lifting weights and practicing shooting as much as she could to build the muscle memory needed. Every couple weeks we'd give a crank on the bow to turn up the poundage. By September she was pulling back 52 pounds on the compound bow and shooting very well.

We had several close encounters throughout the September archery season. We saw lots of bulls, with very

few being over 3 or 4 years old. Moose hunting seemed to get really tough in mid September, as the bulls and cows made their way into dark timber and did not show themselves very often. In the last week of September however, the bulls started to become more visible again, as the rut was in full swing.

On Wednesday, September 28th, I decided to switch to the Pole Mountain area from the Snowies to try to change our luck. Sierra had an Organic Chemistry exam that day in addition to a full schedule of classes, so she couldn't go out. Working off of several stories and tips of moose seen in the area, in addition to a couple observations I had made earlier in the summer myself, I was in the area prior to daylight. As the sun came up, I found a bull in the top of a drainage and he was staring down into the aspens below him. Curiosity was killing me so I walked down into the aspens to see what the bull was so focused on. As I entered the draw I could hear three different bulls grunting and raking trees. I could see the legs of what I thought was a moose about 120 yards away through the aspens. I made a half-hearted cow call / moan to see if the moose would step out and give me a better look. A giant bull stepped out and headed right for me. At 20 yards, the bull stopped, turned his head sideways and snapped off every sapling aspen and pine tree around him so he could make his way through the thick under story to my location. He finally stopped at mere feet away and continued to rake trees and break branches, with many of the branches falling on me. It scared the daylight out of me, as I had nothing to hide behind. He grew

tired of waiting for the mysterious cow to show up, so he turned and walked away. I ended up seeing six bulls and two cows that day. We now had a plan for Thursday morning. I called Sierra, and told her, "No if's, and's, or but's about it.....we are going moose hunting tomorrow!" Dads are not supposed to encourage their daughters to skip school, but this was an exception!

Thursday morning, September 29th, Sierra's 16<sup>th</sup> day of hunting for a moose, found the two of us at Pole Mountain before sunrise. We glassed a couple of drainages from about 1/4 - 1/2 mile away, scanning willow bottoms and adjacent aspen stands and timber pockets. After an hour of glassing at prime time we only found one lone cow. I told Sierra that we might as well head back to where I last saw the big bull the day before. We tried to be as stealthy as possible as we headed down the dry timbered slope into the bottom. When we approached the spot where I had my close encounter the day prior, I pointed to all of the broken trees and tore up sagebrush. I told Sierra that we might as well just stand in one place for a bit and listen for cracking limbs, heavy footsteps, or cow/bull calls. After just a couple minutes, we could hear a bull moose grunting. I pointed downhill and Sierra pointed uphill. After a short argument we decided it was better to follow a young person's ears than an old deaf guy, so we went uphill. After a short 50 yard walk, I grunted in the bull's general direction. In an instant the bull from the day before showed up, swaying his rack back and forth and walking slowly our direction. The wind was swirling and the bull was getting dangerously close to getting

## Sierra's Moose Hunt

in a spot where he would likely wind us. Amazingly, he turned 180 degrees, and walked back to the right of us in the upwind direction, likely to make himself more visible to the bull invading his territory. He stepped out of the trees at 20 yards into an open sagebrush pocket and froze. Sierra drew the bow back and waited for the bull to turn broadside. The bull stood frozen facing us, and the moose and I continued to grunt at each other. The moose eventually started to walk right to left broadside to us. After nearly a minute of holding at full draw, Sierra finally had a chance to shoot, and she let an arrow fly at a distance of 20 yards, hitting the bull in the liver. He scampered about 20 yards uphill, and turned broadside again and stopped, with his head hanging low. Sierra nocked another arrow, and made a 40 yard follow-up shot that hit the bull through both lungs. He slowly walked about 10 yards and tipped over dead. Sierra began to shake uncontrollably and tears started to fall. We hugged and waited as patiently as we could and slowly made our way up to him.

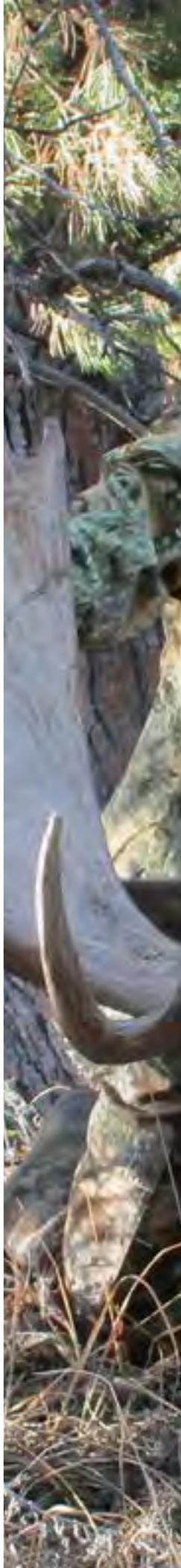
At the moment we walked up to the bull, Sierra and I both realized what had been accomplished. A full summer of shooting practice with the bow, weight lifting so she could pull 50+ lbs draw weight, over a hundred hours of scouting in August, miles and miles traversed on foot and on horseback, balancing school and work with hunting, studying for organic chemistry in the truck and tent, cold nights sleeping on the hard ground, the list goes on and on. Was it all worth it? You bet it was! Spending September in the high country, the smells and sounds of the forest, the great people that

we met and spent time with along the way, watching the aspens change colors, picking wild raspberries in open parks during the slow times of the day, the sounds of bull elk bugling in the woods, all of the wonderful wildlife we saw every day, and most importantly.....the quality time Sierra and I spent together. I am so thankful for this moose tag and hunt, as it provided a means for Sierra and I to reconnect since she'd gone off to college, and share a lifelong common interest and pursue a lofty goal of harvesting a mature bull moose with a bow. Hunting has been and continues to serve as a "glue" that bonds the two of us together. This was a grueling hunt and she showed patience, perseverance, and a positive attitude throughout the entire season. We both said many times, "It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when". The overwhelming emotions we both felt when we walked up to that enormous animal will not be forgotten soon. Blood, sweat, and tears were all used on this one by both of us. Sierra is now likely an archery hunter for life. She craves the close encounters and the challenge this style of hunting provides. We will spend many more days together in the mountains of Wyoming. I can't tell you how much I am looking forward to that. Hunting means a lot of different things to people. It has changed meanings for me numerous times throughout my lifetime, and can change from hunt to hunt. What it means today for me, as I reflect on the Fall of 2016 is:

**Hunting provided my daughter and I an opportunity to spend quality time in the outdoors**

**that can never be taken away from us. We both made big sacrifices in our lives to do it and have a stronger father/daughter bond because of this wonderful experience that a moose hunt provided. That is the true trophy we took home....and it is PRICELESS.**

It is important to remember that hunt success is not always measured in the inches of a trophy. It's easy to get wrapped around the axles about this, particularly on a once in a lifetime tag and hunt. Sierra harvested a great bull that makes the P&Y and B&C Record Books with a net score of 146 6/8", but as we share our stories with friends and family about this hunt, the bull's final score will quickly be forgotten. The memories we generated in 16 hard days of hunting in the Fall of 2016 will stick with us forever, and we'll be glad to re-tell the story over and over again of our father/daughter time on the mountain.





# Sheep Hunting - It Creates the Best of Memories

By Steve Kilpatrick

As I ponder on the most heartfelt memories, those that I will most likely reflect on during my last minutes here on earth, my mind narrows to family and close friends. As I dig deeper, the fondest memories of family and friends almost always involves events associated with the outdoors. The backcountry vistas, the smell of horses, leather, pine, campfires, the taste of cowboy coffee, good whiskey, fresh elk steaks, the sounds of horse feet/bells, streams, wind, elk bugles, and laughter all heighten our senses. And, when our senses are elevated the resulting memories are more likely to be everlasting. When it comes to the basics all we really have is time, time from which to create memories. We should use our time wisely by getting outside

with family and friends.

In September, 2015 I was invited by a good friend Jack Welch, to tag along on his sheep hunt west of Cody. He also invited a mutual friend Gary Butler, and my son-in-law Brian Oland, who is a close friend of Jack's. Jack is no run-of-the-mill sheep hunter. He is a retired BLM biologist who spent much of his career passionately working with cooperators to keep sheep on the mountain at Whiskey Basin near Dubois. On top of that, he has been on 25+ sheep hunts, AND this was his fifth sheep tag! Hanging out with Jack is like Googling bighorn sheep politics, management, ecology and hunting all in one. It's overwhelming.

The icing on the cake for me was having Gary Butler

and Brian Oland along. Gary is a former WGFD biologist/supervisor, founder of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Conservation Fund and he has been on about 30 sheep hunts. Brian is a pharmacist in Lander, acquired his pharmacy and wildlife degrees from UW, been on a handful of sheep hunts and is my son-in-law. I'm sure Jack invited him because he is athletic, savvy with horses/mules, smart, an excellent hunter/outdoorsman, a great cook, can backpack anything and most importantly knows which drugs make older hunters feel younger. Having Brian along, it was obvious Jack really did not need Gary and I, but we thank him for including us. The memories start with the drive from Lander to Cody. We had two rigs and Butler pulled over

at Meeteetse to tell Brian and I some far fetched story about something that happened to him near there. I don't remember what it was, but I'm sure it was important. That's when we discover Jack's horse was colicky in the trailer. The horse was unloaded, Brian the pharmacist turned into a veterinarian, shots were administered and we motored on to the trail head west of Cody. We spend the evening administering more drugs to Jack's horse, Angus, and watching him appear to be dying. Angus dying there was not too cool on several fronts. First, no one wants to lose their good horse and secondly a couple of grizzlies were visiting the trail head daily.



Jack Welch, Steve Kilpatrick, Gary Butler, Brian Oland

After his third drug dose Angus decides he really does want to go sheep hunting and uprights himself. He then proceeded to pack Jack around for the whole hunt, but didn't eat for three days. But, that was ok since he packs 2-3 hundred pounds of meals around his midsection anyway. For the next several days we split up and scouted for the infamous ram. Jack, Brian and Gary spiked out a couple of nights in the higher elevations. We all saw rams and would huddle at base camp to share notes, stories and photos taken through spotting scopes. Jack kept complaining about his back hurting and we sympathized by calling him a Big Baby and telling him to drink more whiskey. More on his back issue later. We scoured numerous drainages, seeing and watching the antics of a fair number of sheep. As we told stories and showed photos of rams to Jack, he would smile and say "Ya, that's a pretty good ram", then quickly go back to sipping his coffee/whiskey and conversing about sheep, hunting, horse wrecks, etc. Ya see, Jack was not interested in just killing something. He was more interested in experiencing the hunt and all its parts. We spent the better part of a week working on "the hunt". It had come together rather nicely with a couple of exceptions; no horse wrecks and no ram harvested. To replace that void we invited three young strapping backpack sheep hunters into our camp. They had obviously been expending a fair amount of energy over the past several days and were over eating dried backpack food. You can imagine the grins on their



faces when we said we were leaving the next day and we had a lot of pork chops and adult beverages we needed to get rid of. With the help of some spirit water, Gary and Jack spilled many a yarn on the younger hunters. They somehow made a connection between a Vietnam helicopter pilot's skill in supplying hooch for soldiers to his similar but different mule-skinning skills in never having a "dry" sheep camp. Yes, the details of a "successful" sheep hunt/camp were emphasized. The trip home was equally memorable. Butler has this horse trailer that eats tires like his helicopter pilot friend drinks beer. Even though he had put all new tires on the trailer, he still had two flats between Cody and Lander. Of course it was during the night, the best of time to jockey horses in and out of a trailer. Gary is somewhat smart and carries extra spares. So, no problem. Then right when they thought they were home safe and sound, Gary's long trailer catches the fence on the last turn into Jack's house. Again, they showed their

resourcefulness and pulled out a chain saw to remove the post. Jack can just replace it later! The next day Jack was still whimpering about his back and I think his wife told him to be quiet or see a doctor. He thought, just maybe, the pain was due to him falling off a ladder and rolling his 4-wheeler on himself two weeks prior to going sheep hunting. We seriously doubted that should have affected him. I mean, he rode rodeo bulls in college and he is only in his late 70's now. Well the x-rays revealed two cracked vertebra. But, that's only two. The rest were fine. All said and done, our senses and memories were heightened by the touch, smell, taste and majestic views of sheep country and everything that goes with sheep hunting. While Jack did not harvest a ram, those memories will stick with us for a lifetime and be repeated for at least a couple of generations. Jack, thank you for inviting us to spend our precious time wisely - on a sheep hunt.

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



LM Cari Goss with her Desert Sheep

Bill Obeid - Area 5 Ram

Rod Litzel's Billie taken while hunting with Curt Shatzer

# Member's Gallery

LM Gray Thornton finished his FNAWS with this Desert Sheep

LM Joe Kondelis found a nice buck in Sunlight Basin



LM John O'Brien and his beautiful Ram that completed his FNAWS





LM Steve Brock's last day buck



Vic Dana with an area 17 Ram



Curt Shatzer and son, Connor, with his fine 2017 Bull Elk

# BLAST FROM THE PAST

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



LM Frank and Frankie Maestri with a public land bull



Jim Bernardin found his Stone Sheep



The Collins Family celebrating X-mas!

# My 2016 Wyoming Big Horn Sheep Hunt

## By John Lee

2016 is a year I will always remember. The memories have much to do with sheep hunting, but even better are the memories and experiences of how great life can be in our magnificent outdoors, and with meeting wonderful people along the way.

At the age of 55, I made up my mind to aspire to and achieve my Grand Slam of North American sheep. It's been said that "massive accomplishments cannot come from tiny aims" and ambition invites our steps and points us to higher places. Our goals add life to life and with no goals, man dies of nothing. Therefore, for a blaze of success, we pick our star, hitch to it and hold on and hold on. We did!

One leg of this four-part journey began in September of 2016 when I had the unique opportunity to hunt in the beautiful state of Wyoming for Big Horn sheep. I had purchased a Governor's tag at the Wyoming Wild Sheep annual auction in June through my good friend, Brady Vandenburg who did the bidding for me in my absence. Brady, a Game Warden in Lusk, is a fine man I've had the pleasure of getting to know from hunting deer and pronghorn in the area for several years.

With good fortune, I was able to hunt for the Big Horn with Meade Dominick of 7D Ranch Outfitters. From the

moment I called Meade, I felt not only comfortable, but confident. He answered all my questions, and was very positive throughout the whole process.

Our hunt began like all others, getting to know each other and organizing our gear. Organization takes so much work and planning and this could not have gone more smoothly. Luck sometimes grants favor, but planned concentrated effort grants more.

at around 12,000 feet, we got to our Ram as the sun was about to set. What an absolute honor to be with friends like Ron Elks, a friend from N.C. who has been my sheep hunting and mountain hunting mentor, with Meade who is one of the hardest working men I have ever had the pleasure to be with Jeff who along with Meade, worked so hard to make this hunt successful, and with Ryan Roemmich.

Having built a fire on top of the mountain, we started preparing our Ram for the ride back to camp. My appreciation was for the people and the blessing of being on this mountain on this extraordinary night. We all experienced the indescribable gratification of being able to say ... "we have done it - this thing we sought to do."

Passion and perseverance carry us through our adversities and lift us over our obstacles, even those which appear insurmountable. The victory goes to those who

won't quit. This was our attitude! Nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance.

Yes, 2016 is a year I will always remember. I'll remember setting and achieving a goal that required intense physical and mental discipline, relishing the warm camaraderie among our hunting party, and being filled with awe at the beauty of Nature. I just can't be thankful enough for the experience.



Our hunt had it all. We had the success of a beautiful majestic Ram, but even more important to me was the total experience. I had the privilege of being around great people who shared my faith and appreciation of God's beauty, and of staying in the great state of Wyoming. Breathtaking beauty and majestic scenes were everywhere I looked, at every turn and vista.

On our afternoon of success

# Rocky Mountain High

## By Bob Meduna

In most cases, hunting Rocky Mountain and desert bighorn sheep in the United States means playing the game of applying for and drawing a permit. Whether the states use preference points, bonus points, weighted preference points, random draw, or combinations of these systems, it will likely take an applicant a number of years to draw a bighorn or desert sheep permit. If you are reading these pages, most likely you already know what is going on. My turn came in 2016 with 19 preference points in Wyoming's Unit 7 near Jackson. This was my second Wyoming sheep tag as I drew a Unit 10 permit in 1992 in what at that time was a completely random draw. I wanted to do this hunt on my own without a guide as that's just

how I like to do it. A big part of each of my western big game hunts is the anticipation of the hunt, including the research and trying to learn about the target

species and the unit and putting this knowledge together to make for a successful hunt. I've been hunting big game in the western states since 1974, and have been successful on many DIY hunts for deer, elk, pronghorn, moose, mountain goat, caribou, and my 1992 Wyoming bighorn hunt. Wyoming law requires that a nonresident have a guide when

hunting in designated wilderness areas. The law allows a Wyoming resident to get a temporary guide's license to accompany a nonresident while hunting to fulfill this requirement. A former college roommate, Bryan Krotz, has been a Wyoming resident for over 25 years and he was excited about going along on the sheep hunt and agreed to get the permit. In addition, my son Luke wanted to be a part of the sheep hunt as he has been building preference points for sheep in Wyoming for a number of years. Also, I think Luke and my wife were in cahoots as they both thought someone needed to be along that could take care of The Two Old Men. At 36, he would be a welcome hunting partner, especially when it came time for packing camp and hopefully a ram. I was glad

to have Luke along as the "Designated Sherpa". As I said earlier, the anticipation of and planning for the hunts is a big part of the total experience. However, I knew that

this hunt would be very physically demanding and, at 64, I began to wonder how well I would get along. My 70-80 pound backpack loads from the past are now 45-50 pound loads. I was already in decent shape as a friend and I completed a successful backpack muzzle loader elk hunt in Colorado in September and I also had a successful solo Wyoming

deer hunt in October and packed a buck out for 2 miles in some pretty rough country. But getting into "sheep shape" would be taking this conditioning another step further.

Other issues of concern were hunting in grizzly country (stories of bear encounters from hunting buddies didn't help), weather (September weather didn't bother me but knowing that I might be hunting in late October brought on worries about deep snow and cold weather), and the fact that it took hunters an average of 20 days to harvest a ram in this unit last year. I have good equipment and a lot of experience so I was not overly concerned about camping in the wilderness, keeping warm (modern synthetic hunting clothing is amazing), and eating decent food. I was confident in my shooting ability and my rifle (.300 Weatherby Mag) and knew that I was capable of making a good shot out to 400 yards if needed.-

After all the planning, training, and packing for the hunt, it was time to head to Wyoming. I wanted to avoid the opening day "crowd" (the season opened on September 1), so we decided to start hunting on September 15. Luke and I met Bryan on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> and packed about 4 miles up Granite Creek the next day and camped in a spot that gave us good visibility into sheep country. We glassed that evening but only saw a small group of mule deer does and fawns. Apparently, we were in good moose habitat as Luke heard several bulls grunting during the night, one of which left his





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tracks a measured 8 feet from out tent! I didn't hear a thing..... Looking through the spotting scope from camp the next morning, I found a group of 9 rams in some steep country above camp. Two of the rams looked respectable and we headed up the mountain for a closer look. After studying them through the spotting scope, I decided to pass on them as they were not as large as my 1992 ram, which, at least for the time being, was the standard that I wanted to equal or better. We continued to climb and spent the day looking into high basins but only found 1 ewe and 1 lamb. From camp that evening, we found the group of rams again, closer now, and in perfect light. My decision to pass on these rams was reinforced, and it was a joy to be in sheep country and actually be watching rams! The rams had moved about a quarter mile by the time we found them the next morning. Since no new rams had joined the group, we decided to move on. We

packed up camp and hiked up to Packsaddle Pass and decided that we were really in sheep country now! The country was absolutely beautiful and it looked like there could be sheep anywhere. We spent 4 days hunting the high country from this camp covering as much ground as we could, but we just didn't see much for sheep. Reluctantly, we left our Packsaddle Pass camp and spent two days hunting basins on our way back to the trail head. Again, we thought we were in good country and found sign but not much for sheep. Our time was up for this trip, and we had to head home. A great trip, but it was disappointing in not finding a ram good enough to take. I headed back to Wyoming on October 19 intending to hunt through the end of the season (October 31) if necessary. Luke was unable to go along as he had work and family commitments but Bryan was able to join me and we met in Jackson. Steve Kilpatrick with the Wyoming

Wild Sheep Foundation (another old college friend) met up with us on the 20<sup>th</sup> and gave us a tour of likely areas to hunt along the Gros Ventre River. A good number of ewes and some rams had moved down into the lower winter range habitat and more were likely to move down as time went on and the snow built in the high country. So we concentrated on hunting and glassing these areas for the next several days. We were seeing up to 60 ewes and lambs each day but only a few rams and none that met my standard. Steve had showed us what habitat types the sheep were most likely to use and that made us more efficient in our glassing as we were learning more each day about bighorns. He also gave us insight into many of the projects that the Wild Sheep Foundation and Wyoming Game and Fish Department work together on including disease issues (pneumonia contracted from domestic sheep and goats often causes catastrophic die-offs), habitat improvement

# Rocky Mountain High

## By Bob Meduna

projects, collaring and monitoring projects, and relocation/transplant projects. Management of sheep in Wyoming and the associated research is an ongoing and complicated process but it's through these efforts that these organizations can keep sheep on the mountain.

Bryan and I awoke to rain on the morning of October 28<sup>th</sup>. I thought briefly about just staying in camp that day as the cloud ceiling was low and the visibility was poor. But with the last day of the season being the 31<sup>st</sup>, I didn't want to waste a day, even if the hunting conditions were poor. So Bryan and I headed up the mountain to try to glass as well as the foggy conditions would allow. We climbed to the top of a ridge we had not glassed from previously, and could see the country from a different angle. I soon found a ewe and lamb about a mile away and then Bryan found a lone ram beyond them. We watched him for a while and determined that he was worth a closer look as he looked pretty good. When he bedded on the point of a ridge above some cliffs, we took off and headed his way. We had to cross two deep canyons to get to the ridge that he was on, and two hours later we were on that ridge. With the wind in our favor, we moved carefully, glassing and trying to find him before he saw us. While we were slowly moving to the next glassing point, he came over the ridge and we saw each other at the same time. I didn't have time to study his horns through the glasses as I was afraid that he would spook but he looked like a great ram. As I didn't want to shoot offhand, I slowly kneeled

down and crawled to a little knob about 15 yards away, rolled onto my back, and sat up very slowly. He was still there standing broadside and looking straight at me. Looking through the rifle scope at about 100 yards or so, he now for sure looked like a great ram. I rested my elbows on my knees and the cross hairs settled on his chest and I squeezed. The "whop" of the bullet hitting was reassuring as he spun and disappeared over the ridge. It had felt like a good shot and I was confident as we walked to the top of the ridge. And there lay the ram, having gone only about 50 yards after the shot. I let out a few war whoops that were likely heard in Jackson and gave thanks to God for the successful hunt – after 17 days of hunting it had finally happened! Words just cannot describe the emotion that I felt when we approached the ram. I've taken several hundred big game animals in my life, but the feelings that I had at that moment were beyond anything that I've ever felt before. We had worked so hard and stayed positive while overcoming the anxieties and doubts that I

had, mostly due to my age, and we had done it on our own. After admiring the ram, taking photos, and rehashing the final moments of the hunt, we skinned and boned out the ram and got him loaded in our packs. The return trip to the truck through the same two deep canyons took about 2½ hours and The Two Old Men were about done for when we reached the truck. I had called Steve to let him know that I had taken a ram, and he met us at the WGFD office in Jackson when I took the ram to get it checked in. The measurements at the check-in were 38 inches in length for both horns, 15¼-inch circumference at the bases, and it was aged at 8.5 years. Later, it would officially score 172 0/8 B & C. It looked like this was as good of a ram as any taken in the unit this year. All of the hard work and hard training had paid off, and this was one of the best, if not the best, hunt of my lifetime, spending time in the Wyoming mountains, learning so much about sheep, and hunting with old friends in addition to taking a great ram all added to the total experience of the sheep hunt.



# Doug says, “I won what?”

## By Doug Bassford & Steve Kilpatrick

That was the response when Doug Bassford, from Los Banos, California was called by Brian Scott, the MC of our 2016 Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation’s banquet. Doug had only hunted one other time in his life. Hunting, the critters and the language were totally foreign to him. So what’s the big deal, he won a Wyoming

hunting! People pay hundreds of thousands of dollars and wait seemingly a 100 years to get the opportunity to hunt a bighorn. He was humbled. Doug enlisted with the Marine Corp in 1989, and learned how to shoot BIG GUNS at Camp Pendleton. He became an Assistant Section Chief Artillery Gunner. He could shoot 20

comparison to his buddies. They sustained life threatening injuries and would have to deal with substantial disabilities for the rest of their lives. While Doug took a “hit” there appeared to be nothing physically damaged. So, he just kept fighting and stayed with the Marines until 1997. He came back home and worked as a Construction superintendent

in the engineering field. Doug worked long hours, 6-7 days a week and everything seemed fine. Then it didn’t. Doug had suffered traumatic brain damage from the artillery round, and things were slowly getting worse. By May 2013, Doug could no longer work. Doug was hospitalized for six months with PTSD. While there he met Glenn Chrisman, a therapist, who connected him with Dan Currah who heads up Hunting With Heroes along with his



bighorn sheep tag - kinda like winning a turkey tag, maybe. Well, maybe not. After talking with a couple of his hunting buddies including one in Wyoming, he quickly realized he had won the LOTTERY of

miles, but someone was likely to shoot back. And, shoot back they did. An artillery round went off next to Doug and three of his buddies in Kuwait, Iraq in February of 1991. Doug felt really lucky in

partner, Colton Sasser. Dan made it possible for Doug to hunt pronghorn in Wyoming in 2015. Doug successfully harvested a pronghorn but it wasn’t easy, mentally. This was the first time he shot at something that didn’t



Doug with his hunt team of Cody Brown, Wind River Backcountry Outfitters, Casey & Cory Albright

shoot back and the sight of blood took him back to the battle zone. He cried for 20 minutes after taking the life of that pronghorn. But, he had overcome a mental hurdle. There was relief and doors began to open. He could now actually make plans and set goals - around things like duck hunting. Doug credits Wyoming for helping him his first steps out of a very dark place. On to the sheep tag. First, it takes generous folks like Fred Maguire, from Casper Wyoming, to donate a transferable sheep tag. Fred took a ram in 1988, but kept acquiring his points. Since then he has gone through the changes many of us have. Trophies and horns were no longer the end goal of hunting. Maximizing the adventure and essence of hunting itself is now his goal. Fred was reading the Wyoming Wildlife magazine and an article about Hunting With Heroes "hit him like a brick". He could actually donate his sheep tag to someone that helped secure his freedom and unique Wyoming lifestyle. Dan Currah's name was in the article and he lived in Casper, where Fred lives. The phone book provided the connection to Dan and the tag donation was in the works. The next step is securing adequate funds so as not to financially burden the wounded veteran receiving the sheep tag. That's where the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation stepped up to the plate and approved a

\$10K grant request from Hunting With Heroes. The funds were prioritized for sheep hunt(s). Dan and his crew solicited qualified hunters and they randomly drew a winner for Brian Scott to announce and call at the banquet. It was Doug Bassford. The crowd of almost 400 raised the roof when that call was made. Now it's late October. Cody Brown owner of Wind River Backcountry Outfitters, and his crew Casey Albright, Cory Albright and Fritz Meyer generously provided outfitting and guiding services. As Doug says, "They were simply amazing". Doug had gotten a little anxious and drove out early to stay in Pavilion while Cody completed other hunts. Then he got little more anxious and decided to move closer, to a motel in Dubois where he called Cody to learn when the hunt might occur. Cody invited him to the bar that night where he promptly told him to be ready the next morning, early. Doug needed to get out of his Hawaiian shirt and shorts and go camo. Just like that, game on, Cody style. The next morning Doug got to experience a "little" Dubois wind. First he was treated to watching one of Cody's guides and hunter harvest an elk at a distance. That was topped by watching a mix of pronghorn, wolves and elk trying to figure out who was after who and which way to run. Then Cody rolls down the window of his truck and slaps on a spotting scope while overlooking the Badlands near Dubois. Cody,

"There they are". Two rams in the Badlands, but they were not dumb ones. They were positioned so that one could not sneak on them given the wind direction. Cody, "We will just watch them for a couple of hours and come back tomorrow." Of course Doug doesn't sleep much and he's ready hours before light. Cody and Casey pick him up and rumble back to the Badlands. The rams are spotted again and Doug is told to follow Cody and Casey while they all sneak within range. Doug soon finds out what a little "sneak" on a Wyoming ram entails. He describes it this way, "Cody and Casey were two mountain goats, dragging me along." Once they are within range Cody has Doug "dry fire" at the ram until his nerves settle to a dull roar. Distance and wind direction/speed are accounted for and Doug successfully harvests a majestic ram. Horses and mules are brought in for the retrieval. Doug has to pinch himself; the whole experience has been surreal. Doug left the ram in Dubois for a full body mount by Ethan Liesenfeldt with Western Legacy Taxidermy. He and his wife are returning this spring to pick up the mount, but they are not moving it to California. Instead, Doug will finish 20 more weeks of treatments in California and then THEY ARE MOVING to Dubois. The ram will simply be scooted across the street. Two hunts and a boat load of hospitality and the Bassfords are converting to Wyomingites! We welcome them.



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# Youth Photo Captions

- 1.) Tayen, Matthew & Duck Wakkuri hunting birds at Glendo
- 2.) Keyton Brunette with his 2016 antelope. This was his first antelope hunt and he was guided by his dad Brian Brunette. His sister Kiana Brunette and cousin Mackenzie Marcovitz were with him when he harvested this antelope.
- 3.) Emily&Levi camping
- 4.) Kayla Fazio with her antelope
- 5.) LM Gage Porter with his mule deer
- 6.) LM Chance Butler with his 2017 Buck, nice t-shirt!
- 7.) The Josh Taylor family on a south fork sheep capture
- 8.) LM Joe Kondelis's daughter,McKenna, loves fishing
- 9.) Josh and Jax Taylor with a nice ram
- 10.) Taylor Fazio with her first buck
- 11.) LM Drake Amundson found a great bear
- 12.) Connor Shatzer with his big white tail buck
- 13.) LM Whitney Porter with her first elk..
- 14.) LM Mack Morgan Porter also got her first bull elk this year.
- 15.) JonDavid Tator, Logan, Thayne and Colton Rutherford hunting pheasants at Springer.



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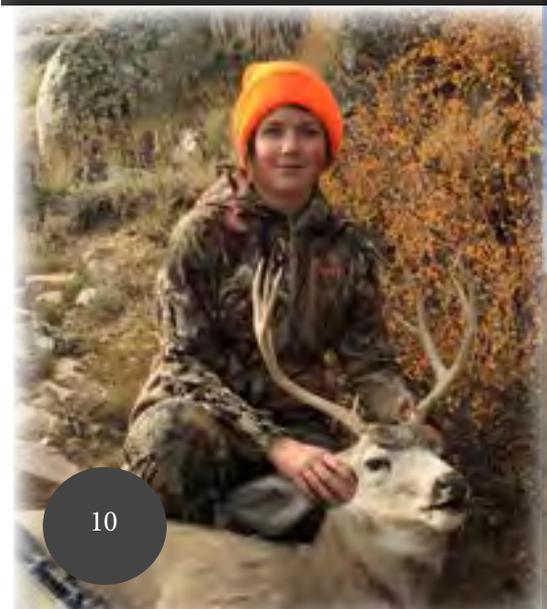
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# Ron Nading , “ You’ve gotta be f\_\_\_ kidding me!”

By Steve Kilpatrick, WY Wild Sheep, E.D.

That was Ron’s response on the second phone call from Brian Scott, our MC at the 2016 Sheep Banquet. Ron was driving back from Wapiti, Wyoming where he had finished teaching a Boy Scout course when his cell phone rang out. Ron is a no no-nonsense type guy and didn’t have time to BS with someone he thought was “messing with him” while driving late that night. He also didn’t know a crowd of almost 400 was listening to him hang up either. They requested a call back which Brian promptly did. Brian said, “Hey man, don’t hang up, I got something important to tell you.” Ron listened until Brian finished telling him he had won the Hunting With Heroes sheep tag. He promptly belted out the above statement. You can imagine the reaction from the attendees. He said he didn’t know everyone was listening, but knowing Ron, I think his response would have been the same had he known. Ron’s family roots come from Iowa, but he got to grow up in Cody, Wyoming where he hunted deer and small game. He had never hunted elk, moose or sheep prior to enlisting in the Navy immediately after high school in June of 1990. Enlisting was just what you did since both of his Grandfathers served in WWII (Army and Army Air Corp), and his Dad served in the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Vietnam. We can even go back further to a relative that received the Congressional Medal of Honor and was Honorary pallbearer for Abraham Lincoln. Furthermore, his brother spent 8 years in the Navy, 15 years in the Air Force and retired as a General. Ron spent 21.5 years in the Navy. He became

a Chief Petty Officer, spending a great deal of his time as an underwater demolition expert recovering ships, planes and helicopters. While performing his duties and training exercises he received a broken arm/wrist, a messed up shoulder and damaged knees. A hard helicopter landing in 2005 gifted him with back injuries. An arterial gas injury from diving and returning to the surface too quickly gave him lingering effects. He has had two ACL reconstructions and is past due for a knee replacement. He still sleeps with an oxygen bottle because of lingering lung issues. Ron finally slowed down a bit to take a Physician’s Assistant position in the Navy before retiring.. Ron retired to Casper, Wyoming in 2011 to be close to his Mother and two brothers. He is not idle. He finished his Bachelor’s Degree in Emergency Disaster Management and is about to finish his Master’s Degree in Strategic Leadership. Ron also teaches judo and is a Scout Troop Leader. He says he doesn’t have time for the needed knee replacement. No dust settling on this guy’s shoulders.

Ron was at the Casper Veteran Center when he came across a write up about Hunting With Heroes. He called Dan Currah and filled out the paperwork to go pronghorn hunting. Then he met Colton Sasser at a meet-and-greet, went pronghorn hunting with him and they became close friends. He got to hunt antelope again the next year and was also offered a bull elk tag. However, Ron’s true colors were

revealed when he asked that it go to another wounded veteran who he felt needed it more.

Today, Scouting has also helped enormously. Ron has teamed up with his brothers and started a National Youth Leadership training program. They will be assisting with a National Scout Jamboree consisting of over 1,000 youth. With Colton and Dan as his second family and now Scouting his third, Ron’s life is considerably brighter. The dark places are leaving.

The second hero in the mix is Chris Sandmark from Casper, Wyoming. He moved from SE Washington state to Casper 26 years ago. He was an air traffic controller in Seattle and then later in Casper. He is also a hunter and successfully harvested a Wyoming mountain goat in 1995 and a moose in 1999. Chris has not harvested a bighorn, but religiously acquired his preference points. Chris met with Dan and Colton from HWH, and the tag transfer to a 50% or more disabled veteran was in progress. Chris had also served in the Army from 1969-1970, just a year and a half out of high school. He has met with Ron before and after the hunt. His comment was, “I got more out of this than Ron.” Moving forward. Like most everything these days, there are expenses and somebody needs to pay the bills. The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation granted Hunting With Heroes \$10K to offset hunting expenses. We preferred the funds be used to assist wounded veterans hunting sheep. Hunting With Heroes

was also successful in acquiring funding from other sources. Funding secured, next steps. It's mid-October, Cody Brown and his crew of Casey and Cory Albright and Fritz Meyer at Wind River Backcountry Outfitters of Dubois, Wyoming have been hunting sheep and other big game species all year. They are honed and ready to graciously provide outfitting services for Ron through Hunting With Heroes. This was the hunt of Ron's dreams. Ron, "I felt extremely fortunate and grateful to have this chance". He would be hunting the Badlands, NE of Dubois which is one of the most unusual picturesque geologic formations in the state. Besides being beautiful, it's a beast to get around in, and that's why rams choose this area as a winter range. Some glassing on the first day produced some rams for Ron to focus his attention on. Not only was the terrain arduous, but the Dubois wind came into play, adding horizontal force in addition to the vertical force of gravity. Balance is important in this terrain. Casey and Cody maneuvered Ron through the sheep terrain until they were about 440 yards from the group. Yep, there was a really nice ram in the group of three. However, they were laying down and at an angle that didn't provide the best opportunity for a killing shot. So, they played the "sheep game" which is simple but nerve racking - just watch and wait. Patience. After an hour or so, they did what sheep often do - stand up and immediately start walking without providing a good shooting angle until they are out of sight. Ron's heart naturally

sank but this wasn't Cody and Casey's first rodeo. After a short move downhill they were back in sight of three feeding rams. Ron found the best position for himself and his 7mm rifle, selected the largest ram and meticulously squeezed the trigger. Bang, the rifle bucked a little followed by a slight buck from the ram. It was a perfect shot behind the left front shoulder and the ram took a few steps and fell on the scenic landscape of the Badlands. As Ron said, he had just harvested a beautiful majestic animal in the most beautiful and majestic setting in Wyoming. While this was Ron's first witness to a sheep harvest, it was Cody's 103<sup>rd</sup>. Whether it's the first or 103<sup>rd</sup>, the sense of magic mixed with gratefulness permeates the soul. The graciousness didn't stop. Once the private landowners Fred Fish and, Stewart and Fred Downing, heard about Ron's success they were quick to invite the hunting party to use easier

access through their properties at the lower end of the Badlands.

In closing Ron stated, "If it had not been for the generosity of Chris Sandmark donating his license to the Hunting With Heroes program, I would not have had this life experience. I am so grateful for Hunting with Heroes, the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, the Wind River Backcountry Outfitters, and numerous others. It has helped me through my transition back into the "real" world and has helped me build friendships with like-minded disabled veterans. Also, keep in mind the families. They bear the brunt of our service and provide the core support. They must be recognized and thanked as well. My life has changed because of all of you." Well Ron, our lives have changed too. They are enriched because of you, your family and your fellow veterans. We thank you, our fellow wild sheep companion.





# MAVEN



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# Preserving the Past with a Clear Eye to the future

## The Wyoming Migration Initiative

In recent years new GPS collar technology has led to major advances in migration science, but the Wyoming Migration Initiative is also gleaning information from past generations of wildlife biologists.

The Wyoming Migration Initiative (WMI) has several ongoing studies with the Wyoming Game and Fish and other partners that are revealing highly detailed information on seasonal movements of wildlife across the landscape, sometimes capturing a location every hour. WMI's storytelling, maps, and social media aim to make these migration stories come alive for the public.

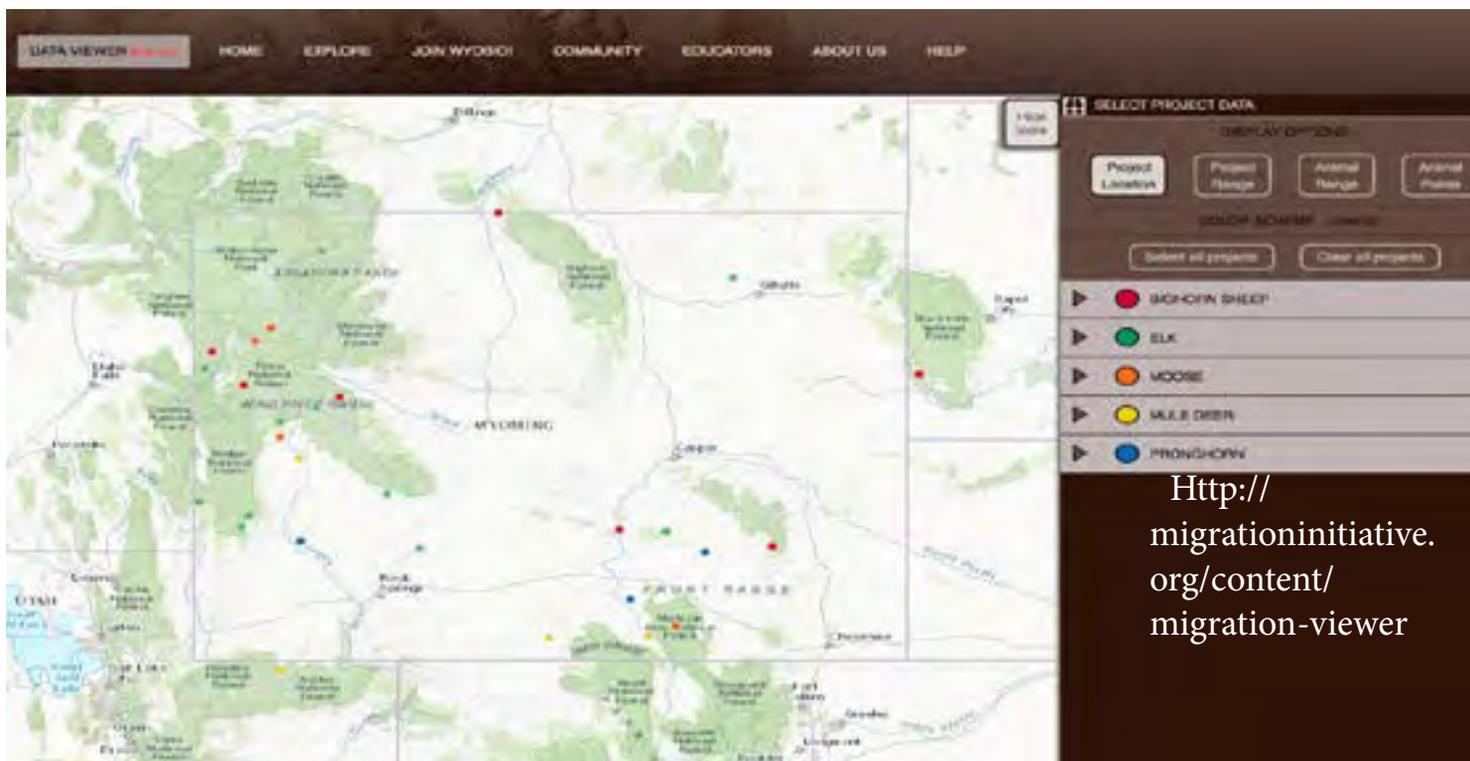
With all this new information we sometimes forget there is a legacy of over 50 years of radio-telemetry studies that have occurred in

Wyoming. Some of these studies pioneered new techniques and others documented movements and habitat use in more detail than had ever been possible.

Did you know that Keven Hurley monitored bighorn sheep in the early 1980's or that Doug McWhirter studied bighorns along the South Fork of the Shoshone in the early 1990's? With help from the Wyoming Governor's Big Game Coalition, WMI co-founder Bill Rudd has been working with many of Wyoming's wildlife professionals to locate the historical information and make it available to the public. Sometimes looking backwards provides a clearer way forward, and it is our belief that WMI's efforts to archive and share these studies will also provide a more complete picture of Wyoming's wildlife resources.

The WMI is currently collecting data from past radio-collar studies and adding it to our on line Migration Viewer. If you have not seen this viewer it can be explored on our website at [www.migrationinitiative.org](http://www.migrationinitiative.org). The viewer allows users to explore radio-collared studies and animate movements of individual animals from each study or just learn more about the research or monitoring that occurred at the time. WMI hopes to have the historical data on line in the next year.

All of this work is in service of the Wyoming Migration Initiative mission: "Advancing the understanding, appreciation, and conservation of Wyoming's migratory ungulates by conducting innovative research and sharing scientific information through public outreach."





## Taylor's Story 2016 Winner of the Grizzly Outfitters Youth Hunt

Grizzly Outfitters, Cole & Elaine Benton, donate several youth hunts each year to various organizations. They feel getting kids involved in hunting, nature, and the great outdoors is very special. One such hunt was donated to the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation for their fund raiser June 2016 in Casper. A 12 year old lady by the name of Taylor Fazio won a completely donated cow hunt with us. Cole had a great day with Taylor and her dad, Peter. She did harvest her elk and this is her story on how it all happened.

“This was my first time out hunting and I was equally as nervous as I was excited. We

headed out that night and made it to the ranch just in time for dinner. We ate with Mr. Benton, his wife, some of their guides, and a few other hunters that were there. When we had finished dinner, it was straight to bed. We had an early morning. The next morning we got ready and took off. We had been driving for a bit when we caught sight of a small herd of elk in a large dish, but there was no way to get to them. We drove a little further, and saw a huge herd of around 140 elk on the side of a ridge, bedded down. We snuck over to them, up and down cuts in the mountain, through a few basins, and got up on the ridge across from them. There were some big bulls. Mr. Benton and I lay prone on the top of the ridge while my dad and Ed (our other guide) stayed behind. Mr. Benton had me set

horned bulls, cows, and calves bedded down off to the side. We laid there for 45 minutes waiting for one to jump up. Suddenly a cow got up. I followed her across the ridge with the scope, but by the time I was ready to shoot, she had made her way into the larger herd. Then the bulls got up and the others began to follow. Mr. Benton then pointed out a cow tailing the others. I got ready to shoot, and she gave me a great broadside shot. I slowly squeezed the trigger, and BANG, I shot. I was shaking so bad I hit her in the neck. At first we thought I had missed her because we saw dirt fly behind her. It turned out the bullet had just gone straight through. Everyone was ecstatic, I had just gotten my first animal, and it was an elk! We then went to retrieve it, and it was amazing.”





# GRIZZLY OUTFITTERS, LLC

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## Montana Trophy Mule Deer, Antelope and Elk Hunts

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Montana Outfitter #7296

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Welcome to Grizzly Outfitters, LLC. Our specialty is Wyoming and Montana trophy mule deer, antelope, and elk hunts. Grizzly Outfitters has been in business for over 25 years. We offer excellent quality animals as our repeat clients can testify. Our hunt area is exclusive on 245,000 acres in one block covering both Wyoming and Montana. We have a complete record keeping program and acquire yearly records on each animal taken. The teeth are analyzed to determine age, weights are taken, location of harvest, and the condition of the animal are all recorded. We at Grizzly Outfitters, LLC pride ourselves in having some of the best guides. Pepper, Tyler, Pat, Jess, Colby, Adrian, Ed, and Brad have all been involved in our operation for many years. They know and understand the game patterns and the terrain.

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

Our hunts are four days hunted on private, BLM, and State lands. You will be guided 2x1 or 1x1 which ever

you choose with four wheel drive pickups and on foot. These are spot and stalk hunts. We offer both rifle and archery hunts. We can handle any type of hunt regardless of your age or physical condition.



Our main lodging is the Cabin Creek Lodge, which is our personal residence, and the Squaw Creek Camp is used for the Wyoming season. We offer excellent accommodations with all the comforts of home. We

employ two full time cooks, so be ready to gain some weight with our home style meals.





# Coues Deer Hunt in Hermosillo, Mexico

## By James Rinehart

It felt strange to be flying into Hermosillo, MX to go hunting instead of Reno for the Wild Sheep Foundation convention, but this was my chance to hunt the Coues deer in Mexico, so with bags and gun in hand, I breezed through customs and the military gun check point. Erasmo Levya, owner of Del Pitic

Outfitters and my guide and good friend Dave Segal of K Bar Z guest Ranch in Cody had ensured that things would go very smooth.

We stopped for lunch in a great fresh seafood restaurant (Hermosillo is just over 1 hour to Baja coast) then completed the 2 hour drive to the ranch. While a very humble ranch house, it was very clean and had all you could ask for with running water and a hot shower! Great food and plenty of it. The locals are always such great hosts.

The first morning my guide decided a bit of a climb was in order to glass quite a large area of the ranch. Coues tend to come to water regularly in this area so we glassed the area around a stock

pond/reservoir. As many folks know or have heard, Coues can be quite hard to locate in the brush and trees! After a few hours glassing we turned up this great buck and we bet he was going to head for water after chasing some does around. The does headed for the reservoir and so were we. After a short wait, our buck showed up and it was over quick.

This ranch about 2 hours southwest of Hermosillo has excellent Coues, and this 115 B&C is testimony to that. The rest of our trip was spent helping the other hunter get a great archery Coues and looking for my second deer. Thanks to Dave Segall of K-Z Ranch in Cody and Del-Pitic Outfitters in Hermosillo, Mexico for this wonderful hunt opportunity.



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THESE PHOTOS WERE ALL TAKEN IN THE 2016 SEASON



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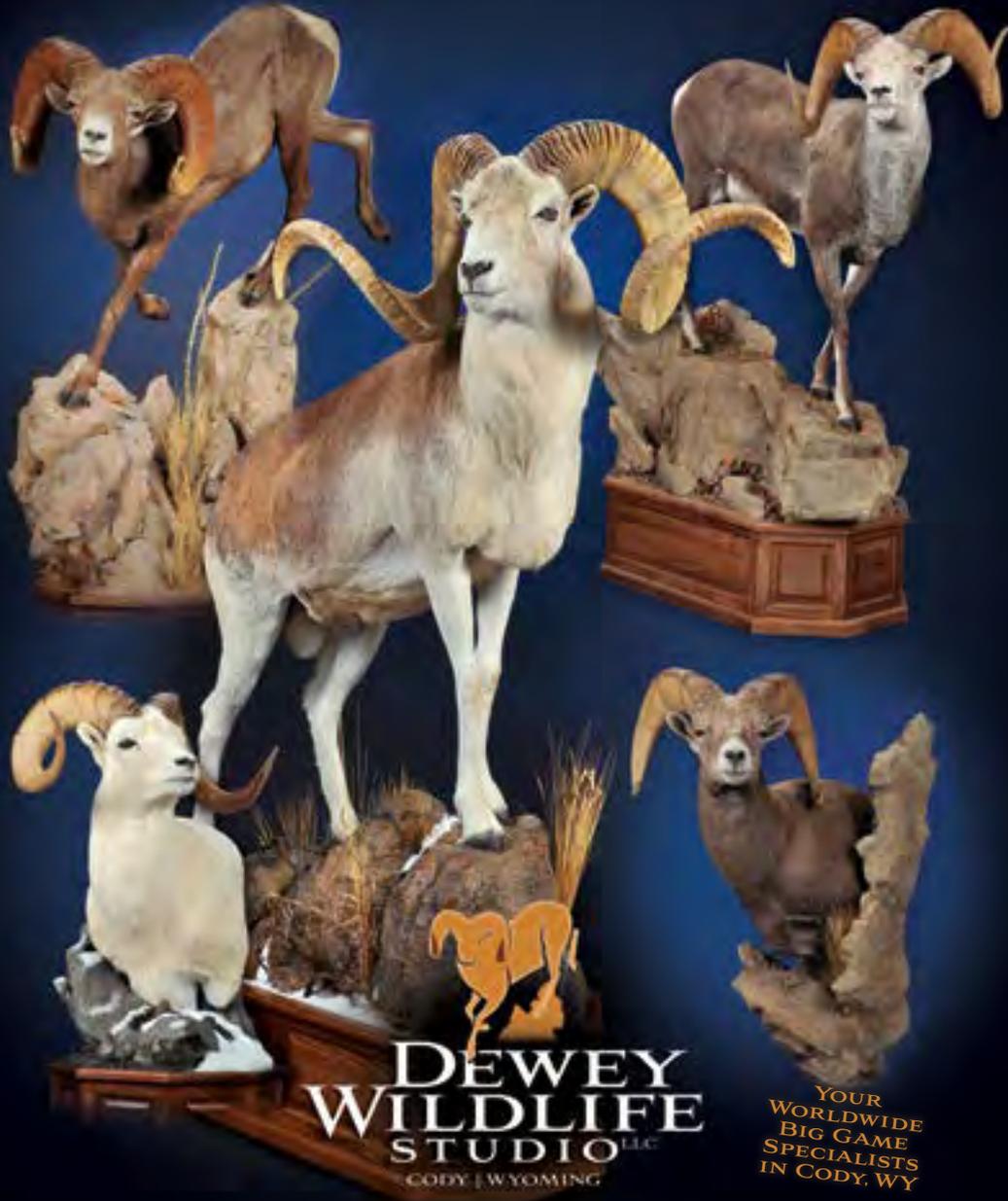
[www.wyomingwildsheep.org/membership.asp](http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/membership.asp)

## Coming in the Fall 2017 Issue!

Hero Keith Stansell's  
Desert Big Horn Hunt  
Convention Results  
Grant in Aid Reports  
Ferris Guzzler Project



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Join us for our annual banquet/convention in Casper, WY on June 2-3, 2017. Registration information can be found inside.

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