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# The **RAMPAGE**

Spring 2021

Features

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Katie Cheesbrough-Executive Director

## Contact us at:

[info@www.wyomingwildsheep.org](mailto:info@www.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:

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Cody, WY 82414

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Cover Photo- North Fork of the Shoshoni River by Ross Gorman

## Address Changes

Become a member to receive your own copy of the RamPage. Dues are \$40 per year or \$750 for a Life Membership. Subscribe at: <https://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store.aspx>

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## Advertising Rates

Full-Page \$500  
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Donations netting WY-WSF >2500 entitle donor to a free full page ad in the next 2 issues of The Rampage. Ads must be received in camera ready format by 09/25 & 3/5!!



# 2021-2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 4-5, 2021  
Annual Convention  
Casper, WY

June 17-18, 2021  
Wyoming Big Horn Sheep Summit  
Burgess Junction, WY

June 24-26, 2021  
WSF Chapter & Affiliates  
Lewiston, ID

Dec 3-4, 2021  
Board/Membership Meeting  
Laramie, WY

January 13-16, 2022  
WSF Banquet/Convention  
Reno, NV

## Membership Renewal

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

<https://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store.aspx>

## 2021 Governor's License Sales Totals

2021 Sale Location	2021 LICENSE SALES	2020 LICENSE SALES
WSF	\$120,000.00	\$105,000.00
Eastern	\$200,000.00	\$94,000.00
Midwest	5/1/2021	\$90,000.00
Iowa	\$135,000.00	\$107,000.00
WY	6/5/2021	\$110,000.00
Total	\$455,000.00	\$506,000.00

## New Life Members

- 606 Bert Fortner
- 607 Jim Hollister
- 608 Dan Thiele
- 609 Timothy Kunkel
- 610 Steve Quisenberry
- 611 Gus Delaporte
- 612 Joe Peachy

Wyoming WSF would like to thank, and recognize, Life Members who have signed up since the Fall 2020 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:

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


If you would be interested in signing up or upgrading to Life Member or Ramshorn Society Life Membership status with WY-WSF, please visit our store or membership pages on the website.

**We thank all of our past, current, and future Life and Ramshorn Society Life Members!!**

**Dear Member; To save printing costs we send one copy per address. If you would like to receive multiple copies, please contact Dean DiJenno at (307) 213-0998 or [info@www.wyomingwildsheep.org](mailto:info@www.wyomingwildsheep.org).**

*Blast from the Past - RHS Life Member #20, Kevin Hurley astride Ram #23 on the South Fork of the Shoshone in 1985. See it on page 60!*

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**The Life Member Breakfast  
Sat. June 5, 2021 at 7:30 A.M.**



# Executive Director's Report

## By Katie Cheesbrough

In my short time as the Executive Director of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation (WY-WSF), it has become clear to me that we, as a Chapter, just plain get things done. The dedication of the Board of Directors along with the commitment and passion of our membership has been demonstrated to me every day since I came on board. I've had the privilege of seeing you all hard at work on volunteer efforts, banquet preparations during COVID, as well as raising and judiciously allocating funds for the benefit of Wyoming's wild sheep. Lately, I've been struck by how our organization's effectiveness is amplified by our incredible partnerships and collaborations.

Given the impressive history of this Chapter, the partnerships that have been fostered and contributed to our mission over the years are too many to list in this article. However, it is important that we acknowledge that putting and keeping kids and wild sheep on Wyoming's mountains is a big task that requires the work and cooperation of many diverse partners. These collaborations take place on a local, statewide, and national level. These valued relationships further Wyoming's bighorn sheep management and conservation, through population management and habitat projects, supporting important bighorn sheep research, furthering education and outreach programs, promoting our hunting heritage and access, participating in natural resource policy processes, and continued fundraising.

Perhaps one of our most notable and longstanding collaborations is with the Wyoming Game and

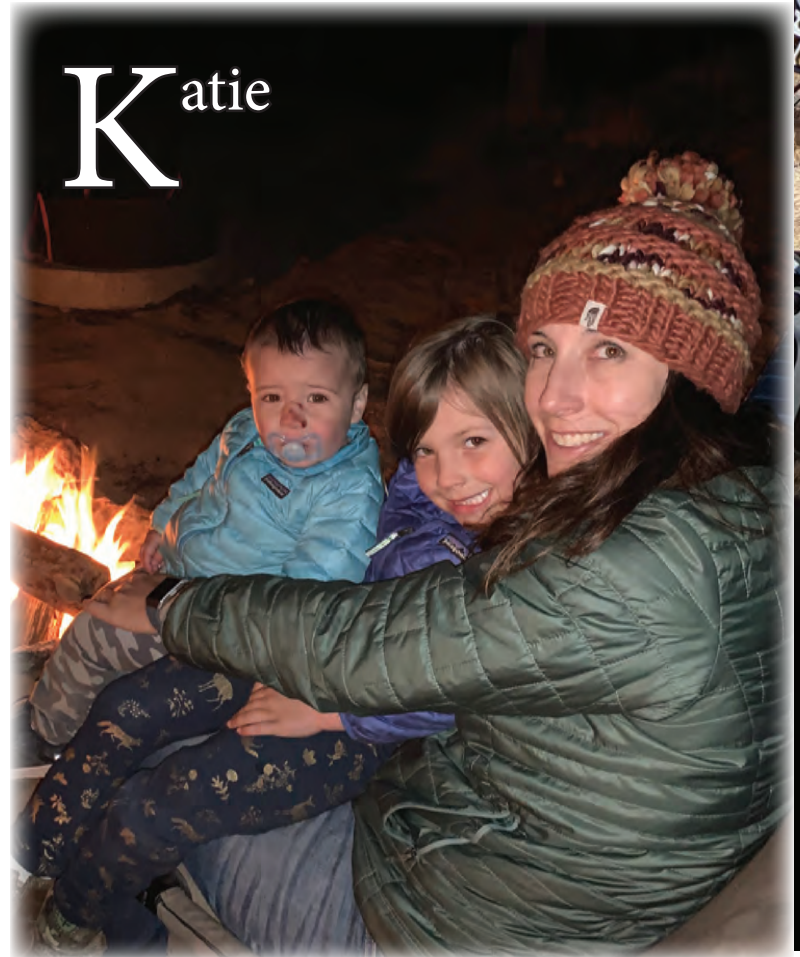
Fish Department (WGFD). The WGFD has the complicated task of managing the state's bighorn sheep populations and has to do so on an ever-decreasing budget. Bighorn sheep management is expensive, but as we all know, worth every penny. As such, we have worked with the WGFD to help raise funds and cover deficits in management costs for almost 40 years. Over the past several years, the WY-WSF and the WGFD have been working towards a Bighorn Sheep Management Needs/Projects document that prioritizes Department bighorn sheep projects for the next 5-10 years. This type of document will help the WY-WSF to raise funds for specific projects and help donors understand where and how their dollars will be spent.

In working with WGFD on this document, the Board recognized the benefit of having a long-term plan to help define goals and priorities to more clearly guide our own efforts as a Chapter. As such, the Board has decided to create a "Conservation Vision," modeled after that of the National WSF

[Http://www.wildsheepfoundation.org/cache/DOC38\\_2018\\_10-26ConsVisions.pdf?20181026021921](http://www.wildsheepfoundation.org/cache/DOC38_2018_10-26ConsVisions.pdf?20181026021921).

It is our goal to create a Conservation Vision that will clearly state the WY-WSF's mission and goals, describe the current status and challenges facing bighorn sheep in Wyoming, discuss long-term conservation strategies to mitigate these challenges, and identify partnerships and collaborative opportunities to work toward implementing these strategies. Additionally, we hope to specify shorter-term projects and priorities to both help raise funds and guide our project funding process. The Board feels that developing this plan will not only focus their efforts as a Board, but will be an important resource for our membership and partners as we continue to work for bighorn sheep conservation in Wyoming.

Katie







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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## BY ZACH MCDERMOTT

**A**s we all wanted closure to 2020 and to welcome in 2021, WY-WSF ended the year on several high notes catapulting us to a great start in the new year.

We were able to focus on growing existing relationships, establishing new ones, and boosting our fundraising efforts.

We continue to have on going collaborations with WY G&F on how to best help our state's iconic species in both science and funding.

We are excited to meet again at Burgess Junction June 17th and 18th which will also include the National Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

In December, we received a real shot in the arm for funding. Thanks to WY-WSF accountant Dirk Montgomery, we applied for the State of Wyoming Endurance Fund grant established to help WY non-profits offset financial shortcomings in 2020. We were awarded \$214K! We set up a sub-committee to help evaluate the best use and allocation of the funds, and also how to leverage them to make that money grow even more.

For 2021, the WY BHS Governor tags have really taken off. At WSF Sheep Week, the tag sold for \$120K (new record) then at the Iowa Chapter Banquet, the tag sold for \$135K, another new record. To top all that, Eastern Chapter decided to take a different approach to help raise even more money. They assembled a raffle of 400 tickets at \$500 each. WY-WSF joined Eastern to assist in the sale of the tickets and tracking. The tickets sold out! \$200K! With the tags sold so far, that is a hell of a lot of money for sheep.

At time of this publication, we plan to hold our summer banquet including our full line up of Live Auction, Silent Auction, Raffles and Kids Events.

We have a great list of Live Auction items highlighted by the final 2021 WY BHS Gov tag, 2 Commissioners tags, Mexico Mule Deer hunt with La Palmosa and a Texas Aoudad hunt with Rowdy McBride.

One relationship we continue to build on and strengthen is with national WSF. WY-WSF has always had a strong presence at WSF Sheep Week with volunteering and sponsoring the Silent Auction. This year due to some unfortunate circumstances, Wyoming had to manage all the raffles at the last minute. And in true WY fashion, we had countless volunteers put their daily lives on hold to help make the raffles a success.

To show their gratitude, Gray Thornton/WSF President, wrote a personalized letter thanking WY-WSF for stepping up to the plate and WSF donated \$2500 to our Conservation Fund.

Gray and his wife, Renee will be attending our event in June and he will be the keynote speaker at the Life Member Breakfast. He will be presenting the theme "One Tent-One Campfire!" We truly are about teamwork and one big sheep family.

**We look forward to seeing everyone in June and having a toast for being together again.**





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## Conservation Fund Update Spring 2021

### Gooch property sale nets 40K investment for the Conservation Fund!!

A special thank you to past board member James Rinehart for his expertise in getting this property transaction finalized and helping Joni and Zach work through the details.

A special thank you to Rusty and Rosemary Gooch for their donations to Wyoming's wild sheep and their future!!

# Conservation Fund Update BY SCOTT BUTLER

In December, your board of directors funded a WY Game and Fish Grant in Aid for a toadflax weed control project in the South Fork of the Shoshone [Cabin Creek], encompassing 400 acres. This project has a total cost of \$53K. Through the WY WSF Conservation Fund the full \$15K request was approved. Other contributing partners include Shoshone NF, WGFD [in kind], Park County Weed and Pest. This is another example of your CF working for Wyoming's wild sheep!!

In February, the Wyoming Chapter of Wild Sheep Foundation received a \$2500 gift from the Wild Sheep Foundation's President and CEO Gray Thorton. The gift to the Conservation Fund is a thank you for the hard work our volunteers did, spur of the moment, to generate over 30,000 raffle tickets during the National Convention in January. These raffles generated \$562,000 for Wild Sheep Foundation's mission. Thank you to all of our members who worked their tails off to benefit wild sheep!

- Jimmy Owens - Lost Creek Outfitters
- Josie Coy - Lost Creek Outfitters
- Meade Dominick - 7 D Outfitters
- Dewayne Dewey - Dewey Wildlife Studios
- Janelle Peterson - Dewey Wildlife Studios
- Josh Taylor - Wyo Back Country Décor
- Jenny Taylor - Wyo Back Country Decor
- Kathryn Harkins - Wyo Back Country Décor
- Nyla Hurley - Wyo Back Country Decor
- Steve & Shirley Brock
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- Gunwerks-Videography
- Landon Michaels
- Nate Robertson
- Cook Moving and Storage-Rich Cook
- Linda Rea - Goodyear Printers
- Andy Schwab - Northern Ag Network
- Loren Schoenborn



Conservation Fund Total = \$374,999.87  
 GIAs funded = \$33,500  
 Life Memberships Awarded = 7

PUTTING AND KEEPING KIDS  
 AND WILD SHEEP  
 ON THE MOUNTAIN!



# JOIN THE FOUNDATION'S RAMSHORN SOCIETY OF LIFE MEMBERSHIP!

The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation has sponsored about Four Million dollars in Bighorn conservation projects since its inception in 1983. Despite our efforts, current Bighorn sheep numbers are at a fraction of their historic numbers in Wyoming, and across the West. Bighorns in the Wyoming core native herd units have been declining since 2014 and the total of 2019 Bighorn sheep licenses issued were the lowest since 1957.

## It is time for immediate action!

Our chapter has created a new level of life membership called the Ramshorn Society. Donations to the Ramshorn Society will be used to immediately fund grant in aid projects designed to stop this downward spiral with our Wyoming Bighorns.

New Ramshorn Society members will receive a donation form, name badge and may choose whether or not they would like to receive a plaque. Ramshorn Society members will receive TWO chances in the annual life member incentive drawing which is held at our annual life member breakfast in June 2021 (you must be present at the breakfast to win). This year's winner will receive a West Texas Aoudad hunt with High West Outfitters to be taken in the Fall of 2021 through the Spring of 2022.

Current Life members who upgrade to the Ramshorn Society will be charged \$500. New members can enroll in the Ramshorn Society for \$1250. Seniors (over 65) will cost \$1000.

Due to the generosity of Weatherby Firearms, Inc, the chapter is offering a chance to win a very special Weatherby Weathermark in 6.5 WBY RPM with one of a kind WY-WSF engraving to all who sign up and pay for Ramshorn Society Life Membership by 8 AM on Saturday, June 5, 2021. You do not need to be present to win the Weatherby drawing.

Please donate today by clicking on our website at: [www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store](http://www.wyomingwildsheep.org/store), mail to P.O. Box 666 in Cody, WY 82414 or call Dean DiJenno at (307) 213-0998. Recurring payment options are also available for this membership.



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Kay Giannola  
Hale Kreycik

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James JR Wetzel  
Gary Butler  
Jo Butler

M.Shawn Nelson  
Rocky Yargas  
Ricky Wilcox  
David Dybvig  
Dale Sims

Jacque Sims  
Jerry Galles  
Chris Otto

Chris Fayville  
Mack Watson  
Marc Zachary  
Jason Radakovich

## Ramshorn Society Members

Tyler Bergien  
Jim Hollister

Leo Goss  
Cari Goss  
Craig Kling  
Travis Bomengen  
Miles Fortner  
Leah Fortner  
Roger Coguill  
Gary Roebling  
Larry McDermott  
Dan Marino  
Steve Kilpatrick  
Mike Pilch  
Terry Dieren  
Rusty Gooch  
Rosemary Gooch



# “My First Deer Hunt”

By Issac Sims, LM#605, Age 11

My name is Isaac Sims.

I went hunting with my Dad (Jacob Sims) and Papa (Dale Sims). We went hunting in Texas.

This is my story:

When we got to Texas we met our outfitter (Sledgehammer Outfitting) and his name was Ron. When I got to my room and we unpacked, we talked and we went out to our blinds and we saw a lot of deer, all female though. We saw one buck but it was a pisky, means small, so we did not shoot it. Then we were trying to pack up and then there it was an 8-point buck. I said, “do you see that buck”, it was like 50 yards away. Dad was looking through his binoculars at the fence so he did not see it. I said move, then I shot and we thought I missed, because his front legs went up so he could jump the fence.

Then he bounced off the fence. We called Ron, then we took some pictures. The next day, Dad and I went to the blind so Dad could get his buck.



We were out all day, does everywhere, but no bucks. We heard some shots 30 minutes later. Ron called telling us Papa got his buck down. Later we went to camp to see Papa’s deer. The next day Dad, Papa and I went to Papa’s blind, not even two seconds later and BAM, Dad got a 10-point buck. But before that, Papa said “that is a monster”! Dad was shaking, it was big. We were all wet so we went back to camp and went to bed for the next day. The next day we went to other

blinds, drove around to see other deer and the area where we were in Texas. We saw tons of turkeys there, next time maybe we can hunt them! It was a great time and a great hunt. This was my first ever hunt and my first deer. I hope next time we go hunting here, my sister can hunt too, but that will be a while, she is only six. But she does go rabbit hunting with me. She loves hunting too. She has her own gun to practice for her first hunting trip with me.





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# “TWO GRANDSONS- TWO LIONS”

By RHS Life Member #30, Cole Benton

Recently we had been seeing some black bears in our area and one of our guides put out three different trail-cams last fall. We never did pick up a bear on one, but to our surprise the cameras caught two different lions.

After a good snow in January, I started looking for lion tracks. On January 9th I found a set and immediately called John Long to see if he and his hounds were available. John could not come out that day, but said he could meet me the following morning. I called my son Tyler to see if either of the grandkids were available in case we were fortunate enough to tree the cat.

The next morning one of our guides, Colby Richens, brought my grandsons Kale and Kade out and we met with John, his wife Cyd and John's hounds.

We spent most of the morning following tracks, but did not turn the dogs loose until about 10:30 that morning when we found a fresh one. I already had permission from all of the landowners between us and the Powder River to run lions if we cut tracks.

This lion crossed three different landowner's property

including some of our own.

Once we turned the dogs loose, we treed the cat very quickly. As John and Cyd were tying up the dogs so my oldest grandson, Kale could shoot the cat, he jumped and ran again. This time it was a short run.

Sixteen-year-old Kale had a hunt of a lifetime and took a beautiful 140# tom.

Now we had one very happy grandson and one that was not so happy. I found out later that the boys had flipped a coin to see who got to purchase the license to hunt the lion.



Kale Benton



It was probably not going to happen, but I was hoping before spring to find another set of tracks for Kade.

The night of January 18th we got a skiff of snow. The following morning, I started looking for tracks and found a set that was made the day before. I called John Long right away to see if he was available, he was. Called my son Tyler to see if they could

pull Kade out of school. Tyler was not available, but called our daughter-in-law Jackie and she quickly left work, got Kade out of school, purchased a license, turned Kade over to John and they headed for the ranch along with John's son Dave and helper Cecil.

All of us met and quickly turned the dogs loose. Unfortunately, the weather had warmed up

and all of the south facing slopes burned off. The dogs had not run the tracks very far and they had to start working bare ground. The dogs were good and worked the bare ground until they jumped the cat. The chase was on, but within an hour they had this 145# tom treed and Kade had his lion. Both cats were taken with Tyler's .220 Swift.

Special thanks to John, Cyd and Dave Long, and their helper Cecil along with Brad Borgialli, and Colby Richins, and of course John's dogs.

Unfortunately, neither of the boys' parents were available to be with them on their hunts.

Two runs, two lions, and two grandsons. Kale, 16 years old is WY WSF life member #230 and Kade, 14 years old is WY WSF life member #330.



Kade Benton



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# “Beating the Odds”

## By Bruce Perryman

We've heard the advice, apply, apply, apply! It's a simple strategy and it sometimes works. You can't win if you name is not in the game... right? Yeah, it might entail spending a few bucks to enter but the reward is priceless should your name be drawn. Such was my recent 2020 sheep tag in Utah. I'd been applying and building points hoping to someday draw a coveted desert sheep tag. In Utah you can apply for both Bighorns and Desert sheep however you must pay for an annual hunting license to put in. I do my share of area research and found a new area for Non-residents in 2020. The Unit holds California bighorns which I hadn't had an opportunity to pursue yet. Around the middle of May, I received an email that starts off with the word "Congratulations" which is what most of us sheep hunters crave to read during draw result week. I had been drawn for the only Non-Resident sheep tap in this unit.

Not knowing much about the unit, I started my research. I was pleasantly surprised to find out that this unit had an over abundance of Rams! There were an estimated 90 rams to 70 ewes. Tags had been increased from 4 the previous two years to 14 in 2020, thus the single NR permit. The management strategy was trying to limit the urge for love struck rams from venturing out of the traditional sheep area in search of females which would put the heard at risk of interaction with domestic sheep. This is a common concern for most sheep heard in the west and in our State of Wyoming as well. Hey, I was more than willing to do my part in support of their management

plans. When the dust settled, I discovered that there were 1,308 other NR applications for this single tag..... I was able to visit with the area sheep biologist who was very helpful and begin to understand the sheep herd dynamics. It seems that the average age class of rams one would expect to harvest would be 6.5 yr. old. The unit was split into two seasons to disburse the sheep hunters, I was in the later group which started on Halloween

entire area. It was rocky, rough and had limited water. The highest peak was around 9,200 feet, so it had plenty of verticalness to offer. After two days of exploring, searching and 5 miles of hiking, we did manage to locate a very nice single ram which had a dark chocolate cape. The fire was lit and preparation for opening day was too far away.

For the hunt, I had planned to take a wall tent to base out of for the scouting trip, I wanted the ability to relocate to different parts of the unit quickly, I opted for my pop-up pickup camper and then towed two ATV as many USFS trail heads had a 50" max width requirement. My son, Cooper and hunting buddy Dave, agreed to accompany me on this trip. Can't have too many eyes to help spot sheep in my opinion. The setup worked out marvelously as we relocated twice to new areas of the unit during our two-day pre-opening day scouting trip. We found sheep on day two and some decent rams

the evening before opening day.

day. Most past sheep hunters did day hikes from the many trail heads and have had good success.

As I was not familiar with this hunt area, an August scouting trip was planned. I was hoping to fly to Salt Lake, rent a jeep and some ATVs to explore the unit and trail heads. I was able to land the Jeep but discovered the only jeeps produced without trailering hitches are found at rental car outfits. Thus, it was long hikes morning and evening. The unit consist mostly of USFS lands which was recovering from a 2008 burn that consumed 80% of the

**O**ur plan would be rise early and hike up the ridge while still dark using the moon light from a full moon.

Our hopes of avoiding the other sheep hunters from bumping the rams we had put to bed worked out. As the sun rose, we located a beautiful ram across a deep gorge





about 1,000 yds away. He was with a band of about 8 ewes which indicated this might be the top ram in the area. As we were debating the 2-hour hike down, then up and over to his locations, we spotted a single dark coated ram that was coming our direction. He was right in the "tweener" category a solid  $\frac{3}{4}$  curl decently heavy and gorgeous chocolate cape. We opted to sit and watch him come down the steep gorge, and head up toward the ridge we were glassing from. The closer he got, the better he looked. When he popped out 100 yds in front of us it gave us a great opportunity to look him over.

We've all heard the old saying "Don't pass up on day one what you'd be happy to take home on the last day". Thus, I made the decision to take the shot. By the time this revelation occurred, to get set up, settled in, we ranged the ram at just over 300 yards, he was quartering away while walking up the ridge. I touched off the 7mm and he dropped from sight. After congratulatory high fives, we ventured up to where we thought the ram was. He lay slightly down the steep slope wedged in some brush which thankfully prevented him from rolling down the nasty steep gorge. We drug him up onto the top of the ridge where we took several minutes admiring this beautiful animal, the area vistas and the overall experience.

After savoring this time, we casually caped the ram out, boned out the meat, loaded our packs and eased our way back down the mountain. The ram was aged at 7.5 yrs. old and was very good representative of a Utah California Bighorn.

Now It's time to apply for that Desert Tag.

Who knows, it might just happen that I will beat the odds..... again!





# “The Way it All Began”

By RHS Life Member #6, Freddie Goetz

**A**s I hung up the phone after talking with the RamPage magazine editor, Dean DiJenno, I thought about the article he had just asked me to write. I didn't get to go on my Sheep Safari this year because of the Covid-19 so Dean suggested I write and tell you all about the early days of our Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation. What I am about to write is what my eyes, ears, and mind have experienced over the past 46 years.

I started getting the urge to learn about wild sheep in 1976, seven years before the chapter was founded. I made my first trip to Dubois to photograph wild sheep and I was hooked from then on.

In 1982 around the end of December, I was staying at the Stage Coach Inn up in Dubois with my good friends Jim and Ben Wilson. We had just come in for the night when John Suda yelled at me to come over to the office. When I got over there, John asked me if I would like to help start a Wyoming Wild Sheep Chapter. Of course I told him that I would love to. We went over to the Rustic Pine for happy hour then back to the office and John introduced me to the guys who were starting the chapter. In attendance that night were; Ron Ball, Alex Wolfer, Dave Steiger, Kent Stockton, John Suda and Myself. We had a real good jam session telling sheep stories and working on how we were going to get the Chapter going. We decided to meet again the following winter in December and to bring some friends along who were interested in Bighorn Sheep.

So in the winter of 1983 the Wyoming Foundation for North American Wild Sheep held it's first meeting. We elected officers and board members. Although I cannot remember how many people were in attendance, two names stand

out in my memory. Fritz Meyer and Lynn Stewart were there at the beginning and they are still active in our chapter today.

After having our next two winter meetings in Dubois we decided to hold a summer meeting as well. The very first summer meeting was held at the Holiday Inn in Thermopolis. Then we decided that the winter and summer meetings should be moved around the state to see if we could interest more people in joining. Here is a list of the towns that we have held a meeting in: Dubois, Jackson, Riverton, Lander, Thermopolis, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sheridan, Rock Springs, Casper, Saratoga, Douglas and Wheatland. As you can see we have pretty much covered the state in the last 38 years.

been the bow's fault. We had a Life Member's drawing for a Model 280 rifle that Jim donated. My ticket was number 10 and Jim Collins had number 6. He wanted to trade very badly because I had his life member # while he had mine. I told him no believing #10 was the lucky number and guess what? I won that rifle with Jim's life member number 10! I do not think he has ever forgotten.

Another winter meeting in Cheyenne was not our best fund raiser because it was held the same weekend that the Wyoming Cowboy football team was playing in a bowl game in Las Vegas and EVERYBODY went out there to watch our Cowboys beat the UCLA Bruins. I did manage to get in a little trouble during this meeting though.



We had a summer meeting at Jeff Reynold's ranch near Douglas one year and we held an archery shoot at different animal targets. One of them was a Bighorn sheep and my shot was not the best because I arrowed it in the head. It must have

My good friend, Jack Finnerty had harvested his Bighorn sheep that year and as I introduced him to the crowd as one of our spotters. I told the crowd that he was the first person to ever receive a BHS Landowners permit. The Game and Fish guys were howling so I quickly



went on to explain that he had taken his sheep on his own land.

Somewhere along the way we decided to shift our annual fund raiser from December to June mostly so that we could be sure of good weather and people could for sure make the event. Although I do not remember the year or the city where we held our first Summer fund raiser, I do remember the uproar about picking the date. What ever date we threw out there, someone was busy haying or had a graduation. So after a lot of discussion we settled on holding it the first weekend in June and our winter meeting the first weekend in December, a tradition we still hold to today.

In 2003/2004 Jim Collins was President and after I retired in February 2004 I decided to book a fishing trip to Canada and guess what, I booked it for the first weekend in June. When I finally figured out my mistake and called Jim to see if he would change the banquet, you do not want to have me repeat what he told me. This was the only event that I missed for many years with Wyoming Wild Sheep.

My memories and stories about our foundation could not fit into this issue of the RamPage but I will share a couple more with you before calling it a day. You have already heard the short version of how the foundation was established and we used the FNAWS designation along with the National chapter and most of the affiliates. Well some of the National chapter founders got to arguing and it was decided we could no longer use the term FNAWS. I think we actually ended up with a better name when we changed to Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation.

I have kept all of the newsletters that were mailed out over the years and they have been uploaded onto our web site for all to enjoy. You should take an hour and read about the chapter doings over all of these years. If you do not see

what you are interested about in one of our newsletters, look me up at the Summer banquet and we will reminisce, if I can remember.

Lastly, I want to bring you up to date on my sheep adventures this winter. The rams in Sybille Canyon seem to be going great as are the ewes and lambs. In fact, one day up there I observed 11 ewes and they had a total of 9 lambs with them. If we could have this success for a few more years our population would be great.

Cole Hansen from G&F at Sybille called to see if I would like to photograph a sheep trapping. He did not have to ask me twice and on February 1, 2021 I was up at Johnson Creek reservoir along with 7 G&F personnel. The helicopter came in with 2 ewes hanging in their net baskets, dropped them and went out looking for more. As I took photos, it was interesting to watch the guys and gals checking the sheep over. Each sheep received an ear tag and a neck tracking collar and then they were turned loose. The samples are sent over to the Wyoming State lab in Laramie and the results will tell us what diseases these sheep are carrying, how much body fat they are carrying and if they are pregnant.

This is all important information for the health of the herd and in case we ever want to transplant any of these sheep somewhere else in Wyoming.

That helicopter crew were kept really busy and after they netted the first three, the pilot told us he was headed over to Hay Canyon to net some sheep for another G&F project led by Martin Hicks. The sheep in Hay Canyon are descendants of sheep we transplanted in there during January 2007. In fact, the ram that I shot in 2014 was a 6 month old lamb when he was transplanted in there. He was born in Montana and raised in Wyoming.

We have a lot to be proud of as Wyoming Wild Sheep foundation members, "Putting and Keeping Kids and Wild Sheep on the Mountain". A legacy for our children and grandchildren to enjoy and treasure. Well, I am going to quit for now and just hope that 2021 will be a better year for all of us so that I can continue to travel to NW Wyoming and conduct my Sheep Safaris.

Till next year,

**Keep thinking and helping Wyoming Bighorn Sheep.**



Photo by Freddie Goetz





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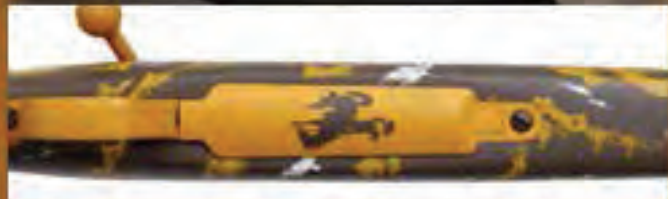
# Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation 2021 Cowpoke Raffle

## 2 Prizes! 300 Tickets will be sold at \$50 each

Winners choice on the prizes. The contest is open to everyone and anyone can win. All proceeds from this contest go towards Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation grant in aid project funding. The drawing will be held at our annual banquet in Casper, WY on June 5, 2021. You need not be present to win. The gun winner may pick up the firearm in Casper, WY during the banquet or pay for shipment to the FFL of their choice.

### Weatherby Mark V Cowpoke edition in 6.5 WEY RPM

If you'll be out exploring Wyoming's great hunting opportunities instead of sitting in the bleachers cheering on the Wyoming Cowboys this fall, you can still show off your Wyoming pride! This rifle is loud and proud to be made in Wyoming! If you draw a Ram tag or plan to hunt Cougars in Wyoming, this rifle can reach out and poke'm. Mark V® Rifles are guaranteed to shoot a 3-shot group of .99" or less at 100 yards (SUB-MOA) when used with Weatherby factory or premium ammunition. TRIGGERTECH Field™ Trigger provides a true zero-creep break, extremely short over-travel, and is externally adjustable from 2.5-5 lbs. Stainless steel corrosion resistant components ensure consistent trigger pulls from shot to shot. 54 degree bolt lift is the shortest in the industry and allows for faster chambering on follow-up shots and great bolt-to-scope clearance. The Accubrake ST™ slimline muzzle brake uses standard suppressor compatible threads. It significantly reduces felt recoil by up to 53% and comes with a flush fitting thread protector.



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[wyomingwildsheep.org/store.aspx](http://wyomingwildsheep.org/store.aspx)

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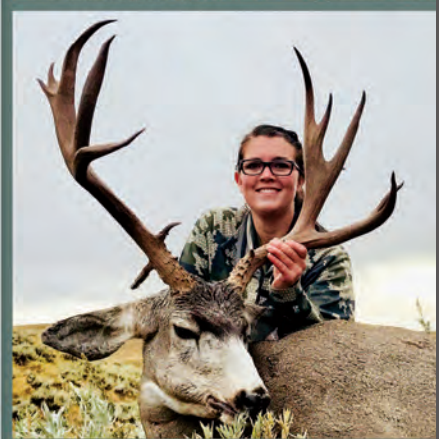


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We are strictly a fair chase, legal operation who loves the wildlife and the opportunities we have to pursue them. We study and live with the game, we hunt and love sharing our experiences and knowledge with others.



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Lori

Teachers of the Year!  
Lori Sincavage And Cecile Prine



Cecile



We chose Lori because she has helped so much over the past 5 years with the education program at the NBSC. She has volunteered on our education committee and provided tons of feedback on the lessons and activities we have created over the years. She also brings her students to visit the center, tour Torrey Valley and either borrows an education trunk or invites me to her classroom every year. She does an awesome job teaching her students about bighorn sheep and conservation.

Lori Sincavage was born and raised in Massachusetts, where she earned her bachelor of science degree in elementary education at Bridgewater State University in 1989. She taught for 26 years in the same school system where she was educated from kindergarten through high school graduation.

During these years, she taught 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade, finishing up her career as a math specialist for K-5.

After retirement, Lori and her husband, Bill, felt a strong desire to spend more time in the west and in 2015, moved to Dubois. Lori began substituting at the Dubois Elementary School and was appointed to a 5th grade position in 2016. Lori enjoys reading, horseback riding, hiking, cross-country skiing, as well as gardening and home improvements.

The 2nd Outstanding Bighorn Teacher for 2020 is Cecile Prine who teaches at Lander Middle School. She was chosen because each spring she spends 3 full days bringing the junior high students to Dubois to tour the sheep center and then out to Torrey Valley to learn about bighorn sheep biology, ecology and conservation.

*Submitted by Karen Sullivan from the National Bighorn Sheep Center*





## “National Bighorn Sheep Center Thanks the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation” By Sara Bridge



Late 2020 the National Bighorn Sheep Center, located in Dubois, Wyoming, welcomed a new Executive Director. This mirrored the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, who introduced Katie Cheesbrough. During this transition, the National Bighorn Sheep Center takes pause to reflect on its partnership with the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation (WY-WSF).

The Center, who has considered itself the educational and outreach arm of wild sheep-related matters, thanks the WWSF for its support and partnership. As we enter a new year, we construct a vision of an even stronger partnership, expanded programs, and increased visibility. Equipped with a mission to educate about bighorn sheep, wildlife, and wild lands, the Sheep Center offers educational programs around bighorns and the outdoors. In 2019, the Center launched “Camp Bighorn” inviting youth ages 8-12 from across the nation to learn about wildlife and outdoor skills in the Whiskey Mountain Basin, prime bighorn habit. Operated by only one full-time staff yet supported by a host of local volunteers, the Center guides fifteen children in a place-based educational experience. Campers embark on ethnobotany hikes led by longtime Dubois outfitters. After an introduction of bighorn biology and adaptations, campers explore trails in the area, prompted with questions such as, “what makes this a great place to live for a bighorn?” Canoeing and archery fills afternoons. Each camper leaves Camp Bighorn with a keepsake field journal, filled with their memoirs and sketches that depict their experience. The connection to wildlife and the outdoors, though harder to capture in a field journal, will remain with these youth forever.

The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation makes this possible. We thank the Foundation for funding and providing volunteer support. Individual WY-WSF board members have

graciously become, “2021 Camp Bighorn Sponsors,” gifting to our scholarship program so that children from all financial backgrounds can experience this opportunity. In 2021, Katie Cheesbrough and Steve Kilpatrick (former WY-WSF Executive Director), will join campers for a session on bighorn habitat and the use of prescribed burns as an effective management tool. Steve’s pyro techniques captivate campers who, then engaged, can then absorb information around the process and its impact on bighorns.

The WY-WSF joins us in acknowledging the importance of planting the seed of conservation in youth at a young age. In 2018, the organization added to their mission “keeping KIDS and wild sheep on the mountain”. A testament to their execution of this mission, the Foundation has contributed over \$68,000 to the Sheep Center. The funding has allowed us to not only launch and expand Camp Bighorn, but also increase seasonal staff, enhance our technological capability for virtual programs, and have Sheep Center staff visit classrooms across Wyoming to share the bighorn narrative.

By educating youth, we aim to instill a lifelong appreciation for wildlife and wild lands, and thereby promote conservation. Youth who attend Camp Bighorn will become the next biologists launching campaigns to stop invasive cheatgrass from destroying bighorn habitat. They will become the wildlife managers deciding to remove and relocate sheep due to proximity or potential commingling with domestic livestock. The journey starts here. Post Camp Bighorn, the Center continues to engage campers through quarterly newsletters that involve bighorn educational activities and curriculum refreshers from camp.

Below are the winners from a logo contest put on by the Center, demonstrating the imprint the experience leaves on youth.



Betty Neidens, 2020 Camper



Adlyn Even, 2020 Camper

The Sheep Center aims to construct curriculum pertinent to all age groups, ranging from Camp Bighorn (ages 8-12) to middle-school and high school. Through the Outstanding Bighorn Teacher Award that launched in 2019, the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation awards a teacher who has made remarkable strides in bighorn education. Our first award recipient, Brady Samuelson from Riverton Middle School, has brought his students to the Center since 2014. Brady’s group completes a semester long project about the alpine ecosystem including Wyoming’s iconic bighorn sheep. We recognize Lori Sincavage, Dubois Elementary school teacher, and former board member as one of our 2020 Outstanding Bighorn teachers. She is applauded for her work teaching students about wildlife and conservation. She has also helped immensely with the development of the education program here at the National Bighorn Sheep Center. CeCe Prine from Lander Middle School was also chosen



in 2020 for her passion to educate students about wildlife and wildlands. Through this program, we applaud education around bighorns and look forward to seeing this program expand.

Alongside our educational programs, the Center offers a museum exhibit and guided wildlife tours. The Center was constructed parallel to the onset of an all-age pneumonia related die-off in the 1990s of our iconic Whiskey Mountain Herd. Dubois once was home to the largest wintering herd of bighorns in North America; the herd was a source for transplants across the Rocky Mountain West. Biologists estimated sheep populations to be over 2,000. Today fewer than 500 are counted. We invite tourists and locals to a renowned museum exhibit, sharing and explaining the dismal narrative of the Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Herd, presenting glimmers of hope for its restoration. Our Center is filled with many gifts from the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation (visit us to see our replica of the world's largest Rocky Mountain bighorn horns gifted to us by the WWSF in 2019!). Walking through our museum simulates bighorn habitat. Decorated with full taxidermy mounts of the four subspecies found in North America, the museum offers cross-section exhibits of bighorn skulls and horns.

Staying the afternoon? An interpretive guide can introduce you to our herd in the Torrey Valley.

The Center looks forward to further working with Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation expanding our education to youth throughout Wyoming and the nation. We are forever indebted to the sheep supporters throughout Wyoming and the United States for their support and shared vision.

**“The NBSC was created to educate people regarding Bighorn Sheep thus promoting conservation while the WY-WSF seeks to promote and enhance populations of Wyoming Wild Sheep through “boots-on-the ground” projects. Together, we have a multi-pronged approach to bighorn conservation.”**

**-Sara Bridge, Executive Director,  
National Bighorn Sheep Center**



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## Camp Bighorn 2021

*Outdoor, nature-based, educational day-camp*  
Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp, Dubois WY

**Youth develop a new set of resources in an outdoor setting, creating a lifelong imprint on their relationship to the environment, wildlife, and natural spaces.** All Camp Bighorn programs focus on themes and experiences around bighorn sheep and the conservation of wildlife and wild lands.

*“At Camp Bighorn, children actively observe and interact with the subjects they are studying, thereby increasing their awareness and relationship to them. This carries to other areas of their academics and extracurricular activities...”*

**Audience: Youth ages 8-12**

**When: August 9th - 12th, 2021 from 9AM - 4PM**

**Where: Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp, Dubois, Wyoming**

**What: 4-days of educational and physical activities. Field journaling, wild edible and medicinal plant ethnobotany, wildlife art, water ecology, petroglyph exploration, fly fishing, kayaking and much more!**

**Cost: \$250 per child (Scholarships Available!) price includes lunch and snacks**

Register for Camp Bighorn today, space is limited due to COVID-19 protocol!

[www.bighorn.org](http://www.bighorn.org) | P.O. Box 1435 | 10 Bighorn Lane | Dubois, WY 82513 | 307-455-3429



*Photos from 2019; COVID-19 safety protocol is observed at camp; masks and social-distancing in effect*

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# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Bighorn Sheep Nutrition and Disease Project Winter 2021 Update Rachel Smiley, Britany Wagler, and Kevin Monteith

A similar story emerged from the Lamb Survival Study in the Whiskey herd as last year. Ewe 107 was our only collared mother whose lamb made it into 2021—this, interestingly, was the same situation as last year. She was also the last ewe to give birth in the Whiskey herd both years. She lost her lamb to predation in mid-February two years in a row. The similarity of the circumstances both years is coincidental in some ways, but sheds light onto the difficulties the Whiskey lambs face in their first year of life.

In October, Bill Sincavage photographed this collared lamb on winter range, with apparent signs of pneumonia around his nose. This wasn't a good sign, but still he survived late into the fall and then into the winter. Mild weather allowed

this lamb and his mother to stay high on Whiskey Mountain in December, so we were not able to catch the pair during our bi-annual captures. Without the ability to catch this lamb in December, we lost the opportunity to collect information on his disease status, how much he grew over the summer, or his and mom's nutritional condition. Fortunately, with both ewe and lamb collared, we were still able to track their movements from behind the computer (though we'd hate to call ourselves armchair biologists!).

In mid-January, we noticed the ewe and lamb had separated. The ewe made her way quickly up to Middle Mountain where she spends most of the summer. The lamb slowly made his way back to winter range. Eventually he made it to Torrey Rim, where many of the other collared

sheep were wintering. Curious about the cause for mom and lambs separation, Wyoming Game & Fish biologist, Greg Anderson, went to check on the lamb. He saw the lamb and noted it had a pronounced limp and that it was slightly separated from the rest of the herd. He did not see any coughing or signs of pneumonia, but the limp was concerning. Though we cannot be sure that he cleared his pneumonia infection, it is promising that Greg did not observe the same symptoms Bill saw.

Unsurprisingly, a week later we got a notification from the lamb's collar alerting us the lamb had died. Likely compromised by his limp, the lamb was easy prey for a mountain lion, which was made clear by lion tracks in the snow surrounding the carcass, hemorrhaging, and puncture





wounds in the back of his neck. We collected what was left of the carcass for further investigation at the Wyoming State Vet Lab. With that, none of the eleven lambs that we collared as newborns in the Whiskey herd survived the year.

Recruitment in the Jackson herd provides more hope for Wyoming bighorn sheep. At the end of the summer five out of nine collared lambs were still alive. In October, one lamb died of a severe pneumonia infection, our first pneumonia mortality of a collared lamb in the Jackson herd. During our December capture, we caught two of the lambs—an 82-pound female and a 98-pound male!

Summer is a vulnerable time for lambs, but they aren't in the clear once they make it to winter range. Young bighorn sheep face seemingly endless challenges from disease, to predation, to accidents that come with the terrain they live in. Our project focuses on identifying what helps lambs survive the hardships they face throughout their first year of life and if some moms, like Ewe 107, might be better at raising lambs than others.

With critical support from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, Wild Sheep Foundation, Bowhunters of Wyoming, Wyoming Wildlife/

Livestock Disease Research Partnership, and the Teton Conservation District, our team will continue to work towards identifying connections between nutrition and disease in bighorn sheep to seek possible solutions to aid in keeping sheep on the mountain.







David happy







# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Laramie Peak Bighorn Sheep Herd Unit (Hunt Area 19) Update By Martin Hicks, Wheatland Wildlife Biologist WGFD

For the most part wild sheep in hunt area 19 are doing quite well. However, due to the state-wide disease surveillance efforts back in 2019 there were 16 female bighorn captured and fitted with GPS collars.

there were more dead sheep within the canyon. A total of nine carcasses were discovered and four were in decent enough shape for a necropsy and *Mannheimia haemolytica* was detected in all four sheep.

roads with the use of gravel and salt.

Unfortunately, wild sheep crave the salt and end up on the highway trying to get their salt fix. To try and alert drivers two Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) were installed within Sybille Canyon along Hwy 34 warning drivers of wildlife on the road. Since the signs were installed no other wild sheep have been hit. A huge thanks to the WGFD's Aquatic and Invasive Species section for sharing their signs!

On a much brighter note, hunters went 8 for 8 this fall in Hunt Area 19 and several older age class rams were harvested indicating that Hunt Area 19 is still providing opportunity to harvest a once in a lifetime trophy ram.

A huge thanks to the WY-Wild Sheep Foundation for their generous GIA to pay for the capture and GPS collars of the not only these 7 sheep but all the wild sheep captures you have helped out with in recent years. Without your passion and dedication to the resource, projects like these would not be possible.

Extensive field surveys were completed to determine if this was an all age die-off or an isolated event. Fortunately all ages and sex of sheep have been observed within the canyon during the spring of 2020 as well as the fall/winter of 2020/21. However, more information was needed so with 100% funding from the WY-Wild Sheep Foundation a total of seven more female sheep were captured this winter within Sybille Canyon (n=3) and the Duck Creek (n=4) drainage. Biological samples were collected for disease surveillance and they were all fitted with GPS radio collars to further assist managers with the delineation of seasonal range selection, movement patterns, lambing areas and if possible cause specific mortalities.

In addition to the isolated die-off, two rams were hit by vehicles this

winter along Highway 34 also within Sybille Canyon. This is an annual problem that managers have been trying to address for years. Winter storms result in icy roads which triggers human safety measures by de-icing the

On a cold winter day last March a mortality signal was sent out, the sheep was located within Sybille Canyon and then the carcass was submitted for a necropsy. Unfortunately the cause of death was pneumonia caused by a bacterial pathogen known as *Mannheimia haemolytica*. A plan was quickly put together and a carcass search was underway to determine if







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# “The Bulls Are Where You Find Them”

By Chris Calloway

In the spring of 2020, amidst Covid and chaos in much of our world, I was given the opportunity to fulfill a dream of my lifetime – with maximum points in hand I drew a Wyoming Moose Permit. I had applied for Area 1 because of history and proximity. History because I have spent a lifetime in that Area hunting, exploring and packing in with horses. Proximity because I spend so many mornings gazing up the Little Goose Canyon as I drink coffee and because its easy access would allow me to share the experience with my family and friends.

I spent the whole summer scouting for likely bulls, assisted by many hunting friends with their Smartphone technology, and was encouraged by the number and quality of bulls I saw. At the same time, I was discouraged by the swarms of people, campers and ATVs which descended upon the mountains to escape Covid lock down.

When the Season finally arrived we set off; my son, Mark and my brother, Joe, my best friend, Kurt, all of us on four-wheelers and my son-in-law, Zach on horseback with a pack string. We started the season at the south end of Area 1, set up camp in a beautiful spot and hunted west as far as the wilderness area. Nothing. An early snow just before the season opened had moved the bulls elsewhere. After five days of fruitless scouting we packed out, spent a day regrouping, and moved our camp to the north end of Area 1.

Without my brother, who had to return to Minnesota, we hunted roads, trails and clear cuts for several days of unseasonably hot weather with little success. Zach and Mark had to return to work and Kurt left to take care of business at home for a couple days. He did not reappear. Days later Mark showed up and – from a respectful distance – told me Kurt was quarantined at home from a Covid exposure.

I decided I would quarantine in hunting camp and spent five days hunting morning and evening in the still warm weather and learning to lug around a crossbow and not lose it off the back of my ATV on this my first archery hunt. In addition to scouting I also practiced my cow calls, which probably confused the cows and drew in only one small bull.

When Kurt finally returned, he came with great excitement and a photo sent by my friend, Jake Townsend, of a nice bull swimming in a lake 30 miles to the south on a hot afternoon. The photo reminded me of the old hunting adage, “The bulls are where you find them!” With my rifle finally in hand and barely a week to go in the season we set off with a sense of urgency. We had seen a number of nice bulls in “the swimmer’s” vicinity during the summer and, in spite of the unseasonably hot weather, we hunted hard but only saw a few small bulls.

Finally the action started. In a single day I managed to pass up three good bulls, all within range! I had a great stalk, got to use my long WAAAAAAAAAAAA call (like I heard on hunting shows), called in a cow, calf and bull with ten long points on a side but he looked somewhat weak in front, so I passed. Then Kurt got me on another trio but the bull was lying down partially blocked by a tree. His left side looked good with a nice kicker off the left front but I couldn’t see if he even HAD a right palm, so I passed. Near dark Kurt called a decent bull into range with grunts and raking a tree. At that point I had passed on two – I might as well make it three.

10-9-2020 Up early, we decided to go for Kurt’s bull with the left kicker.

We quickly located the cow and calf, no bull, but took up our positions and Kurt began grunting and raking a tree. No response from cow and calf and - - - no bull. We began to move further down the marsh and had gone about 60 yards when we heard a bull grunting. It sounded like he was coming right for us, fast, and looking for a fight. It was the right bull, kicker and all, and I didn’t hesitate. I chambered a round in my Dad’s 30-06 and hit him hard in the shoulder. Another round and he was down.

It was a bittersweet moment. I had thoroughly enjoyed spending the Covid summer revisiting old stomping grounds and scouting new territory. I had hunted with my brother, son, son-in-law and friend. I had hesitated, second guessed myself and then not hesitated. My once in a lifetime hunt was over – and I had a great bull down.





# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## “Amid the Chaos”

By Jordan Seitz

As the pandemic tightened its noose around our school and community, we had to continue adapting. There were events that didn't happen and activities we couldn't do.

However, in the words of Sun Tzu, “In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity.”

Despite quarantines, we kept our school open and most of our kids in the classroom.

Game and Fish still collared another batch of bighorn sheep in the Encampment River Canyon, and Biologist Teal Cufaude was able to extend an invite for us to watch from the sidelines. Kids are never too young to be engaged in the outdoors, so I used the opportunity to include six future Sheep Study students who were too young to actively participate in a normal capture year! At the time, most of my students were quarantined or couldn't make it without school transportation, so I took footage with my camera to share the experience digitally.

Keeping students excited about sheep is hard when study opportunities get limited. We needed to regain momentum, and gathering data with trail cameras was an option.

But that would take money we didn't have, which was resolved by an unexpected donation. Gayle Robertson of Houston was scheduled to be a guest at the local A Bar A Ranch last summer until the ranch's season was cut short.

In the name of furthering outdoor education, the decision was made to donate funds to our classes instead of taking a refund.

Thanks to the young lady's donation and a VIP discount from Reconyx, a box

arrived as I write this containing two trail cameras and all the supplies necessary to place them in the Encampment River hills to help monitor the sheep!

Kindergartner Dawson Stern and WY-WSF Life Member, Archie Seitz.





# “Glassing, Guzzlers, and Good Fortune”

By Steve Loose

Late spring, the rivers are rushing hard. The birds are singing as loud as a sports event. And those coveted Wyoming draw licenses arrive in the mail. I have a superstition about checking the web for license results. I just know I'm more successful in the draw if I don't peek before the mail arrives.

So there it was, that familiar envelope. I didn't even remember which favorite elk area I had applied for an extra cow tag. Peering into the envelope, I couldn't believe it. No? Holy Ramshorn! (or something like that). A sheep tag! Yes! Yes! Yes! A sheep tag! Waiting for the mail definitely improves the odds.

Scouting was a cherished adventure. More experiences than I can share here. The trusty but dated truck broke down just as the snow was giving way to better access. Three weeks later, after multiple shipping delays due to COVID medical shipping priorities, I was back to the hills. Country I thought I knew well enough from a few visits became wider, steeper, and taller. But there was help. I had the benefit of friendship with Chris

and Mike, two dedicated natural resource professionals with a passion for bighorns. They shared years of sheep observations, strategies, and provided UTV tours across the terrain.

And there was Bob, a recent sheep tag filler in the same mountains and valleys. We spent several weekends camping and exploring. He helped me learn the patience of glassing and sitting, sitting and glass, moving, sitting, glassing some more. A skill I really didn't have but that could make the difference on a filled tag. So, eventually I understood the fault of pondering “How long are we going to keep sitting here?”. Several groups of sheep were found, including a number of healthy rams. It's good to have a lot of help on an adventure like this.

Then, a rewarding opportunity arrived. Bob invited me to pitch in on a Wild Sheep guzzler project. It was a great chance to meet folks who dedicate much of their energy to make sure bighorns are in the mountains for us all to admire. We removed an old worn guzzler and constructed a new one with an updated design. There were several good sheep

stories, a little ribbing that goes with using hand tools, and sharing the experiences of all the hard work needed to help a bighorn herd prosper. The hard labor was made easy by the group enthusiasm of an impressive number of volunteers. I begged out of the team dinner to do a little more scouting, so missed the conversation about the next day's event.

I learned this next day was the day to pay tribute to Ron Lockwood's efforts to keep bighorns in the mountains. I worked with Ron early in my career. I can bear witness that the Ron stories are true. He could pump enthusiasm for wildlife conservation equally into school programs or fund raising events with reserved adults. I've crossed paths with a few adults with their own children now who remember a field day through the winter range chanting “Habitat is where it's at!” from the bus to the top of the ridge. Ron just skyrocketed your drive to lend a hand with his humor and showmanship. I let that friendship fade before it developed strongly, visiting over the years only when our paths crossed opportunistically. The plaque ceremony in the heart of this sheep country among Ron's many friends and family was truly special. It was great fortune for me to silently offer my own thanks to Ron for all he inspired in me, for all the enthusiasm he promoted for Wyoming's wildlife, and express my regrets for not building that friendship when there was time.

A noticeable change occurred just before archery season. It wasn't our famous weather. Far worse. The bighorn rams disappeared. All of them! Even the sporadic few reserved as the 4th or 5th backup spot if something went wrong with all the really good locations. I still spotted lambs and ewes, elk, mule deer, even pronghorn.





Weeks of surely carefully sleuthed bighorn behavior patterns were in doubt. The rams must have sensed they weren't just going to be watched from a mile away anymore.

No worries though. The last of archery season did favor me some. A group of rams suddenly materialized. Glad I learned about patiently glassing. After some scrambling and sneaking, they were 300 yards from me and painfully, slowly feeding in my direction. I crawled a few yards to a fully limbed 20-foot wide juniper tree high on the draw. I had an incredible ambush site on the left side of the juniper and the wind was in my ear. Perfect. The rams inched closer.

The rams were almost in recurve range after what seemed like a day and a half. They stopped feeding. At 30 yards, the rams adjusted to single to triple file. Headed straight for me. I could hear the rams breathing, snorting, and clacking their hooves as they ambled along. Almost ready to draw back. And then they veered to the right side of that wide juniper. The one that offered me so much cover provided the same for them. I was between a trot and a sneak, one of those improvised backwoods dances, to get ahead of them on the downhill side of the juniper. I managed a few decent shooting lanes between limbs but there was too much mixing of legs and horns. No shot that didn't have a chance to fly wrong. Never while scouting did I encounter bighorns in this tight formation. I just admired this wagon train of opportunities as they leisurely walked beyond me. What a great experience; I was still shaking with excitement twenty minutes later.

Fortunately, rifle season soon followed. The rams were still disappeared. Bob and I glassed and adjusted for hours. Reaching for those 4th and 5th options, I glassed a high ridge that always seemed promising but never held any bighorns. And yet, there they were! Three rams! They were too far to determine much else but it looked promising.

Bob had been a trooper all through our exploring, managing the pain in his arthritic knees. He was all thumbs up, at least on the outside, so we began



climbing even higher. We stopped a few times to catch our breath and reorient. Funny how those locator rocks, single trees, and openings change appearance from different vantages. But our group thinking figured it out and we were pretty close to the opening that held those rams.

We stopped for one last rest and plan adjustment before the last push. I'm looking up the hill sipping water; Bob is slightly above me and facing down toward me. The 3 rams appear, walking casually right to left maybe 75 yards above us. I whisper "rams" to Bob and ask him not to turn around. I melt down toward the ground, reaching for my rifle. Now, I'm a hunter that relies on, needs my bi pod. But there I stand, facing uphill with only an offhand shot free of obstacles in my line of sight. My heart is throbbing from the climb and the opportunity. The largest ram briefly stops on a small table rock and looks toward us. I squeeze the trigger as slowly as I dare and shoot him..... right over his back!? Dirt flies above this ram, the shot echoes, the rams turn around and run the way they arrived. Bob unceremoniously notes "You missed" with some bewilderment.

It seemed like all was lost, for the morning at least. We sat down to think about this one for a minute. By the fourth time reviewing the instant replay in my head, the rams appeared again at the top of a rock outcrop to our right, only a little farther away. They searched down to our direction and around us but didn't seem to exactly lock on to us. I don't think we even blinked for 5 minutes. The rams thought it over, then disappeared.

We're formulating a plan for me to attempt a sneak around the front of this group. The 3 rams appear, again walking from right to left just a little farther from us this time. I still have only the standing offhand shot but I'm rested and prepared. I squeeze the trigger softly as that largest ram pauses again. We hear more of a thud and less echo. The largest ram runs left; the other two head straight up the hill.

We wait a few minutes and glass around. No sign of this ram. We hydrate, snack and rest a little. Then, we start searching. We find the ram about 100 yards over the far side of a small ridge. The emotions fly like an amusement park ride. High fives with Bob. Plenty of photos. Some reliving of the adventure.

**I reflect now on all that had to happen for me to have this experience.**

**Bob spending a lot of his limited free time scouting with me. Chris and Mike providing me an abundance of knowledge that I hoped I was wise enough to formulate into a plan. Their enthusiasm for bighorns, the dedication of many other men and women in the wildlife profession, and the sweat of Wild Sheep volunteers directly resulted in my lifetime adventure. Their determination and yours will keep wild sheep on the mountain for me, for you, and for our long from now generations. What great seeds to plant for Wyoming's future.**





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# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Torrey Rim Invasive Species Survey

By Amy Anderson, Wyo G&F Habitat Biologist

On a snowy June morning in the Whiskey Basin Wildlife Habitat Management Area near Dubois, Wyoming, thirty four volunteers from the Dubois community, the National Bighorn Sheep Center, Fremont County Weed and Pest District, Shoshone National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, and Wyoming Game and Fish Department gathered on behalf of the Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Herd.

Long-term plans are being pursued in coordination with the US Forest Service to conduct a prescribed burn in the Fitzpatrick Wilderness to open up migration corridors for this declining bighorn sheep herd. This prescribed burn will require burning portions of winter range grasslands prior to burning the timber in order to protect the Torrey Creek Valley. Cheatgrass is a very real concern whenever fire is prescribed for habitat improvement. Which explains the gathering of 34 sturdy and passionate volunteers on the top of Torrey Rim in the middle of a June snow squall.

While cheatgrass is of lesser concern in the Dubois area than in many places throughout Wyoming, there are some areas of invasion, especially along roads and in disturbed areas. With the known presence of cheatgrass in the Torrey Valley, and creeping up Torrey Rim, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department wanted to determine whether there were patches of this invasive species within the intact winter range areas.

The volunteers spent most of the day walking transects across Torrey Rim, each person 50 feet from the next, staring at the ground despite the stunning scenery in every other direction, looking for any sign of cheatgrass and other invasive species. A total of 89 miles of transects were completed that day, with only one small patch of cheatgrass found. Weed and Pest personnel immediately treated the invaded area with indaziflam herbicide. This area will be closely monitored.

The survey also helped confirm the need for a cheatgrass treatment on the slope leading from the Conservation Camp up to Torrey Rim. This treatment will occur in the summer of 2021. Also, a plan will be in place to treat invasive species that may show up after all prescribed burn activities.

All of these actions are the direct result of the public process conducted by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in partnership with Wyoming's Wild Sheep Foundation, National Bighorn Sheep Center and University of Wyoming Haub School. The result of this collaboration is the Whiskey Basin Bighorn Sheep Management Plan, where these and other action items are detailed. The Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Technical Committee has developed an implementation timeline and is in the process of addressing many of the action items designed to arrest the decline of the Whiskey Bighorn Sheep Herd. This effort was one step (actually one step after another over 89 miles) in that direction!





# “Sheep In Texas?”

By Mike Pilch

A number of years ago I sat in my living room, spinning my globe to admire all the high mountain ranges of the world. At the same time books, magazines, and I Pad were open looking up all the species and dreaming of how, when and where. A few years passed and a number of successful national and international trips later, someone said, “You should go to Texas and hunt Aoudad.” My first cocky ugly grimacing gut response was of high fences, automatic feeders, 50 yard shots through brush, and Texans. What the hell is an Aoudad? That is a sheep?... Whatever.

Spin up the clock to recent years, I stopped by Rowdy McBride’s booth at FNAWS and shook the hand of a man who has been guiding hunts for wild Aoudad of west Texas for over 30 years. As well, an experienced national and international hunter, Rowdy soon proved to be the real deal of a sheep hunting experience. Finally starting to have a clue of what this was about, I booked a full hunt of Aoudad, Armenian, and Red Sheep. My hunt was scheduled to start Jan 1, this year. A week out Rowdy called me and said, “Hey man, we have a big snowstorm predicted, you might need to delay a day or so. Stay tuned.” I thought, yea whatever. Snow in Texas?! Have you ever heard of Northern Wyoming? You don’t know snow. December 30th Rowdy called, “we have 17 inches of snow in the lowlands, up high its going to be deep.” WHAT?! I unzipped the duffels and realized, well this is sheep hunting, bring more winter gear. On Jan 2, I met Rowdy and his son at the ranch gate and followed them in to the lodge...14 miles on the ranch road! The snow fortunately was absorbing rapidly but the landscape was still white. 1 mile from the lodge there were a number of ewes and lambs and a pretty nice ram. We all got out of the vehicles and Rowdy characteristically smiled and said, “Here they are!” He was a nice ram but of course, let’s wait a bit!

We unloaded and set out in the ranger to start looking around. At dusk we spotted about 50 Armenian sheep off a large

mountain. With some maneuvering I set up and ranged a beautiful old ram at 467 yards. Shot made, 13 year old ram down!! Wow, this is going to be fun! Day 1 done.

The Armenian and Red sheep were imported to West Texas nearly 40 years ago as a gift from Iran. The country of West Texas is unbelievable mountains and terrain. I was humbled and totally impressed. There are large thriving populations and all are fair chase wild sheep. Small in size (at or slightly smaller than a pronghorn), they are a skittish animal and constantly moving. Getting a shot on one is not easy.

Day 2 was cold and crisp. After spotting for a few hours we found numerous bands of Aoudad rams but getting on them was difficult. Rowdy warned me when I arrived that Aoudad are very tough. Much like African game, you need to break them down and once it’s down, reload and stay on him. “They often jump up and run” As we watched numerous rams through the day I was amazed at the creature. Their lope reminded me of bison and they just looked tough.

As the day went on we found a nice band of 10 rams and I centered the 28 Nosler on a ram at 350 yards. It was a great hit and he went down for good after a short run.



Day 3 was great although getting on a Red sheep was fleeting. Their skittish nature had us blowing many opportunities. Finally we saw a ram and I placed a shot at 450 yards. The shot was true and the small-bodied old ram was down.

Three days, three rams! What a hunt. I’d do this hunt again. How did I not know of these sheep in the southern US?! This hunt reminded me of hunting in the breaks of the Powder River or Charlie Russell. Just raise the mountains another few thousand feet! What an experience! Rowdy and his crew are professionals. There were tons of animals, great expertise, great accommodations.

I highly recommend this hunt and will definitely go again.



# “Solitude Amongst A Pandemic”

By RHS Life Member # 568, Danyelle Pace

The year 2020 was anything but a normal year for many of us. It was a year of many changes and challenges. Starting off the year, we were excited to go on a long-awaited trip to Alaska in October to Caribou hunt, deep Sea Fish, and Sea Duck hunt. This trip was planned to be a graduation present for our son, Tanner Pace, and our twentieth anniversary celebration.

However, after the start of COVID-19 hit, our trip was placed on hold per recommended guidelines and the lack of medical care in the region we were hunting.

Due to the planned trip to Alaska during our regular elk season, we chose to apply for elk tags as a family for a late season hunt. As the year went on and we, as well as others, got cabin fever we learned that we had drawn the late season elk tags. Learning that we had drawn, we immediately shifted into planning a late season elk hunt, a plan we had never done before. Knowing the weather was likely going to be worse than an October hunt, we planned for more propane, brainstormed ways to place tents to fight the wind and cold, purchased topo maps, and began learning a new area.

As October rolled around, meal prepping was in full swing. This entails precooking and vacuum sealing all meals, so that each night meals just need to be heated up and dinner is served. After a long day hunting, cooking is the last task anyone wants to do. A week prior to leaving, big storage boxes were packed with all dry food, and

work week was over, we headed for the hills, as fast as we could vacate the house! Final checks were completed to verify tags were in backpacks, horse feed was purchased, and horses were shod. Once the end of October hit, we were all excited to get away.

Who does not enjoy ten days in the mountains? My husband Pat Pace, our son Tanner Pace, and I (ALL WY-WSF Ramshorn members) made it to hunting camp Friday evening and anxiously waited for more family to arrive. The season was not opening until November 1st. On Saturday, our daughter, Jasline, her husband Tanner, and

our two grand babies Brecklyn and Brantley arrived. It was Halloween. To celebrate Halloween, the fox and the hound donned their costumes and trick-or-treated to each tent. The tents were lit up with googly eyes. It was a different Halloween, but the grandchildren sure enjoyed it.

On November 1st, camp emptied out in the early morning. We chose to hunt many different areas. We



The Pace Family in Camp-2021

other necessities. The trailer was then loaded with propane tanks, tents, and all other items to allow for a comfortable ten days in the mountains.

We chose to set up camp a week prior to the season opening as the weather was cooperative. My Dad, Ricky Wilcox (WY-WSF Ramshorn member #567), stayed at camp while the rest of us came home for one more week of work. Once the



sat and glassed ridges and checked valleys. While we did find some elk, they were hiding on private property a few miles away, so we went back to camp empty handed. Back at camp dinner was ate, and conversations were had. This time unplugged from the world was wonderful. This was the first trip that our oldest daughter, Alexa, had come to elk camp for the duration of the trip. It is always a family affair, but all the kids and grandchildren were in attendance this year.

Tags were left unfilled until four days into the season. On November 4th, my older brother, Matt Wilcox, put a stalk on some elk and bagged his first mature bull. Pat, Ricky, Alexa, and I went out for an evening hunt. That evening we found some elk a mile and a half into the timber, down in a valley out of the wind. Our goal was to help my dad get a mature bull, so Pat and Ricky headed down the valley, as two moving through the brush are better than four. While the guys were making their way down the mountain us girls kept a watch on the

herd from up above. The stalk was a successful one, as my dad was able to harvest his first mature bull in his 68 years.

Much to our surprise that evening we ended up assisting our sons to pack out our son-in-law Tanner's, very first elk, a mature bull. The most beautiful scene appeared making our way to them in the dark; a bull elk was standing on the skyline in the moonlight. Our sons were worn out and ready for help when we made it to them. This day by far was the best day, as those that had never shot a mature bull elk were able to fill their tags. The stories by far were the best to listen to that evening during dinner.

As the days got colder, the elk started moving around more. On the morning of November 6th, my husband and I headed out early. On the top of a ridge, we spotted a herd of 6 mature bulls. We made the decision to go after them. After about 800 yards the bulls were spotted moving towards us. We made the decision to sit down, find a steady rest, and be patient.

Patience paid off. 6 mature bulls came up the hillside, through a small meadow and provided me with a perfect shot. My first mature bull and first elk kill with my Weatherby Mark V 6.5 Creedmoor. I was and still am elated with joy. As the trip came to an end and our kids went their separate ways, we broke camp and headed home. Pat and Tanner had not tagged out, so we knew we were not done.

Two weeks later we made our way to the mountain again. The wind was brutal, and it was cold. We spent one full day in the camper hiding out while it snowed. The next morning, we headed out in the early morning. Tanner was able to stalk a herd of bull elk up a hillside and place a shot. What a beautiful mature bull he was able to tag. After Tanner harvested his bull, Pat and I went around and over the mountain to search another valley. Those valleys are elk keepers. Within the valley laid another small herd of bulls. Pat took off on foot while I watched from afar. That day, the 2020 elk hunt season was over, as Pat harvested a mature bull. 6

tags, 6 mature bulls taken by our family this season, many memories, and a lifetime of appreciation for God's country. In this crazy world we are living, take the time to enjoy the little things in life. Find solitude in a smile, and peace in a running stream!

Ramshorn Member Ricky Wilcox and his Granddaughter Alexa Pace after she joined him in harvesting this beautiful creature. Pure excitement!!!!



The goblins are Brecklyn and Brantley Eastman (grandchildren of Pat and Danyelle Pace)





# “David and the Bighorn”

By Chester Moore

In our family, the pursuit of wildlife was as natural as breathing.

Whether fly-casting for bass or hunting whitetail in the wilderness, growing up, we always focused our energies on wild things.

I raised my camera, focused on the full-curved ram, and pushed the shutter button in this serene setting amongst snow-covered peaks where me and my wife Lisa celebrated our 20th anniversary in 2019.

A few months later, I had dinner with my friend Thompson Temple and slid one of the

pushing the shutter on your camera is just like squeezing the trigger of your rifle. You made your shot.”

At that moment, something clicked.

I had always dreamt of pursuing sheep involving drawing a tag and going on an epic hunt. But going full bore after sheep with my camera would have another powerful benefit-conservation.

My career as an outdoor writer/wildlife journalist affords me a voice on many media platforms. Perhaps there was a way to get the story of North America’s wild sheep and their struggle with pneumonia from domestic sheep exposure to a broader audience.

The puzzle’s final piece fell into place shortly after when I found a box full of old scrapbooks at my mother’s house.

As a kid, used copies of Sports Afield, Field & Stream, Outdoor Life, and other outdoors publications were a nickel apiece

at the local thrift store. I would go in and buy them out.

Then Dad and I would sit together and make scrapbooks of our favorite pictures and dream grand hunts together.

My Dad passed away of natural causes while deer hunting with me in South Texas in 2014, so this was like getting back part of my favorite hunting partner.

After flipping through the first book, I was blown away by the



Reannah applying a collar

And as I stood at 10,000 feet glassing a ridge for bighorns, both breath and energy were in short supply. Days of hiking and glassing in the high country left this coastal Texan exhausted.

And then, out of the corner of my eye, he appeared.

A beautiful bighorn ram emerged from a steep slope and made its way toward me. Frustration turned to excitement, and suddenly, the air didn’t feel quite so thin.

photos over to him.

“I might never get drawn for a bighorn tag, but I sure had fun shooting this big ram with my camera,” I said.

“Chester, you know in the Bible, we learned that David snuck into King Saul’s tent and cut a piece of his robe off while he slept. He could’ve killed Saul, but he still got a victory,” Temple said.

“When you do all of that work, and you get within photo range,



presence of sheep. There were desert bighorn, Stone Sheep, Dall Sheep, Rocky Mountain bighorn, and even Urials There were more sheep than any other animal.

Turkeys were a close second, but sheep were tops.

When I got to the second scrapbook, it was the same thing, and then a photo jarred a deep, forgotten memory.

A photo of a man who had taken a massive bighorn by a bow in Canada graced one of the pages. I could literally remember finding this shot, cutting it out, and placing it in the scrapbook.



## It was the moment I fell in love with wild sheep.

Perhaps by photographing sheep and publishing them in various media outlets, I could inspire others to take up the cause of their conservation. Maybe a little boy or girl somewhere out there would even see the photos and become inspired like I did putting together those scrapbooks.

In 2019, I set on a quest to photograph the Grand Slam and their subspecies in North America in all states and provinces. At the time of this writing, I had completed the task in my native Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada.

Wyoming is the next state on the list, and I am super excited to get out to the Cowboy State to capture images of some of its beautiful bighorns.

And me and my wife Lisa hope to bring some special young people along with us. We operate a children and youth outreach that gives wildlife encounters to children with a critical illness or loss of a parent or sibling.

For teens that have been through the program, we offer conservation mission trips to teach them to use media for wildlife advocacy through the North American Model of Conservation.

We had the pleasure of taking one of our young ladies, Reannah Hollaway, on a desert bighorn capture with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, where she got to fit a big ram with a radio collar and take blood and tissue samples.

She's now pursuing a degree in wildlife

management.

We dubbed the photography project the Sheep Scrapbook Project in honor of my Dad and to raise awareness of the issue of pneumonia in wild sheep. Anyone who submits a wild sheep photo to us gets a Sheep Scrapbook Project collector's coin.

I still apply for tags and join as many raffles as I can but feel inspired by the challenge of shooting all of North America's sheep with my camera. Wyoming will be in focus this year, and I have great hope for that expedition.

Being totally self-funded and working around a full-time career and a youth outreach, it's always tough to make these trips possible, but it makes me feel alive.

And I imagine that's how David felt when he took a clipping of the king's clothes. While he left the crown behind, he still got a win.

I would love to come down the mountain packing out a ram, but the idea of capturing their images and sharing them with the world has become equally motivating.

*(Chester Moore is an award-winning outdoor writer and proud member of WY-WSF from Orange, TX. He is a lifelong hunter and angler and loves to get kids facing special challenges involved with conservation. You can reach him at [chester@chestermoore.com](mailto:chester@chestermoore.com).)*

Chester Glassing





# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## “Denizens of the Steep”

By Josh Metten

Grinning at the untouched powder below me, I prepare to drop into the 4 Hour Couloir in Grand Teton National Park when a sudden flash of black catches my attention. We are at 10,000 feet on New Year’s Day so it is to our great surprise to look up and glimpse a black bear run across the slope. Shouldn’t it be sleeping right now?

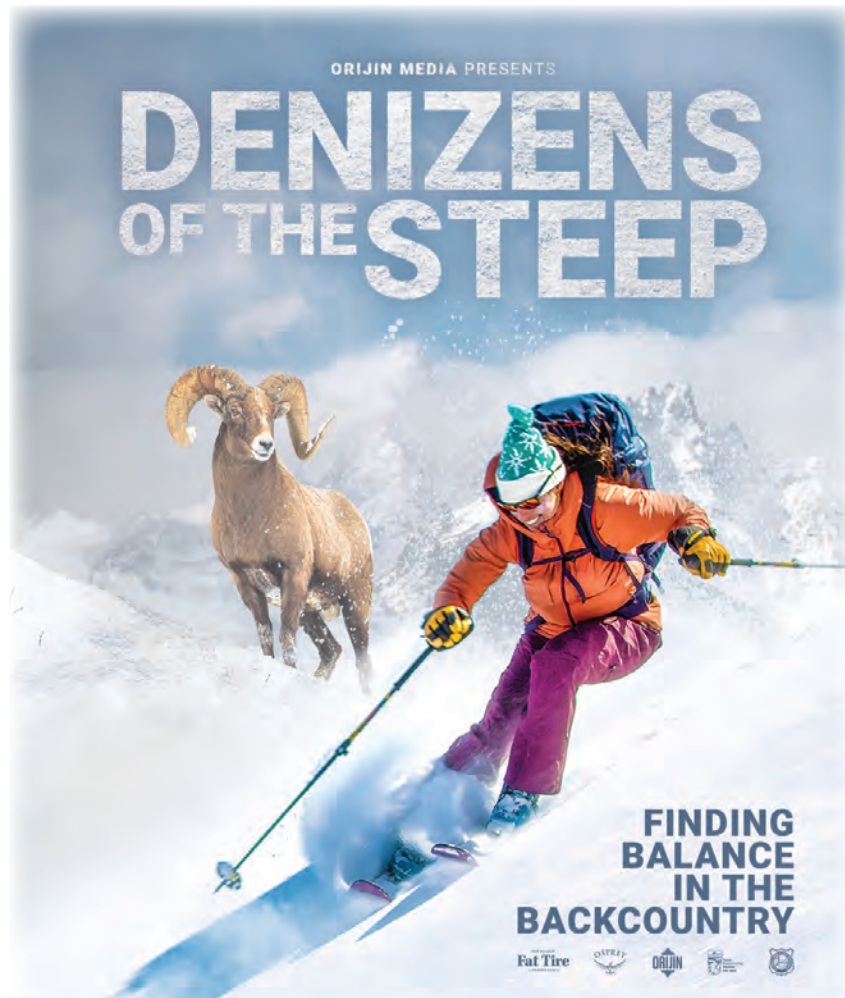
The chance encounter with a bear, who after chatting with NPS biologists, was probably relocating after making a poor den selection, was an exciting reminder of the wildness around us. As backcountry skiers, we often get tunnel vision, focusing on the day’s objective, yet here in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, we are participants in something much larger.

The GYE is one of the last relatively intact temperate ecosystems left on earth; a reality owed in part to its rugged nature which kept early homesteaders at bay. This wildness would inspire early conservationists to create the first National Park, Yellowstone, and the first Forest Reserve which would later become National Forest. It was here that remnant populations of elk were trans located across the US to restore populations devastated by over-hunting, that the longest known mule deer and pronghorn antelope migrations persist, and that grizzlies and wolves still roam wild.

Greater Yellowstone is also home to bighorn sheep.

“...BETTER THAN ANY OTHER ANIMALS THE BIGHORNS TYPIFY THE TETONS.” -F. FRYXELL, 1938

Bighorn sheep are an iconic North American Species, at home in rugged landscapes from the southwest desert to the high peaks of the Canadian Rockies. I have watched



Watch this Movie here: <https://youtu.be/g9JuQOz9QXY>

lambs running headfirst down cliffs, bounding around with the carefree skill of a life in the mountains. In the fall, rams collide headfirst at the equivalent of hitting a wall at 20 mph, a brutal test of strength, stamina, and pain tolerance.

It is easy to see a bit of ourselves in these mountain athletes, who are willing to endure challenging conditions to eke out a life in the alpine. Perhaps that is why I have become so interested in their future.

As many as 2 million bighorn sheep once roamed across North

America, but that number quickly plummeted due to an influx of market hunters, along with competition and introduced disease from domestic sheep grazing. By the early 1900’s, only around 20,000 remained – about 1% of their former numbers. Over the last century, conservationists have worked tirelessly to recover bighorn populations, and today, the number has grown to nearly 90,000 animals.

But recovery of bighorn sheep has stalled out in recent years as habitat loss and the risk of disease transmission plague the species.



# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

Cinematographers Zach Montes and Daniel Gibeau, photo by Josh Metten



Fewer than 6,000 bighorn sheep currently reside in Wyoming, a fraction of their historic population.

Here in Grand Teton National Park, an isolated, genetically unique herd of less than 100 has miraculously been able to hold on, enduring as neighboring herds went extinct in the nearby Big Hole, Snake River, and Wyoming Ranges.

rely on conserving finite fat reserves to survive.

Recent research shows increasing levels of disturbance by backcountry skiers is tapping into these finite reserves and shrinking already limited winter habitat.

It is an uncomfortable truth to realize that something so quiet and

The story of the Teton herd is an impressive one of persistence over thousands of years, yet the herd is now slipping towards extinction. Habitat destruction, lost migration routes, and invasive species have pushed the population to the brink. Winter is the toughest time for the Teton Sheep herd, who

peaceful as backcountry skiing could be contributing to the local extinction of an iconic native species. Yet, if skiers and riders do not step in to help, we could lose this iconic symbol of wildness.

Last year, a collaboration of agencies, wildlife advocates, winter recreationists, and other stakeholders convened in search of solutions.

With this question in mind, Director Zach Montes and I set out to tell the story of Backcountry skiing and Bighorn Sheep in the Tetons, with a film titled "Denizens of the Steep."

We believed that the outdoor recreation community are at their core, conservationists who will step up to steward the wild places we play.

The conservation world has a storied history of avid recreationists, people like David Brower and Yvonne Chouinard, finding their passion for wild places through their own experiences.

Our film tells the story of Ski Mountaineer and Guide Kim Havell, along with other respected members of the Teton ski community embarking on the same journey.

"We all want to ski in these remarkable places so by no means is my approach that we should not go skiing, because I love skiing, it's my job, it's my life, it's my lifestyle, it's my family's life, and it's what makes us happy. But I think doing it with an ability to compromise, adjust and pay attention is what will keep these things intact. – Kim Havell

We are blessed with an abundance of wild rugged terrain to explore, the wild sheep of the Tetons have nowhere else to go.

Watch the film, funded in part by WY-WSF, today.



Daniel Gibeau films Max Hammer, Zach Little and Kai Girard skiing in the GTNP. Photo by Josh Metten



# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Water for Wildlife®/Wyoming G&F Department Joint Internship-Our Future



2018 Intern Jacob Stoinski helps with a fence installation

opportunity to be exposed to many positions associated with wildlife conservation and how non-profits support it. Word of the program spread, and currently 80 plus applications/year are received for these 3 internships. Many interns have been hired by Game and Fish.

Sarah Dugan (pictured), a 2019 intern was hired last spring

as a Wyoming Game Warden. In her words, "The internship Water for Wildlife and Game and Fish put on is absolutely an unparalleled learning opportunity I was privileged to have had. Not only did I get to participate with a non-profit organization that was solely dedicated to wildlife, but I also got to work with a variety of biologists whose careers are dedicated to wildlife. Throughout my time in Lander, I found myself soaking in as much knowledge as possible because each day there was a new opportunity. From electro-fishing to organizing water projects, to collecting vitals on a grizzly bear, there was always something compelling to learn. This internship solidified that I wanted to work with wildlife and be an advocate for this natural resource we have in Wyoming."

"Teach the student to see the land, understand what he sees, and enjoy what he understands."

--Aldo Leopold

Since 2015 WFWF has invested in a joint internship with WGFD. The program originally started with one intern and was so popular it grew to 3 interns/year. Each intern is a college student majoring in such things as wildlife management, range management, biology or closely related fields. The program attracts the brightest young people who aspire to work in wildlife conservation. It gives them an



2019 Intern Sarah Dugan



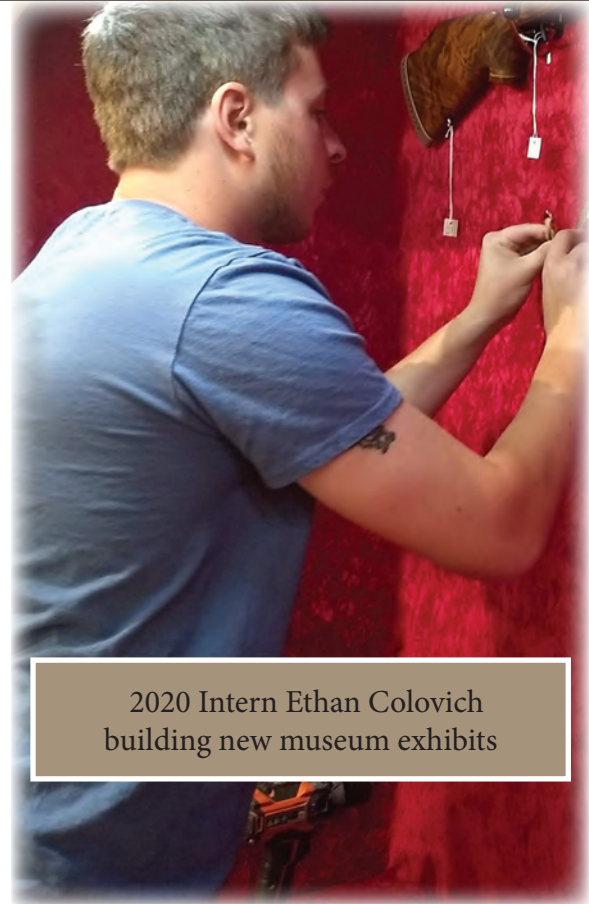
# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

By Vickie Hutchinson, Executive Director  
Water for Wildlife® Foundation

Interns split their time between WFWF and WGFD. Not only do they learn about wildlife conservation roles, they experience firsthand the vital role non-profits, such as Water for Wildlife Foundation and Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, play in supporting wildlife conservation. Previous interns have even participated in fund raising efforts by personally creating an auction item to raise funds. They also assist in water/habitat project folders and communicate regularly with project managers for updates on progress. Interns often participate in speaking and outreach community events such as Around the Campfire at Sinks Canyon and Wyoming Outdoor Weekend. For the past 2 years, interns have designed and built museum exhibits to educate visitors. The exhibits, designed and built by interns, include a woodlands exhibit with leave no trace camping, safe

wildlife distancing, Pioneers in Conservation, project location maps, a working guzzler and many historical displays from the One-Shot Antelope Hunt. The museum is free and open to the public. When the interns are at WGFD, they observe and work right alongside the experts in all the various departments. They may work on projects such as guzzlers, solar-powered wells, spring developments, riparian fencing, off-site water developments. Other assignments include glassing fields for game classification, testing for CWD, seining fish at the hatchery and many other experiences.

This internship program is one of the most unique and targeted programs which directly trains the fortunate participants in a broad range of wildlife conservation projects and gives them an awareness of the vital role non-profits play in supporting these efforts.



2020 Intern Ethan Colovich  
building new museum exhibits



2020 Interns Brandon Sagraves and Cassidy Downing  
construct a Beaver Dam Analog at Mill Creek



# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Cheatgrass mitigation in the Douglas Creek herd

By Embree Hall, Regional Wildlife Coordinator, Assistant Professor (adjunct)  
- University of Wyoming and Laramie Region G&F Biologists

In fall 2020, the Mullen Fire burned approximately 176,800 acres in the Snowy Range west of Laramie, with the bulk of acres burned on national forest lands, including two wilderness areas. The Yellowstone Fires of 1988 (793,000 acres) and Bighorn Fire of 1876 (500,000 acres) were the only two events larger than the Mullen Fire since Wyoming became a state.

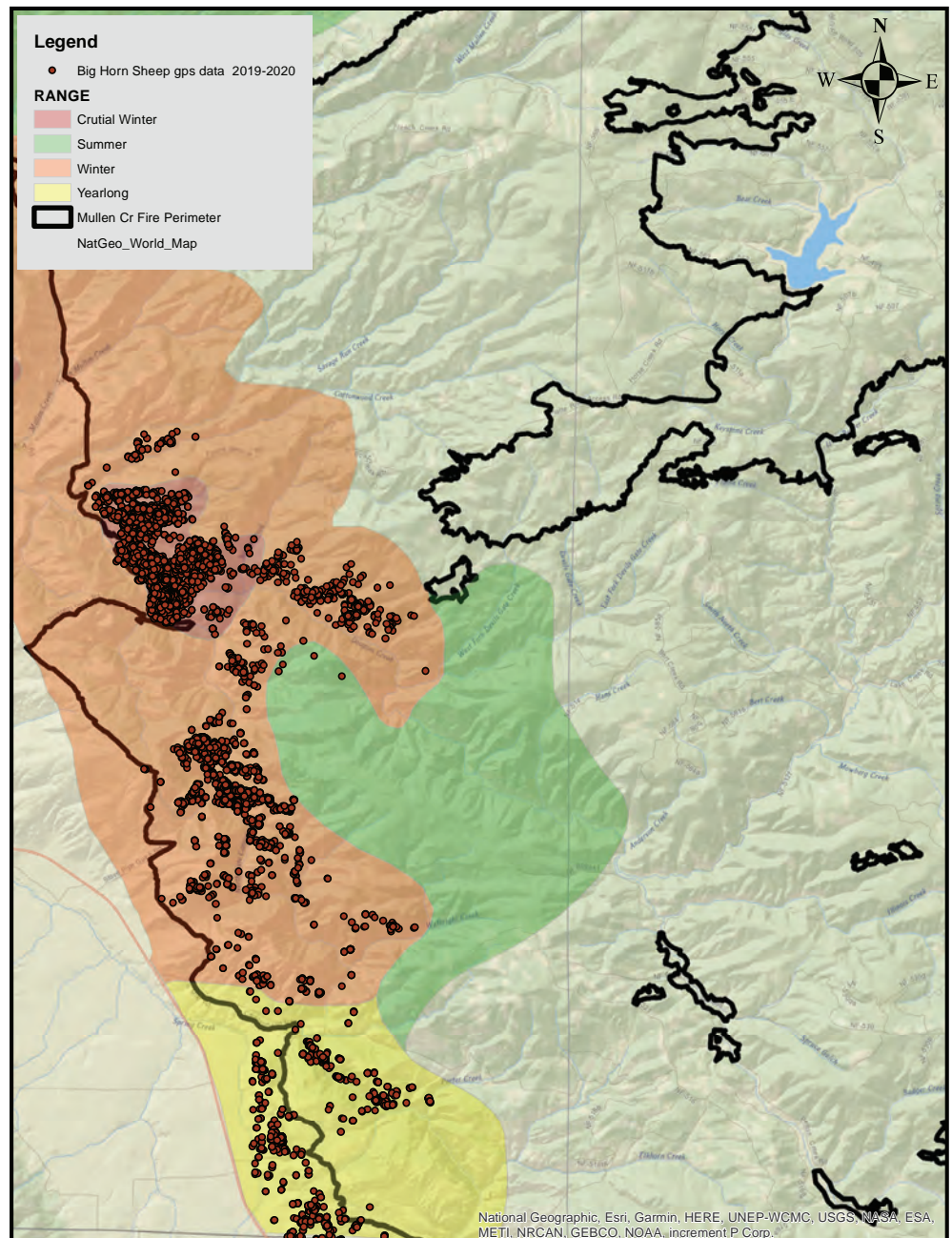
\$10,000 in GIA funds in December 2020. The USFS was able to acquire \$578,000 in Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) funds shortly thereafter. Additional applications are out across the state for another half million dollars. An additional 2,800 acres of BLM lands on the west side of the North Platte River are also targeted for treatment in the Prospect Mountain area.

On USFS lands, we plan to use the herbicide Rejuvra® at a rate of 5 oz/acre. This herbicide was recently approved for rangeland use, and is showing promise for greater longevity of cheatgrass control compared with previously used herbicides.

The western third of the wildfire area encompasses occupied sheep habitat, and is part of the Douglas Creek herd unit (Hunt Area 18). Burning of beetle killed lodgepole pine stands opened line of sight visibility, and created more open travel corridors for bighorns, which will help them access available escape terrain and lambing habitats.

We anticipate many more acres will be available for wild sheep after recovery of native vegetation. It is likely the Douglas Creek bighorn sheep herd will see substantial benefits from this wildfire event.

High fire severity in portions of the Mullen Fire is cause for concern for cheatgrass invasion in the Savage Run and Platte River wilderness areas, as well as other areas adjacent to the North Platte River. The US Forest Service (USFS) identified at least 17,000 acres that are at high risk of cheatgrass invasion due to fire severity, slopes and aspects, and known areas of cheatgrass infestations prior to the wildfire. The USFS – Medicine Bow National Forest, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and numerous other partners are working together to plan for cheatgrass herbicide treatments. Funding applications have been submitted to treat up to 15,000 acres in 2021 and 2022 on USFS lands. The WY WSF was the “first to step up”, allocating





# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

Herbicide application will be completed with a helicopter, as the ruggedness of the terrain precludes application from ATVs, boom spray trucks, or fixed wing aircraft.

Researchers from Colorado State University and the US Geological Survey will assist project partners with monitoring efforts pre- and post-herbicide application by using Landsat imagery and remote sensing technologies. This will compliment on-the-ground intensive vegetative monitoring that federal and state agency personnel will conduct to evaluate herbicide efficacy and native plant community response.

We anticipate forays by bighorns into habitats that weren't previously available to them in the last century due to conifer encroachment into otherwise suitable habitats.

Plans are underway to secure funds for GPS collars to be placed on bighorns in winter 2021-2022 to monitor their habitat use post-fire. The information gathered from GPS collars can help inform wildlife managers of species' habitat preferences.

Habitats for moose, bighorn sheep, mule deer, and elk were all affected by this landscape altering fire.

It is our hope that proactive steps to control cheatgrass post-wildfire will aid in recovery of native, perennial vegetation, and will result in improved forage production and nutritional quality of vegetation for all wildlife species.

**We thank the WY WSF for stepping up early in the planning process to contribute money to aid in the wildfire recovery process. Great things are ahead for the Douglas Creek bighorn sheep herd!**







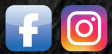
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# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Elk Mountain Bighorn Sheep Sightability Project Update

By Joe Sandrini, WGFD Sr. Wildlife Biologist – Newcastle

The Elk Mountain Bighorn Sheep herd resides on the Wyoming / South Dakota State line southeast of Newcastle, WY and has been managed jointly by Wyoming and South Dakota for 18 years.

The Wyoming portion of the herd falls within Hunt Area 20; and the South Dakota side lies in South Dakota bighorn sheep hunt unit BH2. This bighorn sheep herd has been hunted since 2008, and currently six licenses are issued annually, with three any ram tags valid in South Dakota and three in Wyoming.

The goal of the three-year Elk Mountain Bighorn Sheep Sightability Project is to develop a helicopter based model

to estimate bighorn sheep numbers in the Black Hills (specifically on Elk Mountain). The study is being conducted by WGFD in tandem with South Dakota Game Fish & Parks. It entails capture and VHF radio collaring of 40 bighorn sheep, disease testing of captured sheep, helicopter and ground based surveys of sheep, and development of a model to estimate the population from a helicopter while compensating for topographic and vegetative cover that result in sheep not being detected.

Garnering an accurate population estimate of this herd is vital to its management, and two methods have been tried with limited success: A ground based survey relying on radio collared bighorns was developed as part of a graduate student project in 2013. This method has produced

estimates with very wide confidence intervals that limit its utility, and completing the number of surveys needed each year has proved difficult. In addition, securing access across private lands for data collection in Wyoming has become impossible without paid access agreements, and this technique requires ongoing radio collaring efforts. A forward-looking infrared (FLIR) survey was attempted in June, 2018 to replace the ground based survey. However, the FLIR system was not able to effectively detect bighorns in the Black Hills.

We are now in the second year of the

sightability project, and it has been much more successful than the first. Last winter, we were only able to collar 3 ewes. This was because the mild winter resulted in sheep quitting the bait site, seemingly every time we got ready to trap. In addition, we did not have expandable collars, and so could not collar rams.

This winter things were much improved. After three successful drop netting efforts we managed to get a total of 21 ewes and 5 rams “on air.” Then, we were able to contract helicopter capture with Native Range Capture Services and in short order, collar 12 more rams for a total of 38 collared bighorns. We hope to deploy the last two collars by darting sheep as the opportunity presents itself.

Another bit of good news, disease testing of all the captured sheep to date has not revealed any significant concerns. Although, we are still awaiting lab results from the 12 rams recently captured.

Next winter we will begin model development and hopefully, moving forward, have a new tool in our box to estimate sheep numbers in this part of the country. That can't come too soon, as we have struggled recently to get a good handle on the numbers of sheep in this population and how they are trending.

But, we still expect to continue with 100% hunter success in the coming year. Success that has yielded some truly quality rams.

G&F Commissioner Richard Ladwig has been very involved and recently donated a commissioner's license to WY-WSF with some of the funds slated to be used for a new drop net.





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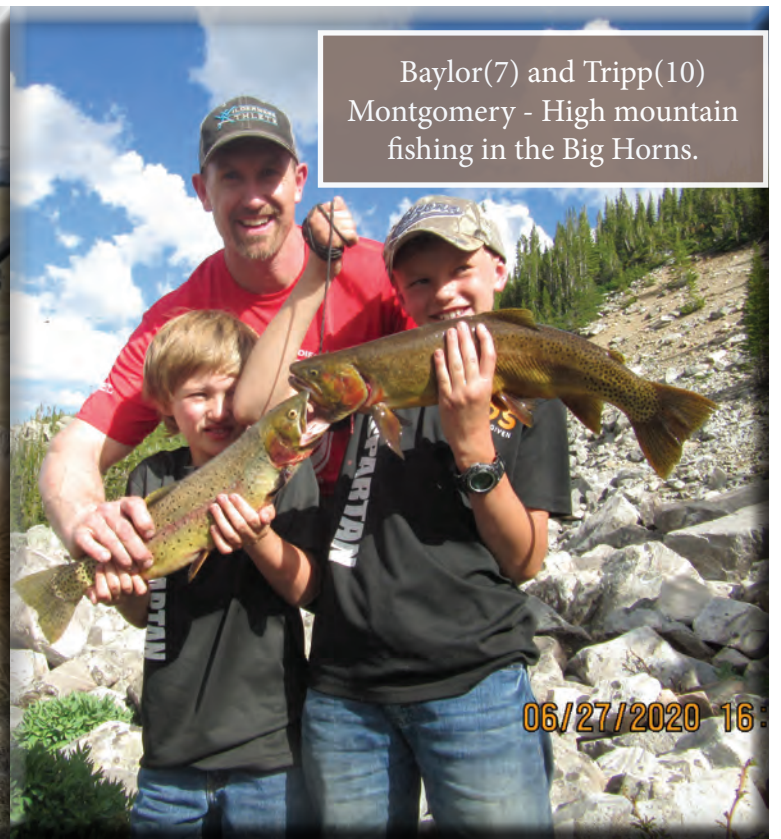
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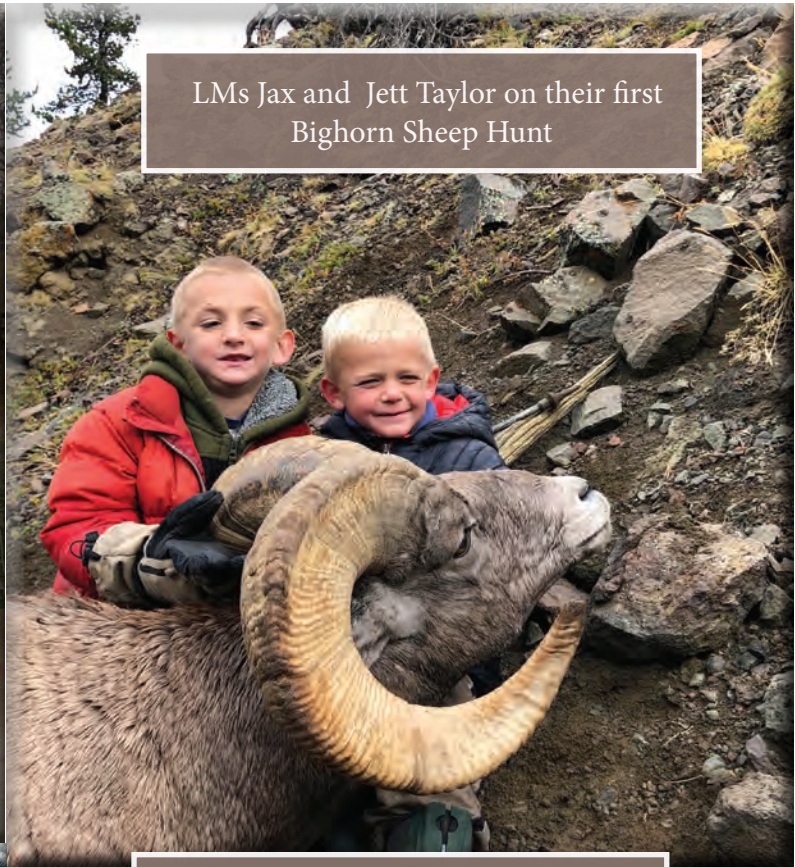
Baylor(7) and Tripp(10)  
Montgomery - High mountain  
fishing in the Big Horns.

06/27/2020 16





LM Chance Butler.



LMs Jax and Jett Taylor on their first Bighorn Sheep Hunt



LM Josh Taylor believes in keeping LMs Jax and Jett busy!



Lash Dominick with Charlie Truman



LM Kale Benton with his First Mtn. Lion



Lash and Zuzu Dominick are helping with predator control too!



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@www.wyomingwildsheep.org](mailto:info@www.wyomingwildsheep.org).



Nick Dobric-Archery



LM Dave Rael



Our members are doing our part on predators- LM Meade Dominick

# Member's Gallery

RHS Life Member Miles Fortner

RHS Life Member Jacque Sims





Ross Gorman  
PHOTOGRAPHY .COM



BLAST FROM THE PAST  
DO YOU KNOW THIS  
GUY? (Answer on Page 3)



Andrea Dominick had some good help with her 2020 Antelope.





# “A Once In Five Lifetimes Tag”

By Meade Dominick

Hey there Wyoming Wild Sheep family. Meade Dominick here and I hope this finds all of you and your families doing well in 2021.

I know that news travels fast in the sheep hunting world, but for any of you that did not know I was fortunate enough to draw a bighorn tag in area 455 in Montana last year. Montana only gives out 2 tags in that unit and a nonresident tag every four years. You can imagine how amazed I was that I drew.

This area is on the East side of the upper Missouri river running South to North from Helena to Cascade Montana. It is a really cool chunk of the upper Missouri corridor and of some beautiful Montana mountains. The area is predominantly private, but thankfully there are some very generous landowners that let the lucky sheep tag holders like myself camp and hunt on their ranches. It is quite an amazing thing especially for this day and age.

The hunt consisted of four trips, two scouting trips in the summer and two during the rifle season. My seven-year-old son Lash got to be with me every step of the way. My wife Andrea and my daughter Zuzu were with me on two of the trips. An incredible network of friends were also there helping me both physically and in spirit. It was a really special experience and hunt. On November 2nd I got a beautiful old Montana bruiser. He was the kind of ram I was hoping for with this tag and the company I was in made it a day I will never forget. I don't want to bore any one with a long story. I can not put into words what it felt like to finally be the one pulling the trigger on a bighorn ram. Thanks, Andrea, Lash, Zuzu, Ryan Roemmich, Roc Lee, Josh Stanley, Spencer Strike, Bob Jose, Brant Miller, Josh and Jax Taylor, Pat Hale, Dave Womack, and Don Harland. I am very grateful!!!





# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Devils Canyon Bighorn Sheep Movement Analysis

By Sam Stephens, WGFD Wildlife Biologist – Greybull



In the summer of 2006, the late Wyoming Game and Fish Biologist Tom Easterly found himself frequenting the south rim of Porcupine Creek Canyon cautiously scanning the opposing face for collared female bighorns and their newborn lambs. Following the successive interstate transplants (OR-2004, MT-2006) of bighorn sheep into Devils Canyon, Tom would spend much of the 2005-07 spring and summer seasons monitoring three distinct groups of sheep within the herd. At that time the original descendants from the 1973 Whiskey Mountain transplant (n=30-60), the Oregon (n=20), and the Montana sheep (n=20) composed the broader population of Bighorns in what is now known as Hunt Area 12. Tom's field work was part of an effort funded by the Wyoming Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation to monitor the survival of lambs to determine if ecotypic variation played a role in lambing period. Although documentation of newborn lambs initially ranged widely from early April to late May (2005), by 2007 the lambing period appeared to narrow where the earliest lambs documented

were now found in early May. From these results, Tom inferred that bighorn sheep in the Devil's Canyon area had adapted to fit their habitat. Furthermore, GPS collar locations revealed that dispersal amongst the three groups was rare. Most sheep occupied home ranges amongst the high plains and canyon breaks between Trout and Porcupine Creek

(core use area). One exception to this pattern were three ewes (Oregon sheep) who departed the core use area to set up home ranges seven miles west, near the confluence of Devils and Bighorn Canyons. Collaring efforts conducted in 2020, indicate similar allopatric patterns persist between these two growing segments of the herd.

later the Devils Canyon Bighorn Sheep Herd has been a success. Providing a unique hunting opportunity to 6 fortunate hunters every fall, Hunt Area

12 has earned a reputation. Managers have been able to maintain a sheep hunting opportunity in collaboration with the Bischoff Ranch to maintain a harvest success rate of 100% while selective hunters are still able to find 170-80" rams every year. Today, our understanding of the size and productivity of this herd is dependent on our ability to locate and monitor sheep throughout the biological year. Using additional funding awarded by the Wild Sheep Foundation: 20 ewes and 10 rams were fitted with GPS collars in the winter of 2019-20. Multiple surveys throughout the biological year included ground and aerial monitoring of collared ewes and rams in April (post-winter lamb count), late May (neonatal lamb count), early July (standardized summer flight), and early February (winter). This data was used to estimate detectability, abundance, and vital rates (recruitment and survival) for the herd.

Cause-specific mortality was determined for 3 of the 4 mortalities, which included two mountain lion predations and one respiratory failure triggered by pathogens known to be extant in the herd (*M. haemolytica*, *M. glucosida*).

*(continued next page)*





This, in addition to repeated visits to collared individuals has given us the ability to more accurately estimate the overall population abundance. Using the data collected from these survey periods to estimate juvenile (79%) and measure adult survival rates (90%) we estimated the 2020 post-season population to number between 230-260 sheep.

Collar locations are collected every six hours and transmitted via satellite. Analyzing these locations through the biological year we found that seasonal movements are rare and restricted for the sheep, especially the ewes. One observation from monitoring ewe movements was that similar to the pattern Tom identified in 2006, there appears to be two distinct subpopulations within the herd unit: those that live towards the mouth of Devils Canyon at lower elevations and those that frequent to upper elevations between Trout and Porcupine Canyons. The two groups appear to be separated by 7-8 miles and so far the only dispersal events between groups have been from a few collared rams (n=3). Standardized classification flights conducted via helicopter in July typically results in a raw count of just under 100 ewes. While the majority of the sheep found within the herd unit remain at higher elevations, a proportion of the ewe/lamb groups counted (2018-20avg: 32%) are increasingly found outside the core use area. This apparent separation of subpopulations could become increasingly important where hunting and transplants as management tools disproportionately impact the sheep within the core use area.

In 2021 we plan on maintaining 30 collared individuals in order to continue our monitoring of vital rates, habitat selection, and dispersal. Collared rams give further insight into ram dispersal as it relates to population abundance, male to female ratio, and age of collared individuals. Surveying collared ewes allows us to use changing juvenile ratios as an index for survival. Tracking these vital rates will continue to help managers understand what environmental variables impact survival through a lambs first year. Furthermore, understanding how carrying capacity relates to management objectives will require further investigation in to the movements of individual sheep as it relates to occupied habitats in Devils Canyon.



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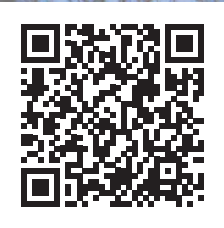
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Our main lodging is the Cabin Creek Lodge, which is our personal residence, and the Squaw Creek Camp is used for the Wyoming season. We offer excellent accommodations with all the comforts of home. We employ two full time cooks, so be ready to gain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







Ross German  
PHOTOGRAPHY



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