

The RAMPAGE

Spring 2023

Ol' Lefty's
Band of Rams
Page 23



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The **RAM**PAGE

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Spring 2023

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Become a member to receive your own copy of the RamPage. Dues are \$40 per year or \$750 for a Life Membership. Join at: www.wyomingwildsheep.org/shop.

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Advertising Rates

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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!!

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Magazine Editor: Kendra Young

2023-2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 2-3, 2023
Annual Convention
Cheyenne, WY

June 15-17, 2023
WSF Chapter & Affiliates
Rapid City, SD

June 22-23, 2023
Wyoming Big Horn Sheep Summit
Burgess Junction, WY

Dec 1-2, 2023
Board/Membership Meeting
Dubois, WY

January 17-20, 2024
WSF Sheep Show
Reno, NV

2023 Governor's License Sales Totals

2023 Sale Location	2023 LICENSE SALES	2022 LICENSE SALES
WSF	\$180,000	\$305,000
Eastern	\$180,000	\$199,500
Midwest		\$170,000
Iowa		\$190,000
WY		\$115,000
Total		\$979,500

New Life Members

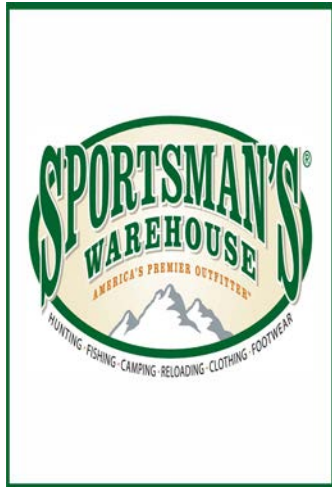
- #665 Robert Thurston
- #666 Pam Kaiser
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- #672 Marcus Gores
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- #674 Milton Angel
- #675 Chris Clark
- #676 Peter Burchfield
- #677 Brian McDonald
- #678 Paul Lang
- #679 Dan Webb
- #680 Quint Gonzalez

Wyoming WSF would like to thank, and recognize, Life Members who have signed up since the Fall 2023 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:

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!!

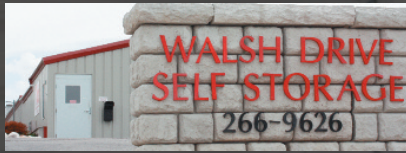
Dear Member; To save printing costs we send one copy per address. If you would like to receive multiple copies, please contact Dean DiJenno at (307) 213-0998 or rampage@wyomingwildsheep.org.



Blast from the Past - RHS LM #247, Joni Miller on an elk hunt. See it on page 60!

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Executive Director's Report

By Katie Cheesbrough

In my last RamPage report, I discussed Wyoming's bighorn sheep management area categories as defined by the Wyoming Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Interaction Plan (the Wyoming Plan). These categories consist of Core Native Herds, Cooperative Review Areas, Non-Emphasis herds, and Non-Management areas (see below table & map). The Fall 2022 edition focused on our Core Native Herds and why they are so important to bighorn sheep conservation in Wyoming. However, Wyoming's bighorn sheep story is incomplete if we don't discuss the importance of these other management areas and how we work within them.

In this issue (page 17), you will find an article about the Whiskey Mountain Core Native Herd that describes how it went from one of the largest herds in the West to a current estimated population of less than 400 bighorn sheep despite major efforts by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) and the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation (WY-WSF). The story of the Whiskey Mountain herd highlights the complex challenges facing bighorn sheep and the importance of not putting all of our eggs in one basket. Although the Core Native herds are our highest conservation priority, it's important that we don't lose sight of opportunities in our cooperative review and non-emphasis areas as well.

For reference, our non-emphasis areas include the Wyoming Range

which contains the Darby herd just south of the Jackson herd, and the area of the bighorns just east of the Devil's canyon herd unit. Cooperative Review areas include the southern Wind River Range which contains the Temple Peak herd, an area in the center of the state encompassing the Ferris-Seminole herd and the Sweetwater Rocks area, the Sierra Madre and Snowy Ranges containing the Encampment River and Douglas Creek herds, and the Laramie Range which covers the Laramie Peak herd. The only current bighorn sheep that live within a non-management area are on the far east side of the state and include the Elk Mountain herd that we share with South Dakota (see map).

We can view these other sheep management areas as our zones of opportunity. The Cooperative Review areas are places with suitable bighorn sheep habitat and historic bighorn sheep ranges. These are places that can and have been home to successful bighorn sheep reintroductions. Take, for example, the incredible success of the Ferris-Seminole herd. Continued transplants and focused habitat efforts have allowed this herd to flourish. This herd has just recently exceeded its herd objective and is now eligible to provide more ram harvest opportunities and could potentially become a source herd for other reintroductions and transplants. Additionally, significant habitat improvements and wildfires can create ideal conditions for bighorn sheep in

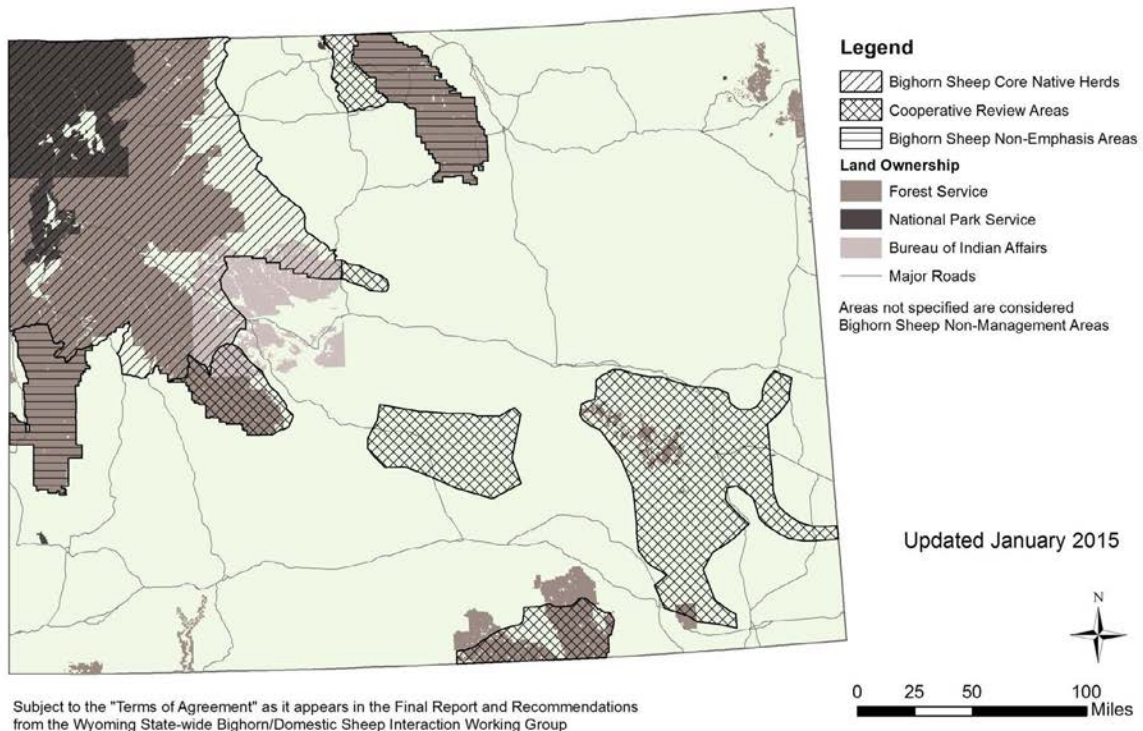
these areas to expand their ranges. This has certainly been the case after the Mullen Fire in the Snowy Range, where collar data shows that the Douglas Creek herd is expanding into new areas.

By creating more herds in appropriate bighorn sheep habitat, we diversify our populations, allow for the potential introduction of new genetics, and by increasing geographically distinct populations assures that disease outbreak in one population doesn't completely decimate the entire state's bighorn sheep. It is for this continued opportunity and the greater good of Wyoming's bighorn sheep that we continue to fund Grant in Aid projects in these other bighorn sheep management areas.

Katie



Wyoming Bighorn Sheep Management Areas



Wyoming Bighorn Sheep Management Areas

Core Native Herds

- Herds that have never been extirpated or reestablished via transplants
 - Highest priority for bighorn sheep management
- All efforts will be made to prevent contact between domestic and bighorn sheep

Cooperative Review Areas

- Areas of suitable bighorn sheep range where proposed changes in bighorn sheep management or domestic sheep use are cooperatively evaluated
- Includes most suitable bighorn sheep range in Wyoming not within Core Native or Non-Emphasis areas.

Non-Emphasis Areas

- Lowest priority areas for bighorn sheep management
- No effort will be made to prioritize/emphasize bighorn sheep unless agreed to by the statewide Domestic/Bighorn Sheep Interaction Working Group

Non-Management Areas

- Areas outside of identified management areas



Photo by RHS LM #393, Chance Butler

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY ZACH MCDERMOTT

As we all move through life, we know we cannot go through it alone. Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation is no different even though we have but one mission in mind "Putting and Keeping Wild Sheep on the Mountain." The partnerships we established have been very instrumental in the success of generating funding for Bighorn Sheep. One of our main partnerships began in 2003 with the Wyoming Big Game License Coalition and the establishing of 5 Governor bighorn sheep tags to be auctioned or raffled off annually. Since inception, the Bighorn Sheep Governor tags have generated over \$5 million in revenue. The goals of the funding focus on Habitat, Disease, Transplants, Conservation Education and ultimately restoring, enhancing, and maintaining bighorn sheep populations in Wyoming. This revenue was key to the allotment buyouts that occurred in the early 2000's, preserving Bighorn sheep habitat and the herds themselves. Through the sales and distribution of these Governor tags to other organizations, it has helped WY-WSF establish key relationships with 3 Wild Sheep Chapters, all of whom do not have Bighorn Sheep in their state. The Eastern, Iowa and Midwest Chapters have all played a significant role in achieving the Bighorn Sheep goals set forth by WY-WSF and the Big Game License Coalition. Each Chapter has donated tens of thousands of dollars to Wyoming and adopted specific herds. In 2018, the Eastern Chapter of Wild Sheep adopted both the Devil's Canyon and Ferris-Seminole herds. They have been instrumental in providing funding for the testing, capturing, and transplanting of bighorns from Devil's Canyon to the Ferris-Seminole Mountains. With that help, the Ferris-Seminole herd has thrived and has met the population objective set forth by the WY G&F. Not only has the area produced population, but also genetics for Big Rams!! Also in 2018, Iowa FNAWS adopted the Teton Range herd. Iowa provided the initial funding of \$12,500 to kick off the workings of the Teton

Bighorn Sheep Working Group. The group was assembled to capture, analyze, and research the sheep and their habitat in the Teton Range year-round as the population size continued to decrease due to Mountain Goats and Winter Recreation. Ultimately, making recommendations to Grand Teton National Park and WY G&F on how best to proceed with saving this iconic herd. Since, this has led to the removal of Mountain Goats and the winter recreation closures in critical bighorn habitat ranges. In 2019, the Midwest Chapter adopted the Whiskey Basin herd and helped kick off the funding effort to create the Whiskey Basin Bighorn Sheep plan. The plan was generated through the collaboration of scientific experts assembled to identify the issues at hand and to provide action items and the research need for the individual issues. The key issues included

Health/Disease, Habitat/Nutrition, and population management. The Plan has since been adopted by WY G&F and the recommendations of the panel are being implemented to help the Whiskey Mountain bighorns. Since the beginning ideas of the plan, \$1.6 million has been generated for research and enhancement. The Midwest Chapter has played a significant role in raising those funds. A special thank you to these Chapters for their partnerships, commitment and the great relationships we have been able to build with their organization and people. Ultimately, we all need to ask ourselves: Why are we here and what kind of legacy do we want to leave behind? For WY Wild Sheep, it's about one thing – Bighorn Sheep, putting more on the landscape and doing everything possible to ensure Wyoming's Bighorns thrive and flourish for generations to come.



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Brynn's Sheep Hunt

By: Brynn Franks ,WSF Member & Bryan Berg, Life Member # 194

“It looks like we’re going hunting this year!!!”

Is what the text message said along with a picture of the Wyoming license draw results indicating that my daughter Brynn had successfully drawn both a Bighorn sheep and a Moose license. This was the result of her applying or buying preference points (during college and nursing school) for 26 years. Starting when she became old enough to hunt big game in Wyoming which was 14 years old at that time. With the change of Wyoming sheep and moose licenses being a once in a lifetime license, these would both be literally her only chance to hunt a bighorn sheep or moose in the state of Wyoming. Our family has always greatly enjoyed sheep hunting so our main priority was the sheep hunt and then on to the moose hunt afterwards.

The sheep license was in an area that we were not familiar with and had not hunted before. I have always thought the best way to learn ‘new country’ is to draw a license there. So the process began of buying maps (I know old school) and talking to several people that were familiar with the area. We got some great help from fellow

hunters and supporters of WY-WSF. We then started putting boots and/or horse tracks on the ground scouting the area. This included many miles and hours behind binoculars and spotting scopes. We had mixed results being that on

hunters, most of whom felt that he was a good one, getting feedback such as he’s a “Cranker” and “that’s a no brainer”. This is exactly what we wanted to hear. He was in a group of 13 rams and living in a basin that appeared to be a good place for a bow hunt. We watched this group of rams for several days awaiting the opening day of archery season.

This next part is still painful for me. On the day before archery season even though I knew better and even told myself that I shouldn’t be doing this. While trying to locate the rams I bumped into them and as you can guess the last time I saw them was when they went over a ridge about a mile away with the big guy in the lead. I was literally sick to my stomach for two days.



some scouting trips we would see a good number of rams and other times not so many or any at all.

Even though we had seen quite a few rams and several good ones throughout the summer we hadn’t seen one that really jumped out as being ‘the one’. Then finally in August we found a ram that we really liked. Never being one that had a lot of confidence in my field judging skills I sent photos of the ram to several seasoned sheep

We hunted several days during archery season but were unable to find a ram that we were willing to shoot with a lot of the season left to hunt. Opening day of rifle season we were up early riding the horses in the dark to get to an area where we had seen a good number of rams while scouting and bow hunting. We hunted all morning and were able to find several small bunches of rams with some very tempting rams amongst them. For the evening

hunt we went to a glassing spot overlooking the area that we had seen the big ram in before season. After a couple hours of glassing we were able to find 10 rams but being a long ways away we were unable to tell exactly how big they were.

The next day again found us in the dark riding into the area that we had seen the 10 rams the night before hoping that the big guy would be with them. After a bit of searching we were able to find the 10 rams but unfortunately not the big one. We then rode over to the basin where we had watched the big ram before season and started glassing. We found 3 rams on a ridge below the basin and with the use of the spotting scope were able to tell that the big one was with them. Finally found him!! We watched them and waited for them to bed down. We were then able to make a stalk that kept us out of sight of the rams. We got set up on a ridge across from the rams. Having watched Brynn make much further shots over the years I was very confident that this would be a done deal. With the shot things got very exciting for a few seconds but ultimately we watched the 3 rams go around a rock cliff and out of sight. We made our way over to where the ram had been and to where we last saw him go around the cliff but were unable to find any blood. Brynn felt bad and I felt bad for her. I told her "that's hunting," and now we just need to go find another one.

We went back to camp during the middle of the day trying not to dwell too much on the happenings of the morning. The evening found us going for a ride along the base of the mountain glassing draws going up the mountain. After several draws and a lot of glassing much to our surprise we found him. We couldn't believe that we found the same ram twice in one day,

especially after shooting at him. We again made a stalk and set up for the shot. With the shot came the obvious 'whap' of a solid hit. The ram took off very fast going out of sight due to the hillside that we were on obstructing our view of the hill he was on. We moved to a good vantage point and Brynn stayed there to watch for him. I went over to the draw and hillside to look for him and/or blood. It was getting dark fast and not wanting to risk bumping him in the dark it was decided to go back to camp and resume our search in the morning.

It was definitely a long night for both of us with every scenario imaginable going through our heads. Not much sleep that night. Finally we were back to where we needed to be at first light and being prepared for a long day of looking if need be. Again, Brynn stayed were she had a good view and I went over to where the ram was. I had just gotten over to the hillside when Brynn yelled "there he is!" She had spotted him piled up just out of sight of what we could see the night before. We met at the sheep and had hugs and high fives. After getting our hands on the ram we were both very happy with what we had. He was everything that we had hoped for.

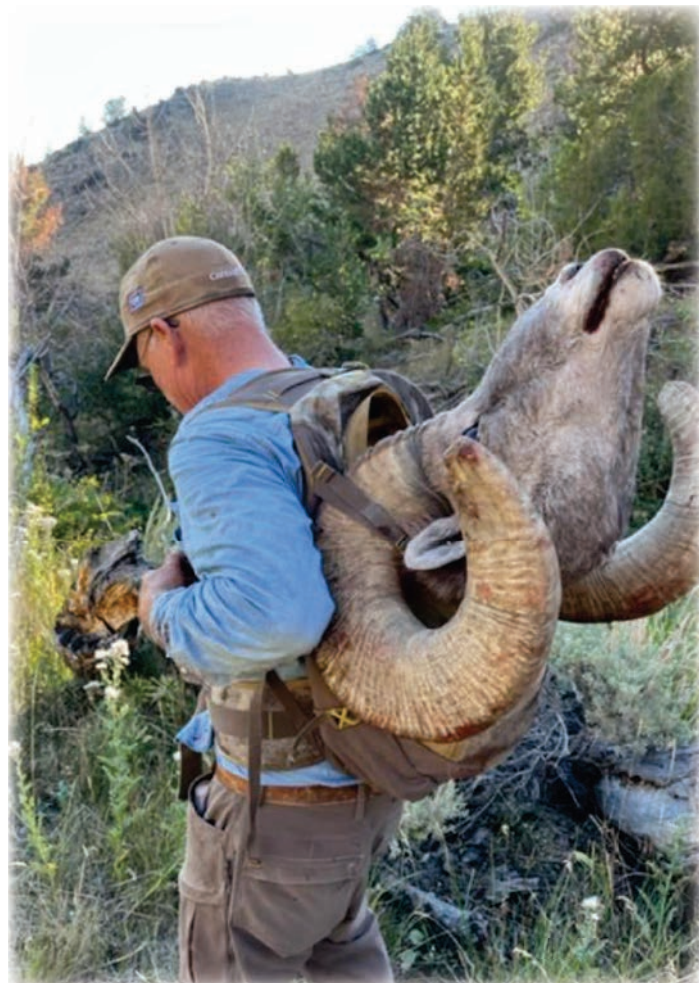
After the picture taking and some reflection on the roller coaster of emotions from the day before. We got him processed and loaded in our packs for the pack out which although a bit of work felt good to be packing out a ram. Yes, the meat was still good and very tasty.

We had a lot of fun and made some great memories while learning some new country and having a great hunt. We made a total of 12 trips to scout and hunt this area. (184 miles one way)

This hunt was literally made possible by the efforts put into transplanting sheep into this area by the Wyoming Game & Fish, BLM and the Wyoming chapter of WSF. We would like to say thank you for putting more 'Sheep On The Mountain'.

I'm not one that likes to dwell on the numbers associated with an animal but rather the hunt itself. But for those that want to know the Game & Fish aged him at 11 ½ years old. He officially scored 185 1/8" gross and 182 3/8" net, with the long horn being 40 ½."

A big THANK YOU to everyone that gave us invaluable information on hunting this area.



Longing For Grandpas

By: Matt Hoobler (Life Member # 656)

The buck stood motionless – fixated on a distant deer in the hazy expanse. The sunrise shot auburn and crimson rays of light through the cedars and wild oaks and onto his glistening frosted hide. He paid me no attention as I motored on past him, headed down the interstate highway that cold November morning. As I marveled at his stately beauty, thoughts of my childhood and the bliss of growing up a farm kid in rural Kansas flooded my mind. I might as well have been driving down memory lane at that moment in time. I recalled some of my first pheasant hunts and my yearning to be old enough to carry more than my Daisy B.B. gun. I remembered seeing my first bobcat in the thicket, catching perch and crawdads in the creek near our farm, and finding my first pair of shed antlers. Oh the freedom of being 10-years-old and having miles of open prairie and wooded hillsides to explore. I could only dream of a hunt “out west” and imagined all the mountains I would climb and the creatures I would stalk. As I thought about my best friend I grew up with and all the people I’ve ventured afield with since then, I abruptly realized I never hunted with my grandpas.

Both of my grandpas enjoyed all that the Kansas outdoors had to offer, yet our activities were never shared. My grandpa Al left

my life too early due to Leukemia, so the opportunity to create memories never had a chance. I’ve heard hunting stories of my grandpa Al and how he always marched into the field before the crack of dawn, many times making the first flushed pheasant of the day a shadowy streak on the dark horizon. Grandpa Al never wore a

grew up hunting by his side, spending many long days pushing the pastures and tromping through the wet sward grass in the bottom of the waterways. I remember my grandpa’s funeral, and how once the family cleaned out his top dresser drawer there were thirteen pocketknives in a little box – one for each grandchild. I knew exactly



hunting vest; keeping his shells in the pockets of his overalls that he always donned whether farming, turning a wrench or hunting. My grandpa was notorious for not chambering a shell at the start of the hunt, either for safety or to give the pheasants and quail a fighting chance, only to show how good of marksman he was by dropping the birds once he finally pumped in a shell. My dad and his brother

which one I wanted – the one he carried with him – and was lucky enough to get handed that knife when the time came to divvy them up. Unfortunately, this is the last of my memories of my grandpa Al.

My granddad Bob was a duck and pheasant hunter and spent his summers seeking walleye and bass throughout Kansas and the Midwest. We didn’t visit him

often, but when we did, he would load up a paper grocery sack full of his old copies of Field and Stream and send them home with me. I was so excited that I would flip through every page and read all I could about such exciting topics as jigging for small mouths, turkey calling with a slate, and learning new knots from the step-by-step diagrams. Apparently, passing on old hunting magazines was enough to think in his mind that he was introducing me to the outdoors or sharing a common interest between us. I fished with my granddad Bob one time when he and my grandma came to Colorado shortly after we moved there. It was mid-summer and we ventured to a little Colorado River tributary high in the Rockies. I was eager, because even though I fished a lot on my own back then, I had never fished with him before. I can't tell you if anyone caught anything that day, but at one fishing hole he found a small plastic container and handed it to me. He told me that if I cleaned it up and glued some felt in the bottom, I could put swivels or spare hooks in it. It was the first time he'd ever shared advice or given me anything to use in the outdoors. Even though I've been through hundreds of flies and lures and miles of leader and line since that day, that plastic container still holds swivels in my tackle box.

After a morning of pheasant hunting with his friends, my granddad Bob collapsed in the shower and passed away due to a stroke. The bouquet of flowers on his coffin contained the tail feathers of the two roosters he'd shot the morning he died. Before I returned home from the funeral, I took the feathers with me. I wanted them as a reminder of him, because what I couldn't fill in my heart with memories together, I hoped to cling to the thought that he loved the outdoors as much as I did. I just wished we'd shared that love together. I wish that of both these men.

Though I may have a sentimental pocketknife, swivel box and

pheasant feathers, these items can't replace a lifetime of lost memories. I ache for any patina faded photos of me as a child with my grandfathers. We could have been standing over a day's limit of quail, each holding a horn of a trophy ram, or grinning from ear-to-ear while showcasing a full stringer of bluegills. I'd love to be the grandson who would stop by the rest home and help my grandpa climb into my old truck, then bounce down some rutted rural road just to let him sit on the bank of a pond to wet his line one more time. Perhaps one day we will all meet again, and I can hunt side-by-side with them down that wooded hedgerow in the sky. Until then I'll just keep longing for my grandpas.



Grandpa Al and his brother Lloyd pose with their catch of the day.

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Whiskey Basin Core Native Herd

By: Katie Cheesbrough (RHS Life Member # 632)

The Whiskey Mountain bighorn sheep (WMBS) herd encompasses the northern Wind River Mountain Range in west-central Wyoming. The herd has been an important component in bighorn sheep management for Wyoming and other western states for many decades. Recognized for years as the largest congregation of wintering bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) in the country, the herd has been a management focus for the Wyoming Game & Fish Department (WGFD), federal land management agencies, and non-government conservation groups for over half a century.

From 1949 through 1995 over 1,900 bighorn sheep were captured and moved from the WMBS herd to establish new bighorn sheep herds or augment existing herds throughout the West. At its peak, the herd provided substantial recreational opportunities for hunters and photographers. Following a large, all-age die-off caused by pneumonia during the winter of 1990/1991, the bighorn sheep herd has consistently experienced low lamb production leading to continued population decline. Observations of the bighorn sheep herd over the past 28 years also reveal the persistence of bighorn sheep (lambs and adults) exhibiting nasal discharge, coughing, parasites, viral infections, and low body mass. All of these symptoms indicate bighorn sheep in the herd are generally unhealthy, likely subject to environmental stressors, and continually exposed to contagious or transmissible pathogens and parasites.

It is unknown how many bighorn sheep inhabited the northern Wind

River Mountains prior to European settlement. Early explorers noted mountain sheep were easily found throughout the Wind River Range. It is known that increased domestic livestock grazing in the late 1880s through the early 1900s had a dramatic impact on wild sheep populations throughout the West. In particular domestic sheep grazing contributed to large-scale die-offs of bighorn sheep due to transmission of bacterial pathogens. By 1940, Honess and Frost (1942) estimated there were approximately 500 bighorn sheep in the Wind River Mountains. By the mid-1950s, WGFD acknowledged the importance of maintaining crucial bighorn sheep winter ranges on and adjacent to Whiskey Mountain for bighorn sheep persistence in the Wind River Mountains.

It appears bighorn sheep numbers increased substantially during this from the 1940s-1970s. And held steady from 1958-1971 as indicated by classification data. However, WGFD personnel noted a significant decline in lamb/ewe ratios in the early 1970s which led to a study indicating poor herd health that may have been due to inadequate forage, overpopulation, and exposure to disease. Researchers and managers had concerns that any additional environmental stress on this herd could easily result in a catastrophic disease outbreak. This prediction came true during the winter of 1990/1991, with a disease outbreak resulting in significant mortality across all age classes with the highest mortalities seen in lambs and continued low lamb recruitment.

Documented bighorn sheep

pneumonia-related die-offs typically show a pattern of low lamb recruitment for approximately 3-5 years following the disease outbreak. After this period, recruitment often increases gradually and populations recover and begin to grow. In contrast, the WMBS herd has continued to decline due to poor lamb recruitment over the past 30 years.

The WMBS Herd's inability to recover from the die-off in the 90s resulted in further studies which continued to find poor bighorn sheep health attributed to nutritional deficiencies despite decreased populations and underutilization of forage. Capture studies done from 2015-2018 indicate that adult bighorn sheep maintain body condition throughout winter better than bighorn sheep in the nearby Jackson and Cody herds (Monteith 2017), suggesting that the WMBS herd may be subject to some unknown nutritional stress on their summer range.

Compounding the nutritional issues identified in this herd is the persistence of bacteria and other pathogens. Multiple species of bacteria related to pneumonia in bighorn sheep have been consistently identified in the population during testing over the years. Recently, the presence of sinus tumors has been observed in this population as well. Other diseases and parasites such as contagious echthyma (ORF) and lung worms are also known to be present. At this point, managers do not know if poor bighorn sheep health in the WMBS herd is strictly due to pathogens and parasites or if the persistence of pathogens and parasites is the result of

nutritional stress. Most recently, increased wolf activity in and around Whiskey Mountain appears to have altered the behavior and distribution of bighorn sheep on winter range.

Over the past 30 years, WGFD has taken a number of management actions aimed at improving bighorn sheep health and spurring population growth in this herd. Actions have included forage enhancement on winter range including prescribed burns and fertilization, de-worming bighorn sheep, removing clinically ill bighorn sheep with symptoms of pneumonia, salt and mineral supplementation, and predator control. None of these actions have had any noticeable, positive impact on the population.

Regardless of the reasons for the continued decline of the WMBS herd, it now appears

the population size is less than what it was in the 1940s at approximately 334 bighorn sheep. The management challenges WMBS herd are complex and require novel solutions. In 2019 the WGFD engaged the public in a collaborative process to fully assess the situation in the WMBS herd and come up with a management plan to address the challenges facing this herd. The plan has been completed and the WGFD continues to work with partners like the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation to ensure the future of this very important core native herd.

It has been proposed that the persistence of pneumonia in chronically infected bighorn sheep herds may be attributed to individual ewes that consistently harbor the pathogens and continually reinfect others, especially lambs. These ewes

have been termed “chronic carriers” and their removal is associated with a fade out of pathogen presence within the herd and subsequent herd growth. Researchers have created a “test and remove” strategy that requires several rounds of disease testing, determining the chronic carriers, removal of the chronic carriers from the population and continued disease monitoring within the population.

After several western states have seen success utilizing the test and remove method, the WGFD has proposed implementation and evaluation of this strategy in the Red Creek portion of the WMBS herd. In cooperation with Kevin Monteith at the University of Wyoming, this management strategy will be rigorously assessed to determine its effectiveness.



Photo Courtesy of Steve Kilpatrick.



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A Z Y R E



Conservation Through Hunting: Achieving Dreams

By: Bralli Clifford (RHS Life Member # 538)

A Desert Bighorn Sheep has always been one of those lifetime goals that I never believed I would have the opportunity to attain.

But the passion to hunt, coupled with my extremely supportive husband and some very close friends, changed the trajectory and put me in touch with AlCampo Hunting, Rancho @ sierraelalamo. I researched them through their website, hunter reviews and then called them directly to discuss their program. It was immediately obvious that AlCampo and the Artee family have a very strong focus on conservation and their primary goal is putting and keeping sheep, and other

native species, on the mountain. They have received numerous awards, including the most recent 2022 CIC Markhor award for conservation as well as just launching the first bi national

research project using satellite telemetry on desert bighorn sheep with Professor Stephen Webb from Texas A&M and Wildlife Old Mexico. I had found my hunt, we booked immediately and began getting prepared. We were grateful to



meet the first of the four Artee brothers, Jacob and his wife Letty at the Wild Sheep Foundation Sheep Show in Reno a few weeks before flying to Mexico.

Rancho @sierraelalamo is located on an abandoned mine within 30 miles of the Sea of Cortez. The mountains of the ranch have an elevation of 3,000 feet which is the highest in the state. We were met by Jorge Artee, the second of the four brothers, at the airport

and traveled with him to the ranch. Low rolling hills surrounded the steep and rocky peaks and multiple mine buildings remained in various levels of repair. We were greeted by Javier, a third brother, BJoe Coy, a close friend of ours from Wyoming, as well as the rest of the guides and chefs who would all be supporting us during the hunt. We would have six sets of eyes on the mountains, not including our own, in pursuit of mature rams.

As with any sheep hunt, the terrain and weather are usually mitigating factors in your success. We had trained for the hunt and felt confident in our physical abilities to manage the terrain.

And because we were in Mexico we knew, or thought we knew, that we would have fair weather and plenty of sunshine.

Our days were spent hiking and glassing the mountains of Sierra El Alamo. We observed a healthy population of ewes and felt fortunate to witness some of the first lambs of the season playing on the ridge lines. There were multiple rams of a lower age class as well as opportunities at mature rams that we dug out of the many canyons, hills and cactus dotted terrain.

Early the morning of day five, we spotted two rams on a ridge line. One of the rams was mature and worthy to pursue. It was decided that we would leave the truck where it was, while we made our way to them.

The weather forecast had predicted rain the night before and an hour of light rain from 9-10am. We watched the skies and as we worked our way up the mountain the clouds opened up. We hunkered under a rock ledge for 15-20 minutes while rain, hail and snow (yes! Snow in Mexico) drenched the surrounding landscape. Jorge could not believe the weather and said they had never had those types of conditions on a hunt.

After completing the final ascent, we attempted to relocate the rams and realized they had moved during our hike. We refocused our efforts in multiple directions to find them again finally realizing that they had actually gone below us, undetected and were now on a ridge behind us and rapidly approaching the top where they would disappear again. The wind was blowing at a likely 40-50mph range as we hunkered down and got into position.

Two successful shots were placed

front of us and as he crested the ridge he looked back and pumped both arms in the air in obvious success. I lowered my rifle and walking sticks to the ground and cried tears of joy and relief. The ram was lying just beyond our view over the ridge and the emotions continued as I approached him. An hour later I was still overwhelmed with gratitude as the rest of our team crested the ridge to celebrate the successful harvest with us. Many hugs and thanks were shared as we took photos and began to field dress the ram. Our entire

descent off the mountain found us in a soaking rain that had us all completely drenched by the time we reached the trucks, but none of us lost the giant smiles on our faces the entire hike.



before the ram walked out of our site line over the ridge, lagging slowly behind the other rams he had been with. My heart dropped and my adrenaline surged. I had wounded a sheep and I was devastated. After a quick, out loud, angry assault of myself while running across slippery rocks towards the ridge, I refocused my thoughts into finishing my job and ethically harvesting the ram. Jorge was in

My success on this hunt must be credited to the following people, my husband and best friend Greg, Jimmy Owens and BJoe Coy who suggested we take a look at AlCampo Hunting, the entire Artee family and the team of guides and support staff at the Sierra El Alamo ranch.

Ol' Lefty's Band of Rams

By: Josh Kilpatrick (Life Member # 397)

The sunrise was cresting the far ridge. Our heart rates dropped and the cool air, combined with sweat, chilled our bodies as we sat at the top of a ridge overlooking a steep, open-faced draw and far knoll where the sheep had been seen the night prior. Colter and I knew they could be close and were concerned a nearby camp might be pursuing the same bunch of sheep we had watched for several days.

Turning the prime age of 39 years in January of 2022, I had decided that I was ready to do the hunt of a lifetime. I had so diligently prepared for this through the purchase of preference points the past 24-yrs.

The unit I applied for was in northwest Wyoming. It was a spot I had become familiar with through past scouting and hunting trips with my Dad, Steve Kilpatrick, and son Levi. We made a trip to the spot a year prior, looking for sheep and at the same time doing a little archery elk hunting. In late July of 2022, we made another scouting trip.

The spot was spectacular. Creeks and waterfalls that flowed to expansive alpine meadows lined with old-growth trees and backdropped with sheer cliff faces. It left me thinking the place I had selected for the hunt was full of mystery, ripe for exploration and

perfect sheep habitat. As we crested out of the drainage bottoms, we were led to never-ending plateaus running for miles, the edges mostly lined with steep terrain and cliffs.

The morning of Saturday, August 27th came quickly. Nine adults, three kids, twenty horses and four dogs all coalesced at the trail head for the pack-in. The fortune of good weather was on our side

along with several philosophical conversations were being had as the group got to know each other. The excitement was contagious.

After moving a couple hundred yards closer and pulling out a spotting scope, we discovered a band of eight rams. One was noticeably bigger and darker than the rest. The ram was nearly a full curl and broomed. There



L-R: Nick, Emily, Brian, Josh, Matt, Levi Kelli, Steve (Dad) & Colter

with sun and warmer temperatures forecasted out for 10 days.

As we rode out, mid-morning on a blue-bird day, there was still a coolness in the air from a rain the prior night that quenched any dust from the trail that would have otherwise choked-out our horses and riders alike. On the way, kids were racing their horses and giggling with laughter, dogs were kicking up grouse and small talk

were two others that were not broomed, but nearly full curl as well. As we glassed the dark-colored ram, we noticed he had a sizable patch of horn missing at the top of his left side. For ease of identifying later in conversation, Colter named the ram "Ol' Lefty".

We arrived back at camp later that day to share in the details of our discoveries. It soon became clear that Matt, Brian and Nick

had all seen the same rams!

The next morning was spent packing our light gear and food to set up a spike camp on the plateau to the east. With the help of my Dad, we loaded a couple of mules with our gear and food and picked our way up the face to the east of camp. As we climbed to our new camp site, we were able to spot the rams we had seen the day prior. The band of rams now numbered sixteen total, which left us pondering the size of the additional four rams none of us had glassed at close range. It became increasingly evident that our new camp would be a perfect location to keep tabs on the rams over the coming days before the season opener.

Later that evening, Colter and I prepared for the next morning's pursuit of Ol' Lefty. Like two seasoned veterans, our thoughts aligned as we discussed what to take and when the alarm would be set. I couldn't help but feel some nervousness along with excitement as we prepared; questioning some of our plans. Colter sensed this, and in his usual calm and assuring way he simply said, "Hey man, we've been training our whole lives for this." He was right. We were as ready as we'd ever be.

At 4:30am our alarms sounded, but it didn't matter, we were wide awake anyway. Colter and I made our way just south of the location where we had both seen Ol' Lefty on the first day of scouting. Days of watching the rams had led us to believe they could be anywhere on the plateau, or even just below the top where we had first put glass on him and the other rams. With the breeze in our faces, we made our way up a rock-laden chute to the south of the bowl Ol' Lefty was in, putting us along the cliff faces

on the south end of the plateau. We reached a location a couple hundred yards short of the plateau's crest where we waited in the dark for the daylight to start breaking.

"Stop!"

As Colter grabbed my arm, I knew we were busted. Colter whispered, "There's a ram 250 yards to your left looking right at us." Emphatically and under his breath, "Just don't move." We both stood there statuesque as the seconds ticked by, and only after a couple minutes he said, "Ok, he is back feeding and no others are looking." He then said, "Slowly get down." With the ram and the others behind him unalarmed, we crouched slowly below the rise separating us, knowing we had dodged my big mistake and couldn't be luckier. Out of sight, we moved slowly back up the hillside, taking advantage of the terrain to remain under cover. We were able to make our way above the rams and to a boulder with an adequate shooting rest. We knew that based on the direction the rams were feeding, it would be possible they could pop into view 50 yards or up to 300 yards away. I waited with my gun perched on the boulder and pointed in the direction of the closest position we thought the rams may appear.

Colter, as my spotter, saw the first ram appear out of a gully running up the hillside at an approximate distance of 250 yards. As I repositioned for a shot, it would not be long before a handful of others would work their way into view, which included two un-broomed full curl rams. With great anticipation, the dark-colored ram with broomed-off horns and the damaged horn on the left side stepped into view. It was him, Ol'

Lefty! The ram that had consumed my thoughts for five days. With little hesitation, I moved the safety to fire. As my mom always told me "Squeeze, don't pull".

I let a bullet fly, and Ol' Lefty took his last breaths. He disappeared back down into the gully, and the commotion of the shot caused confusion for the remaining fifteen rams as they ran a short distance to the ridge above, only to stare down at the fallen ram. They stood there for another fifteen minutes as Colter and I watched. The scene left me with a great appreciation for these animals and the life taken, which must have been the patriarch of the herd. Ol' Lefty would now feed my family and friends, and his horns would spur countless memories and stories memorializing this event. He was now priceless to me.

As I reflect back on this experience that has now come to an end, I am excited and hopeful for the future. I have begun purchasing preference points for my kids and it is my hope that someday I can share in the experience of their sheep hunts. I will continue to take them with me and teach them how to continue our family tradition and culture around hunting. They are the future of advocacy for hunting, conservation of our public lands and the dwindling resource of bighorn sheep. We will continue to prioritize family time in the backcountry and developing the skills, physical abilities, mental toughness and patience it takes to be successful. Hopefully this was one of the first chapters in their book of many more hunting stories to come.

Bison Hunting: A Walk in the Park, Well Sort Of

By: William Gray Plunkett

Growing up in the deep south, the allure of western hunting was something I dreamed of frequently. The ability to hunt elk, antelope, and mule deer in the mountains drew me to Wyoming as soon as I could possibly get here, right after college graduation. These dreams of the West, however, never once consisted of having the chance to hunt a free-ranging wild bison. An animal that is a true icon of North America. An animal that was on the precipice of extinction.

The North American bison is a true story of conservation success. An animal that once roamed from the wooded terrain of the East to the plains of the West dwindled down through the course of western civilization. The only herd that survived throughout the decimation of the bison was a herd in northwest Wyoming, residing in what would become Yellowstone National Park. Thankfully, through conservation efforts made by various agencies, there are still opportunities to see these magnificent creatures in the wild and even to hunt them if you are fortunate enough to draw a tag. Which I was this fall, 2022.

Drawing a once in a lifetime tag is met with mixed emotions: excitement and anxiety, enthusiasm

and nervousness. It is no secret that the Wyoming bison hunt is no walk in the park. Pun intended. You will spend the bulk of your time navigating the boundaries of Grand Teton National Park and various surrounding public lands. Not to mention, the logistics that come into play when pursuing an animal with the sheer size of a bison. After



multiple conversations with prior tag holders, it became apparent that horses and/or mules were almost a necessity. Something that I did not have. Thankfully, Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation life member, Steve Kilpatrick, was ready and willing to make a trade. Being an avid waterfowl hunter, I would

take him and his new Labrador retriever, Cinder, on multiple waterfowl hunts. The best of trades.

The hunt preparation started in July with full intentions of finding a bison to kill in August. However, that was not going to be as easy as it sounded. Our first trip in August started full of excitement but ended the same way the next several would- seeing bison just across the line in Grand Teton National Park, safe from any potential projectiles from my 338 Win Mag. Every morning we headed to the same spots only to find that the bison had not moved more than a few feet overnight. I swear, earthworms probably moved farther. Though, it was hard to complain or get frustrated because each morning we were greeted by a sunrise illuminating the Tetons, a sight that will never get old.

As fall faded and winter arrived with fury, the conclusion of the allotted season began to bear down quickly. The mule rides began to look different with ever-increasing snow depths, but the results were mostly the same. Bison were not where we needed them to be. Especially the occasion were we unknowingly rode up on a group of bulls positioned on the opposite side of a willow thicket we were riding through while still in the park. I am not sure if the bison, the

mules, Steve, or myself were the most surprised about the encounter. It became apparent that the bison and Silas, the mule, did not like the presence of each other. A western standoff that would rival that of Clint Eastwood's *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, turned into Silas deciding she was going to vacate. Quickly. Thank goodness for deep, soft snow.

The pressure of having this once-in-a-lifetime tag did not set in until the new year approached. The last month of a 6-month long season approached with an unfilled tag still in my pocket. Thanks to a text from a local Jackson-area game warden, Jon Stevens, it became apparent that the time had come to change the pursuit of the bison from the Bridger-Teton National Forest to the National Elk Refuge. By the time, Steve and I arrived at the National Elk Refuge the herd of bison had been split into multiple groups. After conversing with several Elk Refuge employees, we were in pursuit. The first group of bison we found were moving in a single file and it became apparent there was not going to be a chance to get close enough for an ethical



shot. We regrouped, saddled the mules and horses, and on a trot, we went. Once we got around 500 yards from the herd I took off on foot while Steve stayed back with

the mules and horses. The herd was in a tight bunch and cover was hard to come by. After navigating to 200 yards, it was time to pick a bison from the group and execute a shot. I glassed the herd over and picked the one that stood the tallest. Two shots later and my once-in-a-lifetime tag had been filled.

The memory of the hunt after the harvest is one I will remember for the rest of my life. While I was moving in on the herd, Steve contacted my wife, Katherine, so she could join us. The three of us enjoyed the success of the hunt together while we began the arduous task of deboning and packing out a bison.

The journey of this hunt is one I am very thankful for. A journey that began in the blistering heat of August and ended in the depths of a Wyoming winter. The opportunity to hunt a species that was so close to



disappearing from the landscape altogether. An animal that in my wildest dreams I never thought I would have the chance to hunt, in a landscape that will leave you awe-inspired no matter how many times you are fortunate to see it. We truly do live in paradise.



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Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation
39th Annual Convention and Fundraiser 2023
June 1-3, 2023, Little America Hotel
2800 W. Lincolnway, Cheyenne, WY 82009

Thursday, June 1, 2023

2:00-6:00 p.m. Board Meeting at AVI Engineering
1103 Old Town Lane, #101

Friday, June 2, 2023 Underwritten by: Capital Lumber

6:00-10:00 p.m. Friday Night Rendezvous -- Grand Ballroom
Chicken Alfredo, Shrimp Alfredo, Soup & Salad, Breadsticks, and Refreshments.
2022 Bighorn Sheep Hunt Summary by Tony Mong. Q& A with G&F Director,
Brian Nesvig.

Saturday, June 3, 2023

7:15-9:30 a.m. Life Member Breakfast Buffet (Life Members Only) -- Grand Ballroom, Scrambled
Eggs with Peppers and Onions, Apple-Wood Smoked Bacon, Biscuits and Gravy,
and Refreshments. Life Member and Ramshorn Society Incentive Drawings.

10:00-11:30 a.m. Membership/Business Meeting -- Grand Ballroom

11:40-1:00 p.m. Break for Lunch (on your own)

1:00-3:00 p.m. Seminars -- Rendezvous Room

1:00-4:00 p.m. Youth Activities- by WSF, Dr. Ryan Brock, and NBSC—
Grand Ballroom Hallway

5:00-6:00 p.m. Happy Hour, Games, Raffles -- Pre-Ballroom

6:30-7:45 p.m. Dinner -- Grand Ballroom. Rib-Eye Steak, Dry Herb and Spice Rub, Fingerling
Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables, New York Style Cheesecake with Strawberry
Sauce, and Refreshments (Kids < 12- chicken tenders and fries)

8:15-10:00 p.m. Live Auction and Raffle Prize Awards -- Grand Ballroom

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Photo by Mark Gocke

Blue Chip General and Gun Raffles



Blue Chip/General Raffle Information - Buy your tickets before May 9 and get a \$20 bonus! Six sheets of 5 tickets plus a Blue Chip entry for \$100. This year's Blue Chip prizes are Ram, Ewe, Kid and Sheep Camp. A whole table full of prizes for each. Put your general raffle tickets in the bucket for the prize theme you would like to win. Archery, Backpacking, Camping, Cooking, Dogs, Fly Fishing, Ice Fishing, Guns, Ladies, Processing, Survival, and Youth.

10 Gun Raffle - Purchase 6 tickets for \$50 and put them in the buckets for the weapons you would like to win. 10 Great prizes including: Weatherby, Sig/Sauer, Taurus, Savage, Diamondback, Christiansen Arms, Browning, and a Prime Compound Bow.

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You must be eligible to receive these items at your location.

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- 2023 Wyo Commissioner’s Deer, Elk, or Antelope tag
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- 6 day Mt Lion hunt with Milliron TJ Outfitters during Fall 2023 season.
- 2024/2025 10 day Dall sheep hunt with Raven’s Throat Outfitters in NWT, Canada
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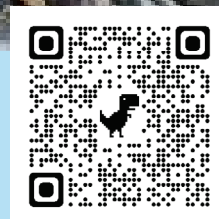
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A winner will be drawn at Wyoming's WSF Annual Convention in Cheyenne, WY on June 3, 2023. You need not be present to win.
The contest is open to everyone.



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Life Member Breakfast

Saturday, June 3, 2023 at 7:15AM
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Free for Life and RHS Members Only

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Jake's Bull

By: Curt Shatzer (Life Member # 220)

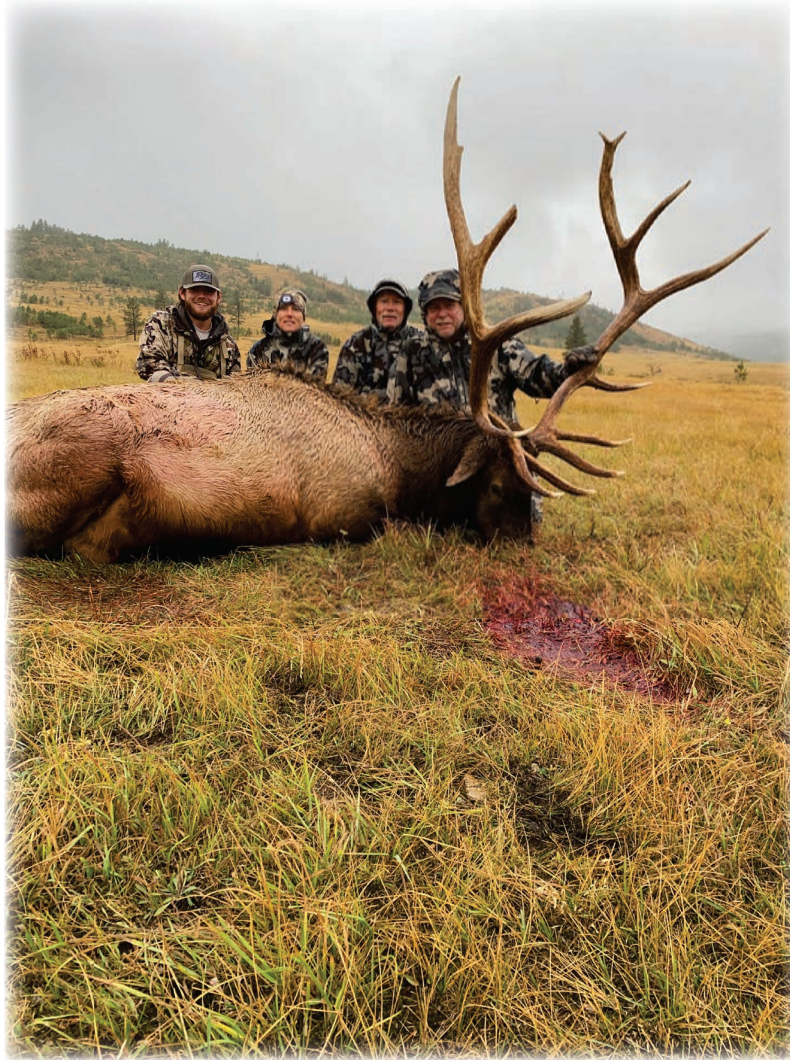
This story is more about friendship than the bull itself.

In high school I met Jake Haivala. We had a deep connection in outdoors and hunting. It didn't matter if it was coyotes or our shared interest in hounds. Most of all the love of big elk was strong! As life does, we drifted apart and lost touch for nearly 15 years. Out of the blue he called me in 2010 and from that moment on we picked up like it was yesterday when we last spoke. He wasn't much for small talk and the little details of daily life. However, we spoke nearly everyday from that point on. At that point I had a couple good lion and bobcat dogs and he was just getting into it. The fact he lived in the middle of the best lion country I have ever hunted brought me to his place. We treed a Big Tom that I brought back home with me.

The lion hunting was impressive but I could not get over the elk! The big bulls seemed to be around every corner. Jake was by far the best elk hunter I had ever been around. He was very humble and never bragged about his success. We made a point

to get together a couple times a year hunting coyotes or cats. I always loved getting pictures of the big bulls that summered and wintered around his house.

It wasn't until 2019 that I could afford to start applying for tags outside of WY. He invited



me to start trying. I knew the odds were stacked against me. Typically it took 12-15 points to start having a possible chance of drawing that tag for a rifle hunt. Just like I expected, no success on my first year of applying.

The morning of Sept. 3rd 2020 I

received the worst call I have ever taken. He had been killed in a freak accident. I was in disbelief. I had just spoken to him a few hours before. I can say that I had no idea how much his daily conversations and friendship meant until it was gone. In a blink of an eye he was

gone. Attending his quiet small service at his home was gut wrenching to say the least. I made a point to stay in touch with his wonderful wife Sarah. I made several attempts to fly up and see her but as I neared that beautiful mountain range he once hiked on a daily basis I would turn the plane around. Jake was gone and I didn't want to face it.

Needless to say the idea of applying for an elk license in 2021 was of no interest to me. Jake had many good friends but a guy by the name of Ted was at the top. I did lean on Ted when I just needed some one to talk to. He knew Jake as well as anyone and understood the loss. Like in every situation like this, time does heal. I

remember speaking to Ted about applying and if I did draw would he like to help. I knew the odds were less than 5% but I needed to keep adding to the points.

The Montana draw came out and I didn't check it for a day or two because "I didn't draw anyways".

When I did check I was in disbelief. To the point I called the Fish and Game in Helena and had a lady check for me. She giggled and confirmed that I had drawn. The first person I reached out to was Sarah. She replied “F*! Yeah, come on up”. When I called Ted the plans started being made. In late July that summer my son and I made a trip to help Sarah with some cow work (and look at elk). It was then that Sarah said she would like to be a part of the hunt if possible. That meant so much to me. That trip was so healing for me.

On that trip we looked at 50-60 bulls in that area. It was very surreal. One bull just stood out from others. He had a giant frame and top. There were several big bulls in that 340-350’s class but they just didn’t compare to this one. The bulls always leave to go rut, who knew if any of these elk would return after the rut was over.

Connor (my son) and I packed up camp and food for 30 days. I wasn’t coming home without a bull that was worthy of this tag. Just a couple days before we left for MT the bulls started to show back up. I tried to keep an open mind and accept that it was still a hunt and anything could happen. With the help of Ted we set up a nice wall tent camp and headed straight out for an evening glassing session. One of the first bulls we

saw was the big topped bull from summer. Every time I looked at him I kept thinking “is he really the one”. We still had a day and a half before season opened. Over that time we looked at 25-30 different bulls. The big top bull was always there but away from the other bachelor groups. There was one



bull that peaked my interest that we guessed in the 350-355 class.

Opening day came and it was rainy and foggy. Same routine. Looking at bulls and wondering how it would all unfold over the next few weeks. When we would see the big topped bull, Ted would say “he is bigger than you are thinking”. Connor took his own pickup and Ted and I took mine to look at country from different

angles. Connor called me on the radio saying “I think you better come look at the big top bull, he is next to a couple others we were calling 330-340 type bulls”. When I looked at him next to the other bulls I couldn’t believe my eyes. There was absolutely no comparison. When I asked Ted

if I was making a mistake by passing him he replied “that is the biggest bull I have seen in this area all fall, and I just got done guiding on the neighbor (which holds around 4500-5000 elk)”! Oh well that makes things a little different. Ted, Sarah, Connor and I took off to see what we could get done. The stalk was perfect and we ended up harvesting this giant of a bull. Walking up to him I told Connor he just keeps getting bigger and bigger. In my head I could hear Jake say “did you think I would let you kill a dink!” I knew that Jake had his hand in this hunt from the time my name was selected. Lots of tears and hugs were shared. It truly was my dream

bull. Great steaks and a fine bottle of wine was shared that night. I owe so much to Jake and Sarah for making this dream a possibility. Ted is one of the most humble genuine people I have ever known.

Life only gives you a very small number of this caliber of people in your life. Please enjoy and appreciate every moment.

RumaRam

By: Andrew David (Annual Member)

Back in 2020 I was very fortunate and drew the one random tag in a unit that only gave out 5 tags total.

It wasn't just any unit though, it was the Seminoe/Ferris unit. The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation along with Wyoming Game and Fish Department have done a ton of work in this area and this ram is a testament to that.

Once I had the tag in my pocket it was time to start scouting. I had the option of two hunt areas 17 or 26. After spending some time in both I was drawn more to the rugged timbered terrain that 26 had to offer. I decided I would focus most of my attention there but also explore the 17 side some also. Not knowing anything about sheep

hunting, the first few weeks were a little rough as far as sheep sightings but as time went on I started to find more and more. I received a couple tips of a big ram that was living on the 26 side. This fueled the fire and the search intensified. The weeks went by and I still had not turned up this mysterious big

I narrowed it down to a ram I found on the 26 side that I named JarJar because he reminded me of the Star Wars character.

Opening day of archery came and I glassed up a band of rams bedded down low next to the lake shore. I couldn't make out if JarJar was in

there so I decided to make a stalk to close the distance and see. As I got to within 200 yards of the bedded rams I looked over to my right and bedded about 70 yards away was a ram I couldn't see from my previous vantage point. He was broadside to me and staring my direction. I could tell he was a BIG



ram. That's when I gave him the name RumaRam because I was almost convinced it was nothing more than a legend. Opening day of archery season was approaching and between the two areas I had looked over 52 different rams.

ram but wasn't comfortable taking the shot so we just sat there staring at each other until eventually he had enough and trotted away. When he got up and turned my jaw dropped! I knew that this was him, this was the mysterious RumaRam.

Over the next couple weeks I was able to turn him up pretty often and even got a couple more stalks on him with him winning each round. It still bewilders me how I spent months looking for him with no luck and now I could turn him up almost every trip. With rifle season fast approaching I decided I didn't want to blow him out with another failed stalk and spent the last few days just sitting with him from sunrise to sunset. The day before the opener I was struggling to turn up the band of rams, I glassed farther away and saw a band with a big ram in it. Thinking they moved overnight I moved to get a better look and in the process found the band with RumaRam in it right below me. If he is there then who is this new ram I found? After some investigating I found it was a Ram that a photographer in the area had named "BigDan." While he was an impressive ram I still liked the look of RumaRam more so I stayed focused on him and watched him until it was too dark to see.

Opening day of rifle was finally here and I had some great company to join me on this trip up the mountain which included my buddies Ronnie, Chad, and Randy. We got to the glassing point just after sunrise and within minutes I was able to turn up the band of rams

again. I remember pacing back and forth because I was so excited we found them again. Then it was time for me to make my move. I left the guys at the glassing spot and made my way down the canyon to get into position. I was able to get directly across the canyon from the ram. I got set up on the ram and had a clear shot at his vitals. His head was behind a tree so I decided to wait until he stepped out so I knew for sure I was on the right one. He stepped out and it definitely was NOT RumaRam! That was almost a costly mistake. I relocated RumaRam out in the open. Settled my cross hairs and squeezed the trigger. After the shot he took off like nothing happened and

all the rams grouped up together behind a tree. Had I just blown my opportunity after all this work? How could I have missed? Well about 30 seconds later he stumbled out of the group and down the mountain which was confirmed by cheers from the guys above me!

I'll never forget walking up to this animal, they truly are amazing creatures. After we got him field dressed and caped out we packed him back to the truck, enjoyed some cold beverages and put a tape to him. We roughed him right around 186" and after the 60 day drying period he officially scored 185 6/8 gross and 185 4/8 net. This is one hunt I will never forget.



Eastern Chapter Raffle Winner

By: Jon Stanek

I was extremely fortunate and shocked to find out that I had won this past years Eastern Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation Wyoming governor's tag auction by buying ONE ticket! I booked the hunt with Josh Martoglio of Trails West Outfitters and began to dream about September.

Josh picked me up at the hotel on September 11th and we headed to the trail head. According to Josh, we were heading to a "Hell Hole" for a few days to see if we could find a large ram that had been seen earlier in the season. The pack in on the mules and horses through the rugged untouched scenery was spectacular. We arrived at camp, which was a beautiful high mountain basin, that held a small stream for the horses and a few flat spots for our tents. We still had a few hours of daylight left, so we hiked to the top and began glassing this large basin that was over two miles across. We were fortunate to locate several rams that evening but they were a long way off and were moving in and out of the timber and shadows which made evaluation very difficult. However, there was one that stood out and we wanted to try to get a closer look at him in the morning.

The following morning, we were back on the mountain glassing for rams. We split up and Josh located the big ram that we came to that drainage for. Initially, the larger ram and two younger rams spooked and then ran over

a secondary ridge into a tight pocket of timber. We were able to relocate the rams and then continued to watch them for several hours until they calmed down and bedded.

The approach to the rams involved walking the ridge around the main basin then down the secondary ridge that was above



them. There was one precarious section of that main ridge that we had to cross to get to the rams. It was a two-foot wide cat walk ten yards long. To the right it was a sheer cliff that was 1500 feet and to the left was a 400-foot loose stone slide. Yikes! I decided to cross it but would not be returning that way for sure.

We continued to work our way around this very cliffy section of the ridge and then down the secondary ridge.

We located the rams feeding in a timber patch and quickly positioned for a very steep shot on a large boulder. I took the shot at 160 yards and the majestic ram was down. As I approached the ram and grabbed his majestic horns, I reflected on his life and how harsh of an environment that he had survived in for the past 11 years. Sitting next to the ram, I was so grateful for how everything had worked out and for all the wonderful people that had made it happen.

When he was caped and the meat bagged, we began the long hike back to camp. The hike out involved 4,000 vertical feet to avoid that nasty catwalk. We arrived back at camp around 11 o'clock that night and then sat around the fire cherishing all that the day had offered.

In hunting, so much is about the people, experiences lived, the hard work involved, the commitment, and the beauty of nature. This hunt was everything you could ask for in a sheep hunt. Thank you to Josh Martoglio, Kenny Gunn, Paul Borgialli, Trails West Outfitters, and The Eastern and Wyoming Chapters of the Wild Sheep Foundation for making this a reality.



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GRANT IN AID UPDATES

“Check Please”

By Jordan Seitz, Encampment K-12 Teacher

Last fall we set four goals for the Winter.

(1) Find a new camera location that looks down a trail with a scenic background and is in a winter travel area for the sheep: **CHECK.** We hiked up and down the river canyon rim to choose the best spot.

Hopefully the animals agree! While in the field, we saw a small group of sheep up close, and checked a cheap camera nearby that didn't have a lock box. Not only did it fail to capture any

images, but it had been torn off the tree and chewed up by a bear.

(2) Continue looking for a pinch point where the sheep cross a stream: **Still looking.**

(3) Join G&F Biologist Teal on a collar hunt after some of the GPS collars drop off ewe necks: **CHECK.** Teal reached out to say collars were eleasing. Lucky for us, one dropped where students could hike to (about 1.5 tough miles from the Suburbans).

Even with GPS and telemetry gear the unit was really hard to find in the rocky terrain and snow, but we succeeded! Celebration was a lesson on backcountry fire starting to warm up before heading home. I thought the “character building” would be the steep hike out of the canyon...but it

been there two years before.

The new fence was three strands, with a smooth bottom wire higher off the ground (16-18”), and a lower top wire (38-40”). Their cameras will continue to monitor animal movement due to the fence. In the field we viewed fresh images with our iPad. Pronghorn were

benefiting from the smooth wire at their historic fence crossing, but some were also jumping over the fence (previously impossible due to fence height). A fence improvement project for bighorn sheep is on our Sheep Study radar.



was the final downhill stretch as Wyoming winds descended the Sierra Madre and blasted us with an arctic windchill and a whiteout.

(4) Meet with the A-Bar-A Ranch and Platte Basin Timelapse crews to see a fence improvement project they completed with the local SER Conservation District, and learn how their camera data played an integral role in the project: **CHECK.** It was one of those “full circle” moments because the 8th graders had

New Goals:

(1) Analyze sheep collar data with Teal and look for high impact travel areas.

(2) Decide if we have enough information for a sheep improvement project.

(3) Continue learning about cameras, fences, and wildlife movement at A Bar A.

(4) Check our cameras in the spring.



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GRANT IN AID UPDATES

Herbicide Applications to Control Cheatgrass in Bighorn Sheep Ranges

By: Ryan Amundson, WGFD Terrestrial Habitat

Biologist, WY WSF Life Member #384

The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation has been an integral partner in helping the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, federal and state land management agencies, and private landowners, combat an invasive annual grass in wild sheep ranges in southeast Wyoming.

Two herbicides are being utilized to control cheatgrass, Rejuvra® and Plateau®. These herbicides are applied in late summer via helicopter, and work to prohibit germination of cheatgrass in the Fall. Control can last from 2 to 5 years from herbicide residual, with variations based on herbicide selected and precipitation received to help incorporate the herbicide into the soil profile. With successful control and reestablishment of native, perennial vegetation, long term control can be achieved that can last for decades.

Cheatgrass has a very short window of palatability and provides very little in the way of nutritional benefit to wildlife or livestock. Properly functioning, native,

perennial plant communities can meet nutritional demands of wildlife virtually year round. By eliminating the competition from cheatgrass, we typically see higher forage production by native vegetation, as well as a prolonged period of greenness on the landscape. This bodes

was a monumental task and is precedent setting for the agency. A massive vegetation monitoring program has been undertaken by U.S. Forest Service, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, U.S. Geological Survey employees, to monitor herbicide efficacy and native vegetation responses. Initial results in 2022 showed excellent

control of cheatgrass. Also encouraging was the fact that little impact was seen with native plant community species diversity. Bighorn sheep are utilizing areas burned and treated with herbicide. In the last 2 years they have spent time exploring new habitats made available by opening



Platte River Wilderness in 2022.

well for wildlife, as they traverse the landscape looking for forage that meets their nutritional requirements throughout the year.

In 2021, over 10,000 acres of lands burned in the Mullen wildfire were sprayed with the herbicide Rejuvra to control cheatgrass on slopes utilized by bighorns in the Douglas Creek herd. The U.S. Forest Service needs to be commended for getting authorizations to treat within designated wilderness areas. This

up coniferous forest areas that were largely comprised of dead lodgepole pine.

Over 900 acres of habitats utilized by bighorns year-round were treated in Palmer Canyon, west of Wheatland in September of 2022. Two private landowners worked cooperatively with us to treat habitats burned by the Britannia wildfire of 2018. Due to fire severity, we witnessed a conversion of native habitats to areas being

dominated by annuals. In this area, we utilized a tank mix of Plateau and Rejuvra. The two products will work together to provide effective control for several years to come. Monitoring of vegetation annually will help us determine herbicide efficacy and help us make informed decisions about re-treatment, if necessary.

Over 5,000 acres were treated in Sybille Canyon, including the majority of the lands within the Tom Thorne/Beth Williams WHMA. Other BLM, Office of State Lands and Investments, and private acres were also treated. The majority of the acreage treated has not yet been burned by wildfire, but due to current cheatgrass dominance in the under story of mixed mountain shrub stands, the chances of a large scale wildfire are very high. We have seen with previous wildfires in the area, very high mortality of important shrubs utilized by mule deer, elk, antelope, and bighorn sheep. The area is prone to lightning strikes associated with small isolated thundershowers in summer months. We feel that we cannot



HeliSpray in Sybille Canyon.

afford to lose thousands of acres of important winter range shrubs, so this preemptive strike was necessary to manage fine fuel loads and reduce wildfire risk. We are hopeful that controlling cheatgrass will aid in the shift of plant communities from one dominated by cheatgrass, to one that is made up of a diverse mix of native,

perennial species. We are learning a lot from each project completed, and are fine tuning our treatments as we move forward. Vegetation monitoring is important to help us make informed decisions in the future.

This work is not cheap, averaging \$70 per acre for herbicide and helicopter application, and it takes a lot of planning, coordination, and multiple partners to pull projects of this scale off. Many thanks go to a long list of partners that have contributed substantially with funds and technical assistance to the projects mentioned:

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Muley Fanatic Foundation, Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Carbon County Weed and Pest District, Platte County Weed and Pest District, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and several private landowners.



Monitoring Mullen in 2022.

Gifts of the Wild - A Story of Bighorn Sheep

Text By: Jessi Johnson, Photo By: Neil Moore

The soft crunch of footsteps on dirt suspended with permafrost approaches from the well-worn game trail above. Two legs, hiking boots and gators come into view as someone leaves the trail and heads for my creek bottom. It is quiet in this drainage and a snarl of green lichens and willows covers everything muffling the steps to a muted thunk. The only other sounds are a light breeze rustling the already bare branches and a soft inhale exhale of breath. The steps stop and time feels suspended. I have been seen.

I am not sure how long I have been down here in the bottoms of a Montanan valley surrounded by steep cliffs and slopes. Time passes differently once you become a part of a place and not just an occupant. I grew up here, learned this landscape from my mother and ultimately this also is where I now rest in a slow but steady disintegration into dust.

Forested north facing slopes and the windswept southern exposures tower above my resting spot in this rocky creek bottom. It is November and already the herd has moved onto the exposed southern slopes to feed on the short grasses and sage. Life in this place requires a near consistent consumption of calories, an ever-aware eye for predators and a close-knit family who watches for each other. It is all I have ever known and to bear witness to years of it hasn't diminished its trials or its harsh and unequalled beauty.

People have been walking past me for years, hurrying on their own adventures, destination oriented and distracted as often

humans these days are. They seem to be the only animals that forget to introduce themselves to a place; to stop and take in what it is that keeps us all alive. The individual whose breath slowly puffs into the brisk air above me is the first who has taken time to see the soul of this landscape and I think they feel that acknowledgement as much as I do.



Hands wrap around the base of my horns and give a slight tug. Being pulled from the ground is like a birth of sorts. Parts of me are stark white than have been buried and protected- but I can feel the green moss that blankets my horns dislodge with the movement. Abruptly I feel the grips of the earth loosen and I am free. I sit in a lap of crisscrossed knees and stare into a face tinged with awe and joy.

I was a Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep ram. There was a time when millions of us populated this continent having crossed the Bering land bridge from Siberia some 750,000 years ago, but, as time passes, change often creates new circumstances and there are as few as 8,000 of us (3 subspecies of Bighorns. *Ovis canadensis canadensis*; the Rocky Mountain Bighorn,

Ovis canadensis sierra; Sierra Nevada or California Bighorn, and *Ovis canadensis nelsoni*; the Desert Bighorn) left today.

Bighorns have hacked out our existence in some of the most remote and rugged country this earth has to offer and it is to these places that we are slowly returning. Fueled by conservation efforts led by hunters like the one whose hands grip my skull, the species are being slowly and deliberately recovered. And while we still face threats from diseases transferred from domestic sheep that our bodies do not understand how to fight and our habitats seem to still be shrinking, the outlook feels hopeful.

I rest cradled in hands that gently lift and turn me. As they examine each inch, I am not sure what they are looking for, perhaps a clue as to why I am buried to my horns in the earth. In truth I am not even sure what brought me here; maybe a hard winter, a misplaced foot or a mountain lion. Life ends fast. Regardless I feel the curiosity in their gaze. This connection to something living awakens a memory of the life I lived in these mountains. I find myself tucked carefully into a pack and hoisted over a shoulder. They scramble up to the little game trail and each turn and ascent is familiar. In a feeling of both moving on and going home I say goodbye. This country that I am so much a part of lets me disappear over the horizon to a new resting place with a new purpose; a snapshot of inspiration, a memory of a beloved landscape, and a respectful promise to keep pushing for the existence of wild untrammelled places where sheep like me have a spot in our world.



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GRANT IN AID UPDATES

What Goes Up

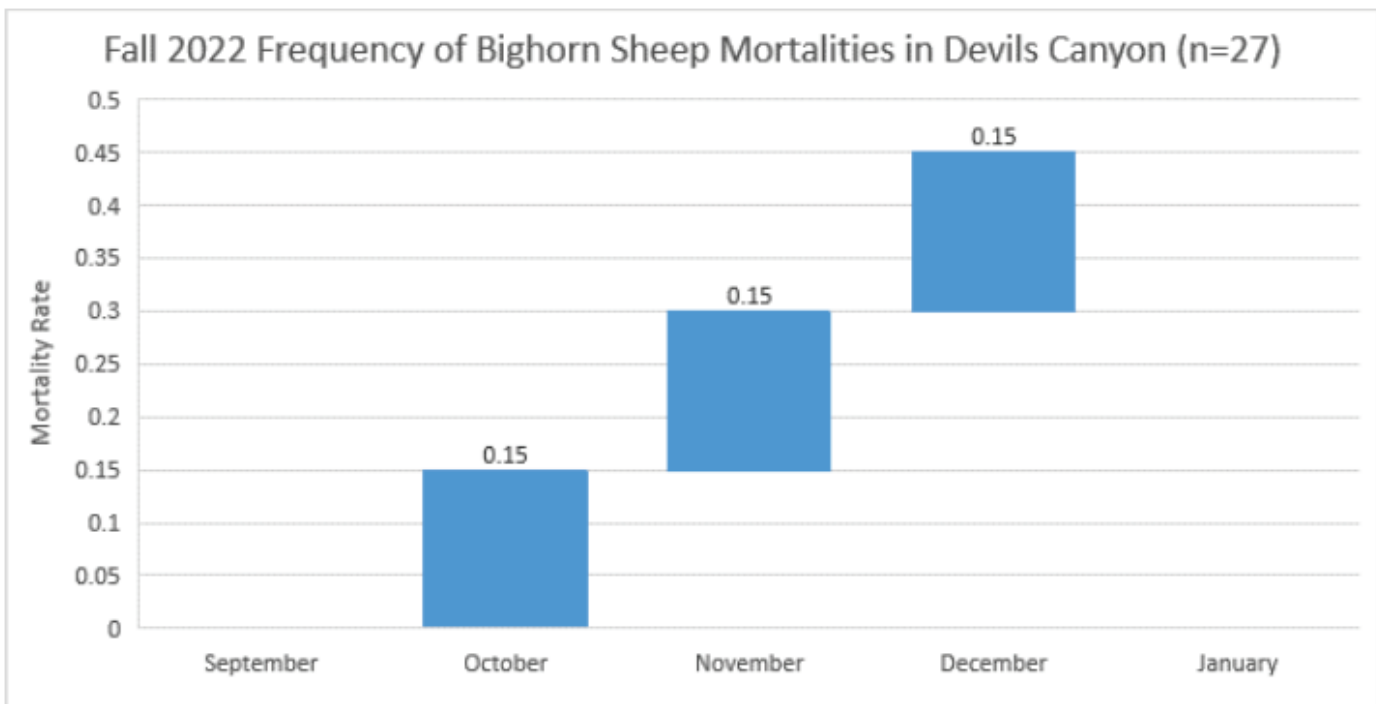
Monitoring the Devils Canyon Sheep Disease Outbreak of 2022 Sam Stephens, Wyoming Game and Fish Biologist; Greybull, Wyoming

For those who've never been there, The Moss Ranch is not an easy place to get to. It requires a two hour four-wheeler ride from either Bighorn Reservoir or Sheep Mountain (depending on the season). Those two hours are spent bumping along limestone bedrock in the gut of Porcupine Creek Canyon, before ascending 1000' to a mesa that separates two of its major tributaries. There sits the Moss Ranch. The Moss is the ranch headquarters for the E.O. Bischoff Ranch in the summer grazing season. From the air it's an emerald gem amongst an arid landscape. Ewe and lamb bighorns have called it's irrigated pastures home since the first re-introduction in 1973. Numbers in the late summer and early fall

range around 50-100. In July of 2022, 253 sheep were counted from the air in Devils Canyon, marking the second highest count in the herd's history.

On October 16th we received a mortality notification that indicated one of the collared ewes in Devils Canyon had died. Since the collaring project began in 2019 we have maintained 30 collared animals (10 rams, 20 ewes). Losing a few collared sheep is completely normal in Devils Canyon. Annual survival rates range 0.85-0.9, which means you'll typically lose three to four animals every year. In order to determine the cause of death, it's critical to investigate the site before the carcass is completely consumed by scavengers. On

that particular morning, most of us at the Game and Fish were pre-occupied running check stations for our elk and deer seasons which had opened the day before. Fortunately for us, Ty Bischoff (Ranch Manager) was staying up at the Moss well within cell service and only a few hundred yards from the mortality location. After a short conversation describing where it was, Ty agreed to check it out and text any pictures of the sheep. It was an hour later that Ty called back to inform us that he'd discovered 20 dead bighorns laying within a couple hundred yards of each other. This concerning news prompted us to re-prioritize our day and head into the ranch. Several hours later we found ourselves



GRANT IN AID UPDATES

What Goes Up

Monitoring the Devils Canyon Sheep Disease Outbreak of 2022 (Continued)

gazing over the carnage first hand. Ewes and lambs scattered along a sagebrush hillside, some bloated and others fresh with dried snot caking their snouts.

The following week was busy and consisted of three more trips taken into the Moss Ranch to remove carcasses in an effort to cut down on transmission to live animals. Tissue samples and some whole carcasses were collected and sent to the Wyoming State Veterinary Lab. The results consistently showed a virulent strain of *Mannheimia haemolytica* to be the pathogen responsible for the outbreak. In total we documented 37 dead sheep in that first event. The majority of the deaths were ewes and lambs with only a few younger rams. Knowing that breeding season was just around the corner we hoped that this initial event would burn through this resident group of ewes before the rams started to move down.

It was almost the end of November when we received another mortality notification, this time a collared ram. This marked the beginning of the second pulse of mortalities which

stretched through December. The last collared ewe mortality was detected on December 9th whereas the last ram came on Christmas Eve. It was apparent



that the disease had a delayed but significant impact on the rams. A total of 12 out of 27 collared sheep were lost to the disease outbreak (6 ewes and 6 rams) between October and December.

Several surveillance flights were conducted over the winter to count living sheep and estimate the extent of the loss. On February 24th, we were able to

fly the area and counted 83 sheep. This consisted of 63 ewes, 9 lambs, and 13 rams. Of the sheep seen, six (0.4) were collared which gave us a sense of how many sheep we didn't see. Ultimately we won't know the overall impact of the die-off until spring brings more favorable weather. For now our management approach is to reduce licenses as we expect the worst and hope for the best. Like most sheep herds across Wyoming, Devils Canyon is a difficult place to access

in the winter. The contributions made by the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation to grant funding for GPS collaring enabled managers to detect this event and respond accordingly.

My 2022 Dream Ram Wild Sheep Hunt

By: Ted Hubele

I got lucky and drew an area 2 tag in 2022 with only 4 points. Right off the bat I knew this was going to be a once in a life time hunt. So, I hired a very well-known guide, Josh Martoglio with Trails West Outfitters to give me the best chance at killing my dream Ram.

Josh and I agreed mid-October was our best bet to kill a big ram, so we headed up country on the 10th of Oct. We had word of a big ram in some nasty remote country and his team, and I set out early for a quick 2 days trip to try to locate him before moving further into the unit.

Day 1 we rode mules in about 6 miles and glassed all day till dark, we glassed up around 16 rams but nothing worth going after. We set up cots right on the ground and had dinner that night by the fire and planned for morning.

The next morning, we set out to the far side of the basin to investigate a new drainage and the snow came in and out all morning. We were seeing lots of sheep but the big one was gone. We were about to head out when Josh spotted 5 rams directly below us watching us on the

skyline, 2 big rams and 3 nice



respectable rams. We made our move on them and a few hours later we were set up about 350 yards from them. The big ram in the center of the bedded group was super long on the right side and broomed on his left and the other large ram was a little

better than 3/4 curl and heavy.

After a minute or so of going back and forth, I opted to pass the long ram that was broomed on one side but not the other. He had everything I was looking for and he was in a better shooting position. I took aim with him bedded quartering away and squeezed. With no thud heard, he bolted and I thought I missed but our spotters said "hit" over the radio. We moved up the ridge to the timber line and caught him walking through the trees and I shot him again and down he went. It was the best moment in all the hunting I've done.

I could not believe I killed my Dream Ram on day 2 of the hunt which seemed to end before it really started. Josh Martoglio and his crew were amazing, they had the ram packed up and back to the truck by 10pm that night. It was a long walk out with the mules but one of the best walks I've ever had. The Wyoming Wild Sheep Dream hunt was checked off my list. My ram ended up being 9 years old and his teeth were falling out of his upper jaw. He was the right one to harvest.



GRANT IN AID UPDATES

National Bighorn Sheep Center By: Sara Bridge, Executive Director

The National Bighorn Sheep Center engages nearly 20,000 individuals each year, transforming conservation from a concept to a value. For 2023, the National Bighorn Sheep Center has its sights set on:

- Increasing outreach: holding a wild-sheep program in each county in Wyoming
- Camp Bighorn: hosting 30 youth from across the nation
- Wild Sheep Webinar Series: growing interest and engagement in our monthly series
- Breaking Ground on the Beck Learning Center

WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION'S SHEEP WEEK: JANUARY 2023.

Using grant monies afforded by the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, we presented on key areas at Sheep Week in Reno, Nevada this year, 1) Biology: "Horns, Hooves, Hides," 2) Understanding Wild Sheep Disease and "Mock Captures," 3) Habitat. Over 1,800 youth attended the Youth Wildlife Conservation Experience put on Dr. Ryan Brock.

WILDLIFE ART MUSEUM YOUTH ACTIVITY DAY: FEBRUARY 2023



Gus Barnum

Gus Barnum, age 6 and at a fighting weight of 44 lbs., was one of many youths who took on the 48 lb. World Record Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep at the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson, Wyoming on February 5th, 2023. Hoisting more than his body weight, Gus won the match. The world record replica (replicated in size and weight) was donated by the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation to the National Bighorn Sheep Center for outreach and educational purposes. It travels with us across the nation and through thousands of youth's hands, making life-time memories. This replica was made by our friends at Wyoming Backcountry Decor.

HABITAT ACTIVITY WITH WYOMING GAME & FISH'S AMY ANDERSON: FEBRUARY 2023

We joined Amy Anderson in leading over 180 youth at Riverton Middle School in a "habitat management" lab, providing a real-life scenario of how habitat biologists can use transect samples to estimate range capacity. The National Bighorn Sheep Center helped 6th graders convert grams of forage to pounds per acre, arriving at the estimated number of sheep an area on Torrey Rim could support. We explained how healthy habitat leads to healthy wild sheep populations - and heavy horns!

CAMP BIGHORN: AUGUST 7TH - 11TH, 2023

This year at the Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp, we anticipate hosting 30 youth from across the nation for five days for our fourth year of Camp Bighorn. This year we have a session on the importance of scoring and record keeping (e.g., Boone and Crockett Record collections), reloading, and fly-fishing. We are excited to host new volunteer instructors, such as Kim Lutz, to teach on the Art of Taxidermy.

Campers are invited to stay over-night in the cabins with their families.

BEAK LEARNING CENTER: SUMMER 2023

Groundbreaking for the Beck Learning Center is on track for summer 2023. This expansion project includes a 650 square foot multi-functional learning center on the west-end of our building which honors the life and legacy of Charley and Sue Beck. Charley and Sue were educators who pioneered in Torrey Valley in the 1900's. They established a dude ranch for teenagers and strategically planned for the future of their land by selling it to Wyoming's Game and Fish Commission in 1958. "All who enjoy the valley now, and in the future, owe their thanks to Charley and Sue Beck." The project also includes increased office space, bathroom space, gift shop space, and storage, and a new kitchenette.

WILD SHEEP WEBINAR SERIES: SPRING/ SUMMER

Webinars are held the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM MST. All webinars are recorded and uploaded to our website: bighorn.org/wildsheepwebinars.

February 9th: Working Dogs for Conservation.

March 9th: Clint Epps on Conservation Genetics.

April 13th: Genetic Issues in Teton Herd with Carson Butler (Grand Teton National Park).

May 11th: Anne Hubbs on Wild Sheep in Alberta 6 PM MST.

June 8th: the North American Model of Conservation with Charlie Booher.

We thank the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation and Wyoming Department of Game and Fish for their support to make this programming possible. We also thank them for their shared vision around wild sheep, wildlife, and wild lands.



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Welcome to Grizzly Outfitters, LLC. Our specialty is Wyoming and Montana trophy mule deer, antelope, and elk hunts. Grizzly Outfitters has been in business for over 25 years. We offer excellent quality animals as our repeat clients can testify. Our hunt area is exclusive on 245,000 acres in one block covering both Wyoming and Montana. We have a complete record keeping program and acquire yearly records on each animal taken. The teeth are analyzed to determine age, weights are taken, location of harvest, and the condition of the animal are all recorded.

We at Grizzly Outfitters, LLC pride ourselves in having some of the best guides. Pepper, Tyler, Pat, Jess, Colby, Adrian, Ed, and Brad have all been involved in our operation for many years. They know and understand the game patterns and the terrain.



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

Our hunts are four days hunted on private, BLM, and State lands. You will be guided 2x1 or 1x1 which ever you choose with four wheel drive pickups and on foot. These are spot and stalk hunts. We offer both rifle and archery hunts. We can handle any type of hunt regardless of your age or physical condition.



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



Memoirs of an Inimitable Sheep Hunt

By: Matt Hoobler (Life Member # 656)

The ram raised his nose, curling his top lip, as to sniff the snowy mist lifting off the mountains. Virtually motionless, his cloaked hide melted into the pale browns, rough golds and amber accents of the forest around him. I strained to keep my optics steady, squinting through the rumble of flurries while ignoring the breeze that needled at my cheeks. He looked like a 55-gallon drum and the girth of his curl held my attention until he seemingly disappeared into the long shadows of the peaks. I closed my eyes to soak it all in. I was in sheep country – my time with the bighorns had arrived.

Day 3:
Life on the Elk Fork
There should be a word that describes the aroma of mule sweat and campfire smoke, because by Day 3, that is what we smelled like. Twelve miles deep into the Washakie Wilderness

we made camp within earshot of the murmuring Elk Fork River. Joined by my youngest daughter Shelby and one of my best friends Bryce, we were hosted by the gents of Lost Creek Outfitters.

Early mornings are consistent with a trot up the mountain stopping only to glass the crooks and crannies of the jagged skyline. On today's ride, we paused atop a grassy plateau affording us a stadium-like view of three basins. I quickly discovered the best recliner-shaped rock to lean into for the next glassing session and hopefully locate the needle in the haystack – tiny white sheep butts. "I think I see one," I express to

sights, hours passed until it was too late to make a stalk. We slowly descended off the mountain and returned to camp where a warm fire and hot meal welcomed us back, knowing that tomorrow could be the day it all comes together.

These simple pleasures consoled me as tragedy struck today on my walk back to camp – the top elastic to my underwear unraveled. Guess I'm riding low while sitting high in the saddle from here on out. I probably should have brought a second pair.

Trail Confessions
What else do you name a black horse with a white stripe around his neck other than "Preacher." A genuine mountain steed if I've ever ridden one. No dead fall tripping, no sporadic jumping, and he knew how to ski down a muddy gully without barreling over me. As a Preacher,



Jimmy hours later, followed by a creative tale of rock descriptions to try and talk someone else into seeing what I see. It's an endless game that lasts all day among everyone looking for sheep. Without a shooter ram in our

he also became a coerced listener to my deepest confessions. Like the time I confessed my qualms of saying ... "Jimmy, take me to the area you would sheep hunt if you had the tag." Affording your outfitter this semi-ill-

conceived freedom, knowing you are among his youngest clients, is a great way to see how rugged Wyoming truly is.

I confessed the amount of money I spent on my personal training the year before my hunt. How I had sweat hard and told myself all year that I was plenty fit and tough enough to endure the daily jaunts of a sheep hunt, yet by the time I returned to camp each evening, I was conceding to Preacher that I could have accomplished more. One less donut ... one more stair climb ... remind me what machine at the gym will stop my knees from cramping on the downhill walks?

My main confession to Preacher was that hunting for me is not for another rack on the wall or tenderloin for the grill. Instead, it is much more personally selfish than that. Hunting is my mental disconnect from real life – the place where I find calmness in my mind and spirit together. John Denver sings it best that "... you fill up my senses, like a night in the forest ..." and I admit that I do not sleep outside as much as I should knowing how well it makes me feel. People search for answers every day for the next self-help promise, drug, or solution to make them feel better, when in fact, nature may be the best elixir. I know it is for me, just ask Preacher!

Day 5: Moonlighting on the Eagle's Head

We spent the night away from camp and not because we wanted to. Jimmy, Dan, and I left the face of the Absarokas at dusk following a rushed scramble up the volcanic breccia crags and a missed shot by me. With only a toe hold and a 50-degree upward angle, my heavy breathing sailed a shot wide left. Dejected, we donned our headlamps to descend to the spike camp as Jimmy felt we could locate the correct ridge that put us down to the main trail. Two hours later and with the temperature dropping, it was obvious we missed the pass. Back where we started, and with the mules no longer fully cooperating due to thirst and exhaustion, we bedded down for the night under

the moon shadow of the snow-clad Eagle's Head. Lying prone on wet saddle pads we huddled close to the fire before us. There is not an older friend to the hunter than the campfire. An ancient bond that has survived millennia, this universal connection exists whether hunting Argali in Mongolia, Stones in the Yukon, or in our case, Bighorns in the Washakie. As Dan dropped another root ball into the dancing flames, I imagined what the sheep saw as they looked down at our hasty campsite, and if our wild sheep share a collective thought with other sheep peering down upon their own hunters and campfires alike.

And speaking of survival, I fixed my underwear problem. With some paracord and a pocketknife, I was able to attach the elastic band from my headlamp to what remained of my skivvies. While it makes saddling Preacher more difficult before dawn, it definitely sheds new light on things when I pee.

The Maverick Trail

Only because they were born in the 20th Century are sheep hunting guides not the vagabonds of the old west nor the nomads of the north. These same characters could be woven anywhere into the tapestry of the past due to their grit, individuality, gravel guts and bathing habits. When time travel finally arrives and history can repeat itself, sheep guides are the ones who will lead Daniel Boone through the Cumberland Gap, or fight in the Alamo alongside Davey Crockett, or raise Cain with Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. Heck, they might rob your bank, hold up your stage, or wear a star and shoot the outlaws that do. They are as tough as railroad spikes, as worn and well-rounded as a mule shoe, and about as polished as a diamond ... a diamond hitch that is. The world in their mind is limitless, lawless really, just as the vast expanses of nature that exists from one divide to another. Sheep guides live a life as close to peril and danger as anyone in an environment where the primary call they hear is from the wild. They are a unique breed as special as the game they pursue.

Josh's Lucky No. 7

Josh rapidly gestured for me to crawl into the granite notch and find the shooter ram in my scope. This was my seventh day on the mountain and my knotted calves had added a few more hitches to my giddy-up. Quickly dropping my backpack and losing my hat, I swiftly yet cautiously slid into the stone crack next to him. Josh softly muttered "you'll see three rams ... it's the one on the upper left." I raised my Winchester, took a calming breath, and squinted through the scope to see only the rising sun blinding me from noticing any shape or sheep. I paused.

The night before we had bedded this mob of seven rams on the knife's edge above Burnt Timber Creek. With fact being stranger than fiction, Josh had lamented all week that seven was his lucky number and that we would find success on the seventh of October. Not just a fortune teller, Josh was our party's spiritual leader and camp poet laureate, keeping us all entertained during the seven days spent together. True to his prediction, I clung to the scarp edge and again peered into my scope. Cupping my hand near my eye to shield out the bright daybreak, I found the upper ram and held my reticle on his shoulder. One pinch of the trigger and the sturdy cimarron had fallen.

I put my hand on the ram's shoulder as he lay motionless before me, feeling his muscled frame and thick brittle hide. I quietly gave thanks as a geysir of emotions welled up inside. My 20-year quest had ended with a mountain monarch and an experience beyond what I could not have imagined that fateful day I bought my first Wyoming preference point. My fingers slid over each ring and notch of his curled horns, and I especially admired the big missing chunks above his forehead, pondering the blows that it took to splinter them. Forefront in my mind was this time in the backcountry with Shelby and Bryce, and how the best memories, the inimitable ones, are those that are shared.

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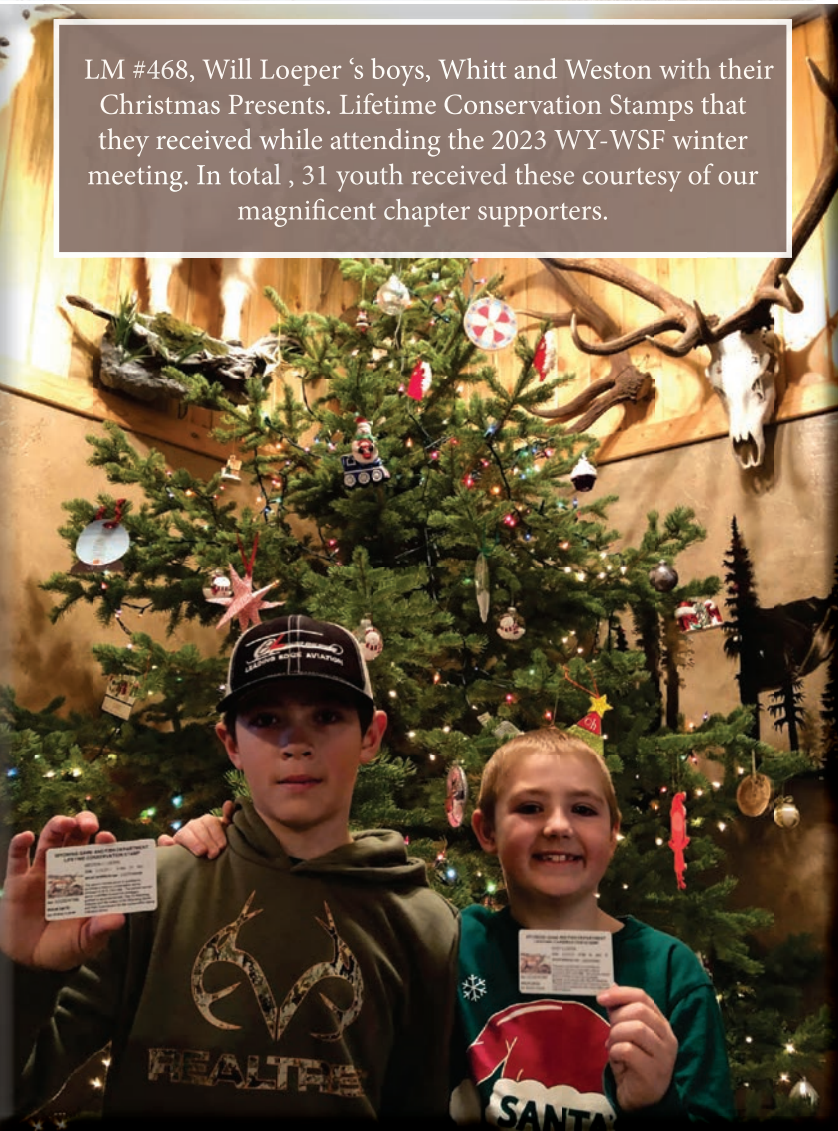


RHS LM#644, Nick Roskowiak harvested in MN by muzzle loader.



LM#552, Chadd Hardwich with LM #390, Ian Tator(right) and LM #384, Ryan Amundson on a Colorado deer hunt.

LM #468, Will Loeper 's boys, Whitt and Weston with their Christmas Presents. Lifetime Conservation Stamps that they received while attending the 2023 WY-WSF winter meeting. In total , 31 youth received these courtesy of our magnificent chapter supporters.



LM #506, Vic Dana with his Desert Sheep.



RHS LM, Russ Grisbeck and friends with a Wyoming Ram



LM #642, Scott Mitchell with his Wyoming Ram.



LM#254, Sara Domek. A Wyoming bull.



LM #622, Steve Haberland with his Wyoming Ram.



RHS LM #483, Steve Brock. A Wyoming Bull.



Our youngest LM #661, Lincoln Kremke with his brother, LM #662 Kannon. LM #200, Kathy Townsend is the proud Grandmother!

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.



RHS Life Member #323, Mike Porter harvested a great Aoudad.



RHS LM#632, Katie Cheesbrough found this pretty Wyoming Antelope.



LM # 493, Joe Kondelis with his Mid-Asian Ibex

Member's Gallery

LM#680 Quint Gonzales (4th from left) with from left: LM#273, Rod Litzel, Jordan Martoglio, Kenny Gunn and RHS LM#515, Josh Martoglio.



LM#675, Chris Clark harvested a great Wyoming Ram.





LM #449, Anthony Wyatt with a very fine Montana Ram.

RHS LM #473, Greg Pope went trout fishing in Argentina

BLAST FROM THE PAST

DO YOU KNOW THIS



GAL? (Answer on Page 5)



“God Winks and Lost Creek Outfitters”

By: Steve Austin

“May I never forget
on my best day, that
I still need God
as desperately as I
did on my worst”.

“God winks”. Yes, God winks, are those moments in life that are bestowed upon you to show you an open door, an opportunity, a blessing.

They are a moment where you're given a blessing by earthly parties and those Devine. It was truly a blessing to be given this chance at a lifetime event and the pressure to succeed was on.

God Wink. Awarded a Wyoming Bighorn Sheep tag is one of the most sought-after tags and having one drives envy from any party. I was blessed with this chance and I didn't want to spoil it.

I hid it from friends and family. I wanted to remain humble and appreciative but my anxieties of fulfilling this lifelong dream were imminent. I've wanted this hunt pretty much my whole life. I was always intrigued by the American Antelope and the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep. Both iconic big game animals.

The summer of June 1988 I arrived at Fort Sill, Oklahoma for Army Basic Training two days after graduating high school. It was here that I was introduced to who would become my “combat

buddy”. Larry was from Idaho and grew up chasing elk. We were close. We befriended one another and became pretty much inseparable. After basic training, we attended Airborne School together at Fort Benning, Georgia, followed one another into the Ranger Indoctrination Program, and then were assigned to the same Artillery Regiment at Fort Bragg, North Carolina with the 82nd Airborne Division.

God Wink. It was at Fort Bragg that both Larry and I found that we were among a group of paratroopers known as the “breakfast club”. This led to becoming very close friends with two fellow troopers named Paul and Giff. Both Paul and Giff enjoyed hunting as a youthful passion too. Giff was from Virginia, and like me, grew up hunting turkey and whitetail deer. Paul was from Michigan and grew up trapping,

hunting deer, and ice fishing. The four of us quickly established a past time routine of hunting and fishing during our off times, when training and deployments allowed. I was first introduced to western big game when the three of us joined Larry on a trip back to his home in Idaho. There, crossing the Montana state line into Idaho, I saw my first live Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep. Nothing took my breath away such as an animal like this.

The four of us pretty much came up with big game animals we longed to hunt. They ranged from Moose, to Brown Bear, to Caribou, to the Sheep. We made those youthful packs to help each other achieve our dreams in chasing and harvesting our dream animals.

During our careers, we each found ourselves being called to do our Country's duty.



Assignments found us going separate ways and coming back together. Giff committed suicide in 1992 shortly after returning home from Desert Storm. Larry was killed in 1996 while home on leave, ironically by an elk on his way to go elk hunting when one came through his windshield on a blinding stretch of mountain road. Paul and I were the last of the four.

Paul and I continued to hunt and fish while we both tried to raise young families. Those moments were enjoyable but never the same. We would entertain our conversations with the “packs” we had made years before. Then September 11, 2001 happened. Paul was killed when a rocket hit the vehicle he was traveling in while in Iraq in 2004. After being injured myself, I was able to retire from the Army in 2009 after serving twenty-one-years of active duty service.

I continue to struggle daily with depression, anxieties due to combat related PTSDs, physical ailments, and just fitting in

with society. My family felt the brunt of these issues and I felt the burden. I became disconnected and alone. I became extremely apathetic to life. I hit rock bottom, mentally and physically. I finally agreed to seek therapy in 2019.

The Veteran’s Affairs Mental Health in Cheyenne have been very helpful. I currently attend Cognitive Processing Therapy, or CPT. This treatment has allowed me to learn how to process traumatic events in detail that remain an issue, or some may say, a haunting in my day to day activities. By writing down specific points within an event, I am provided the tools to decipher its crippling efforts and process these thoughts into something more manageable. Doesn’t always work though. However, through this therapy, I have begun to transition my life.

God Wink. Not long after I retired, my wife, Amanda, suggested that I rekindle my love for hunting. I once again began to feel its healing powers and spent

time alone afield. I then began to hunt big game again. Casual conversations had me once again speaking of Larry, Paul, and Giff. I felt that guilt, the sadness, of not being able to fulfill the dreams we once made. I’d thought about Larry and the others for years and always wondered if I’d have the opportunity at a ram, not necessarily for myself, but also for my friends. I settled for watching YouTube shows and living vicariously through the victors of the shows.

God Wink. In July 2022, due to the kindness of Rod Coulston from Powell, Wyoming who donated his Bighorn sheep license and the assistance from an organization called Hunting with Heroes Wyoming in completing paperwork from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, my dream was actually coming true! I was to hunt my sheep in Hunting Area 22 (5).

As I came out of the shock of such a gesture, I began researching and doing my “e-scouting”, inquiring with local biologists, and game wardens. I was trying to figure out how to make the best of this opportunity. I personally could not afford a hunt of such; I was going to have to do this on my own. Amanda saw that I was beginning to feel the pressures and stress of feeling hopeless to the opportunity. It wasn’t that she didn’t think I could do a hunt of such caliber on my own, but the environment I was looking at putting myself without regard that worried her. I’m the guy who doesn’t seek the help, it’s a “do or die” attitude, and what’s a few hungry bears going to do to me?



I begged her not to tell anyone. Then a close friend of mine one night, Craig Cowley, sat at my dinner table. I had been prodding him for information on how he hunted his ram years back when Amanda told him of my opportunity. Craig immediately called a friend of his he knew from years previous; BJoe Coy.

God Wink. Turns out, BJoe Coy is a living legend in these parts of eastern Wyoming. Craig explained to him my situation and wondered if there was anything he may know to try or where to go to find my ram. With a somewhat secret encrypted text the following morning, I was instructed to call a number in the text. The message said, "have your guy call this number and talk to the guy who answers the phone".

God Wink. It was a Sunday when I made the call to the random phone number I was given. A voice answered on the second ring and I introduced myself. Jimmy Owens, owner, and operator of Lost Creek Outfitters located in Cody, Wyoming, replied, "I am expecting your call". We chatted briefly about how I came about a Bighorn sheep tag and all I remember Jimmy saying was, "how cool is this?"

I explained to Jimmy my situation and thanked him for taking my call. I told him of Larry, Giff, and Paul and why this hunt meant so much to me. I asked Jimmy about his terms for the hunt and without hesitation, Jimmy said that wasn't important as much as tagging my ram was and to not worry. He explained that he was off to British Columbia to work on some Stone Sheep and would be back within a few weeks

but in the meantime to send him my contact information. I did with both overwhelming disbelief and guilt. This man supports his family with hunts, but I was extremely excited for the opportunity. I was introduced to Jozie, his lovely wife, and business partner. Jozie's communication with me until my arrival was phenomenal and attention to detail was impeccable. Based on the required information she needed, I wondered if I was up for the challenge! So.....

I prepared for this hunt. I visited a rifle range darn near daily, placing rounds on target, getting to know my rifle better than ever before. I began picking out its intricacies, how it felt in my hand, how it sounded when I chambered a round, whether it was jammed up or inserted smoothly. I became one with my rifle just as I had done years before in the military. I fired it so much that I asked a friend to "build me the best ammo" to really bring out what I wanted from this rifle. No, what I needed this rifle to do. I had my wife walking up to 13 miles per day and I carried a forty-five-pound bag of chicken scratch in my rucksack. This is a once in a lifetime event. I'll never have such an opportunity again. Ever.

God Wink, Lost Creek Outfitters was providing me an opportunity to harvest a ram in the Absaroka Mountains of Wyoming. Knee deep in Grizzly Bear country and all that I knew, was Jimmy said, "it takes however long it takes".

My family was as eager as I was. For the first time in many years, my family felt an excitement in me that had been so absent many years before. I hugged my wife and son. Amanda took

a picture of me as I climbed in my truck and pointed my nose northwest from Cheyenne. I called my older boys, one who is in the Navy, and the other in the Army, to tell them that I loved them, and I would call sometime soon to deliver any positive or negative news.

I drove northward to Cody in such a manner I thought something was wrong. I was taking my time. I normally drive much faster, but I wanted this time to reflect on a plethora of thoughts racing through my mind. I recalled memories of deer hunting in the North Carolina woods with Larry, those moments in the military comparable to attending a college fraternity party, or at least it seemed that way. I asked myself what I could have done to help Giff and how long he had been gone. I remembered the last few words shared with Paul. I watched the clouds drift by, and the miles got shorter. The emotions got stronger.

God Wink. Sunday, I arrived at the driveway of Lost Creek Outfitters in Cody, Wyoming. Jimmy personally met me as I got out of my truck. He immediately made me feel welcomed and at home. That's hard to do when you meet someone for the first time and can be especially hard for me. I was introduced to a lovely family and invited into their home and lodge. Amazed by the animal mounts that adorn the living space, I was shown my room for the night. I was told to make myself at home. It felt surreal. I called Amanda and told her that Lost Creek Outfitters is truly an A+ outfitter. I really had no idea.

Monday, we started our horseback hunt. I found myself

in the front of Jimmy's pickup truck bouncing up a Forest Service Road into the drainage known as Aldridge. We found a group of ewes up high and separately saw two sows and their two cubs galloping up the side of a draw. We returned to the lodge for the night.

Tuesday, I was greeted at the breakfast table by Cameron. A guide who was born and raised in Cody. He works for Jimmy and you could tell from the start the two of them feed off one another's motivation. They knew each other as well as many of the groups I dealt with in the military. They were good. Each had their own responsibility, and both were as committed to me as they were the business. I was their business.

We rode our way up into a high plateau that overlooked Deer Fork. There we sat and glassed like so many of you have done looking at elusive animals such as Bighorn sheep. It was warm enough that a small nap was in order, but eagerness couldn't keep me from checking the binoculars or spotting scope. To the accolades

of both Jimmy and Cameron, I found the first rams of the hunt in my binoculars. Jimmy confirmed their identity with his 95mm spotting scope and offered it up to me to watch. I wondered why we weren't ready for the chase but neither of these rams would be potential targets. These young guys needed some more gym time. We saw another sow and her two cubs, multiple elk, and some mule deer. My first night under those stars in years. I slept like a baby.

Wednesday, we rose early and gathered the ponies up from within the corral. Our destination this day was over in the Greybull. We glassed high up into the mountains and I looked at little dots against a grayish green backdrop. We made our push from the trail head heading into the high country. We split at camp to better our efforts in finding the ram I was after. Just like we had the previous two days; sitting, watching, waiting, knowing that my prey would soon show itself.

After a couple of hours, Jimmy smiled at me and said, "We have

the banger". There, among a group of twelve "rambos", sat the "rambo" that I would consider "mine". We would sit, watch, and "put our ram to sleep". We would be back by morning to move into position.

On our way out, we ran into our next three sets of sows with two cubs each, a sow with one cub, and a boar grizzly. Each attempting to enjoy a portion of the elk kill meal that lay on the ground. The boar appeared to be as big as a modern-day truck!

Know, that every time we ran into bears, both Jimmy and Cameron were instrumental in ensuring the safety of the party and each other. Bears are just a part of the adventure and seeing them in their natural habitat is icing on the cake! We slept on the ground under stars, no tents, in a comfort zone I had done so many times overseas less than a mile from our hairy carnivorous friends. My wife says I am nuts, but I slept like a baby again that night.

Thursday, I slumbered out of my sleeping bag ready for the "ram's wake up". Today was my day. A day that I have dreamt about for decades, yes, decades. We saddled up and filled the panniers, ready to ride back high into the basins of the Absaroka. We once again paid a visit to our grizzly friends as they continued to eat on the elk carcass and eased our way higher into the steep rock outcroppings of the mountains. My two guides and I climbed our way to 10,900 feet to spot our group of Rams and to make that decision on which one would be my quarry. Cameron stayed behind to provide herd updates while Jimmy led me across the treacherous and



steep drop-offs along the ridge to conceal our every movement.

Finally, in place at the summit of the ridge, I was seeing something I'd never thought I'd have a real chance to see. I was being instructed to place the biggest ram in my sights. I had a Bighorn sheep in my rifle's cross hairs! In all this excitement, my buddies were there. It was a vision as vivid as the reality of the moment. They were there. Right there. With me.

Jimmy asked if I had a good rest, to take my time, and placed his hand on my shoulder while he looked through his binoculars. His calm demeanor was that of experience, he'd been in this very position with tons of clients I am sure. I've looked through cross hairs and sights plenty of times, many of the visions I relive on a day to day basis isn't one I care to remember, but in this moment, I had the weight of three men and my dreams on the line. Jimmy instructed me to wait until the ram turned broadside and within seconds my fatal shot hit the ram. The ram was dead on his feet, but we placed another round in him to seal the deal. I laid my firearm down, and to the accolades of both Jimmy and Cameron coming through on the radio, I celebrated, and then the emotions rose. I thought about the hours of physical and mental preparation, the events it took just getting here on this ridge line, and most of all, the love of complete strangers and family. I thought about this very moment. My combat buddies.

My ram fell at 237 yards and it was the longest descent I believe I have ever made. I cried tears of joy and thanked God for the God Wink. I was prepared to handle, for the first time, a Bighorn

sheep. My guides and I shared hugs, smiles, and laughter. They too knew why I was there.

As always, we took pictures. Tons of pictures. I held a picture of Larry, Giff, and Paul next to my ram. They too were there. I tried to withhold my emotions. I tried. I wanted to do my part to prepare my sheep for the haul out, but Jimmy insisted I take in the



moment. I sat, watching Jimmy and Cameron cape a sheep with the efficiency of a pack of wolves, and I sat looking down the basin back to where we had departed just a couple of hours before, and thought that; Larry may not have harvested his Moose, Giff his Caribou, or Paul his Brown Bear, but they were there when

I took my ram. Our ram!

I sent an inReach to my wife back in Carpenter, Wyoming while she was teaching school of the news. She simply responded that she was so happy for me and that the "boys are cheering". She told me that God is good and said that without Jimmy, Jozie, Cameron, "her dad", [and Lost Creek Outfitters], the God Wink, would have never been fulfilled. There are no words to describe my appreciation for the kindness and gesture bestowed upon me by Lost Creek Outfitters.

We rode out of the mountains in pure darkness, talking the whole way so that our grizzly friends would know that we had decided to depart the party. Under the blanket of the Milky Way, I wondered if my successes of the day were being measured with a number, a ratio, by my guides?

I think not. It was measured by their hearts during those four days of hunting.

God Winks. Despite all the negatives I have witnessed in my life. Despite all the dark days and trying times getting through life, I have learned to look once again at the positives in life. I have learned to enjoy the moments God gives you. The people he brings into and out of your life. He winks all the time; you just need to know when that wink is bestowed upon you. He's great, he's good, he winks at you. It's time to wink back and say, "thank you".

If you are looking for the perfect Outfitter dedicated to putting you on game, look no further than Lost Creek Outfitters. It may be a way of life for them and their guides, but it is their mission to make every second of that adventure a memorable and lasting one.



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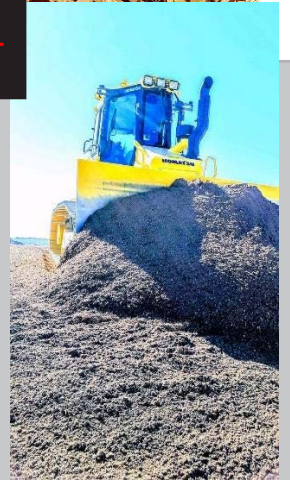
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The First Area 7 Type 6

By: Phillip Lennox (Annual Member)

As anyone reading this can attest to, The West and its jagged wildness calls us, holds us, pushes and pulls.

I'm a transplant here and like so many other pilgrims, I showed up hungry to connect. Certain landmarks, legends and creatures are totems that conjure what it means to be wild and western, the Rocky Mountain Bighorn being high on that list.

Besides my beautiful wife, hunting is the only thing to have swept me

off my adult feet, and to hunt sheep as a youngish man is to be fully swept. This year I drew an area 7 type 6 ewe/lamb tag, honored to do so as it's the first year being offered and one of the only times ewe hunting has been allowed in the region. As I understand it, WGFD's primary goal with sheep is maintaining and improving overall herd health. This tag was the result of research by local biologist Aly Courtemanch, University of Wyoming nutritional ecologist professor Kevin Monteith, and others, idea being that targeting ewes and reducing herd size would lead to more food per sheep and greater overall health. Though epitomizing ruggedness, bighorns teeter on precarious footing with

their kryptonite; pneumonia, with underfed individuals being especially at risk. Take a ewe, help the herd.

Underneath red and grey cliffs overlooking Crystal Creek in the Gros Ventre River drainage, a mature ewe fell to my efforts. Crazy enough to take my bow, I became the first hunter to fill this tag opening day 8/15/22. She immediately went on to provide valuable data to further sheep research and the conservation of her species, as well as feed my family with venison of the highest caliber. In a more spiritual sense, the memory of the hunt will snowball my dreaming, tying me to the landscape, and the horns on our living room wall will be a token reminder of the freedom and frailty of life on the edge.



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Wyoming Sheep Hunt

By: Barry Dampman (Annual Member)

“After 22 years of applying for Wyoming Bighorn sheep, I was finally rewarded with a tag for area 7.”

After packing deep into the wilderness, I couldn't wait to get set up and start glassing for sheep from long range.

Sheep were found in a variety of places, rocky steep cliffs as well as in grassy faces and even in some scattered timber patches.

As the bands would move around, I couldn't believe how they could literally disappear



Barry Dampman with Guide Tayton Dana

when they moved into the shale slopes and bedded down.

Opening morning turned up a band of sheep high on some ridges, as they slowly fed into a clearing this ram definitely appeared to be the best in the group.

It was obvious that he was the kind of ram I had been looking for, old and broomed off evenly on both horns.

At the shot of my suppressed rifle, his heavy horns hit the ground first. The remaining sheep stood still and watched briefly before heading over the mountain.

Can't wait to get him life sized!

Thanks to all who helped me take this great 10 year old ram.



Barry Dampman

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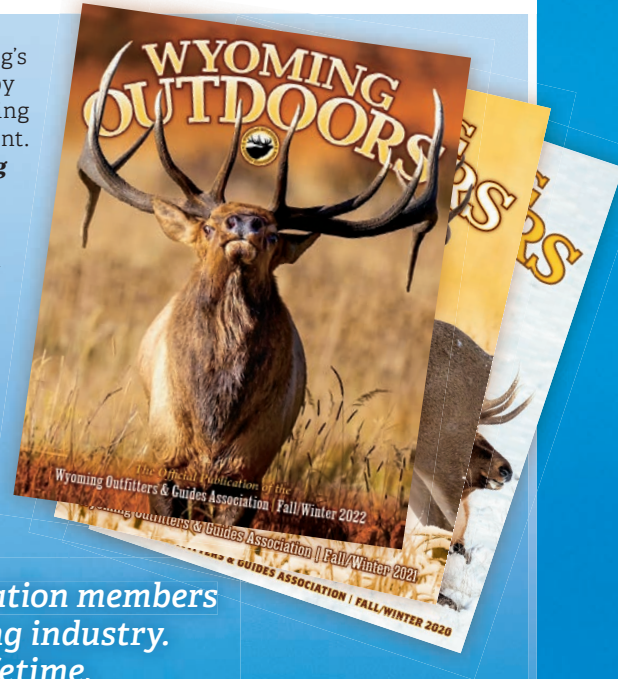


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5 year old Brecklyn Eastman is the daughter of LM Jasline Eastman and Tanner Eastman.
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