

A photograph of three wild sheep (likely bighorn sheep) standing on a rugged, rocky cliff face. The sheep have thick, brownish-grey wool and large, thick, spiraling horns. They are positioned in a line, with the sheep in the foreground looking towards the camera. The background is a steep, rocky slope.

The **RAM**PAGE

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation
Fall 2024

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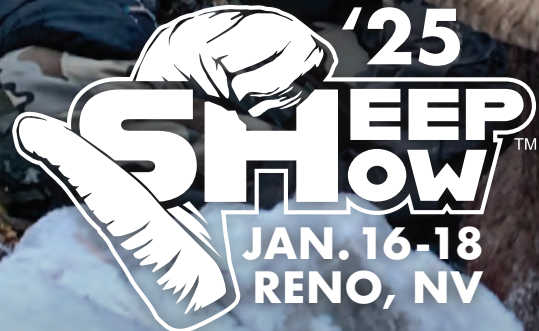
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The **RAMPAGE**

Features

Fall 2024

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- Sam Lockwood
- Katie Cheesbrough-ED
- Dean Dijenno -DD

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Magazine Editor - Kendra Young

Address Changes
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Front cover photo taken by Bryon Worthen.

2024-2025 CALENDAR

Dec 6-7, 2024
Board/Membership Meeting
Lander, WY

January 16-18, 2025
WSF Sheep Show
Reno, NV

June 6 -7 2025
Annual Convention
Casper, WY

June 5-8, 2025
WSF Chapter & Affiliates
Fort Lauderdale, FL

June 19-20, 2025
Wyoming Big Horn Sheep Summit
Burgess Junction, WY

Wyoming WSF would like to thank, and recognize, Life Members who have signed up since the Spring 2024 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.

2023-24 Governor's License Sales Totals

2024 Sale Location	2023 LICENSE SALES	2024 LICENSE SALES
WSF	\$180,000	\$195,000
Eastern	\$180,000	\$185,000
Midwest	\$165,000	\$185,000
Iowa	\$150,000	\$185,000
WY	\$178,000	\$190,000
Total	\$853,000	\$940,000

New Life Members

- 703 Colter Kinner
- 704 Alexa Pace
- 705 Denise Thorson
- 706 Ray Maack
- 707 Mary Maack
- 708 Steve Austin
- 709 Kathy Johnson
- 710 Richard Ladwig
- 711 Cory Edwards
- 712 Randall Borkus
- 713 Glenn Pauley
- 714 Larry Johns
- 715 Maven Roy Middlestadt
- 716 Lanny Applegate
- 717 Colton Wolski
- 718 Brooke Tully
- 719 Kim Withers
- 720 Cooper Perryman
- 721 Jake Brunette
- 722 Mark Esau
- 723 Chuck Middleton

Blast from the Past - RHS Life Member #371, Dean Dijenno high on the Grand Teton in 1987. He had been told that there were Wild Sheep up there! See it on page 64!

Paradise Found.....



Casuarina Sea Breeze





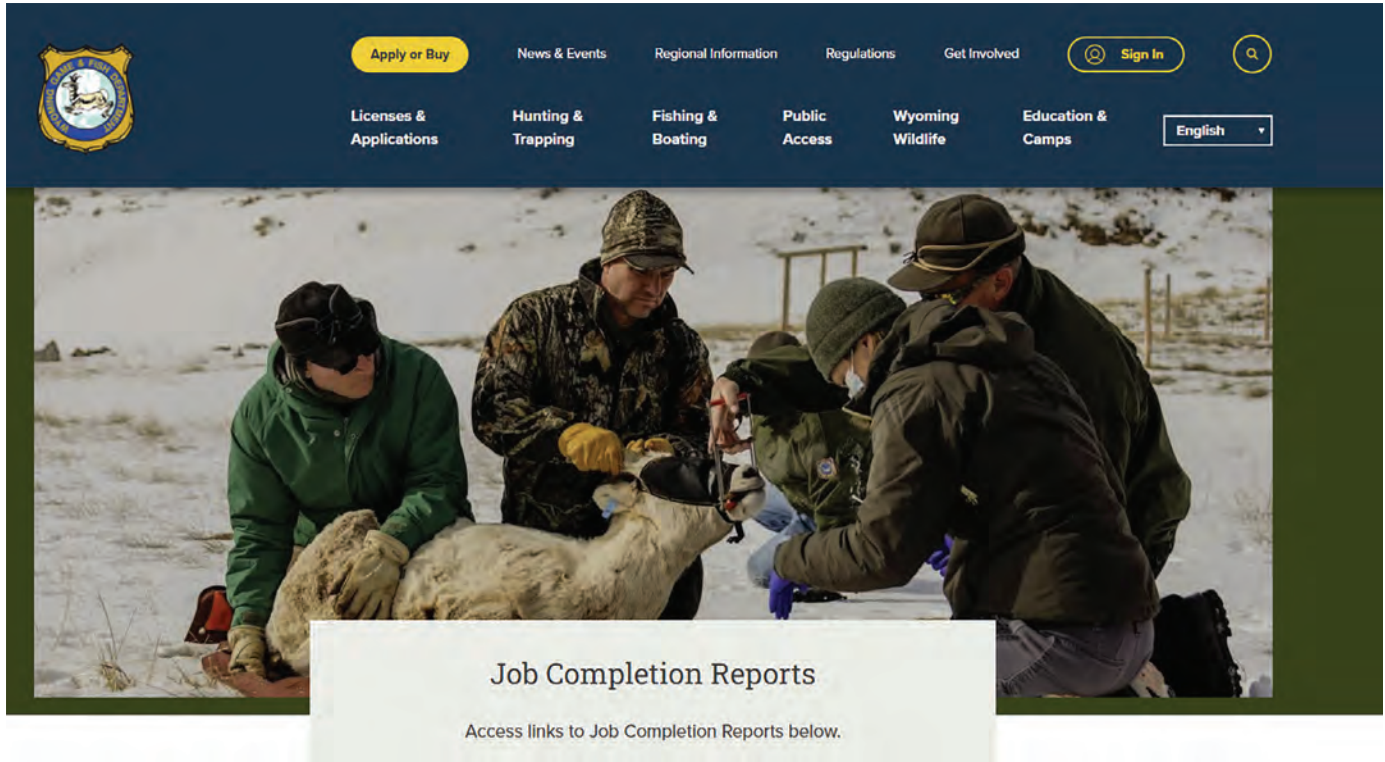
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PROUD SUPPORTERS OF WYOMING WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

Executive Director's Report

By Katie Cheesbrough



I have to hand it to our Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) field personnel; they not only spend a lot of time and effort managing our wildlife and working with the sporting public in the field, but they also spend an inordinate amount of energy writing detailed reports on the data they've collected and their accomplishments. Unfortunately, not many folks outside of natural resource agencies know that these reports exist, where to find them, and/or just don't have the time to read them. Having worked as a habitat biologist for the WGFD who has put a lot of work into reports like these, it can be frustrating to know that the important information that is compiled in these documents may not reach the sportspeople or organizations supporting this work.

So, what are these mystic reports which I speak of? The first is the "Job Completion Report" or JCR. Now, if you're like me, that title does not inspire much excitement and I wouldn't guess that it had anything to do with wildlife. However, this may be one of the most informative documents produced annually about all of Wyoming's game species and their

management. These reports are organized by WGFD region rather than by species. So, if you are looking for all of the 2023 information on bighorn sheep, you must open each



region's report and navigate through each 100+ page pdf to the section on bighorn sheep. This format makes data from each region on one species laborious for the reader to find and challenging to compare. The JCRs are available on the WGFD's website here: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/hunting-trapping/job-completion-reports>.

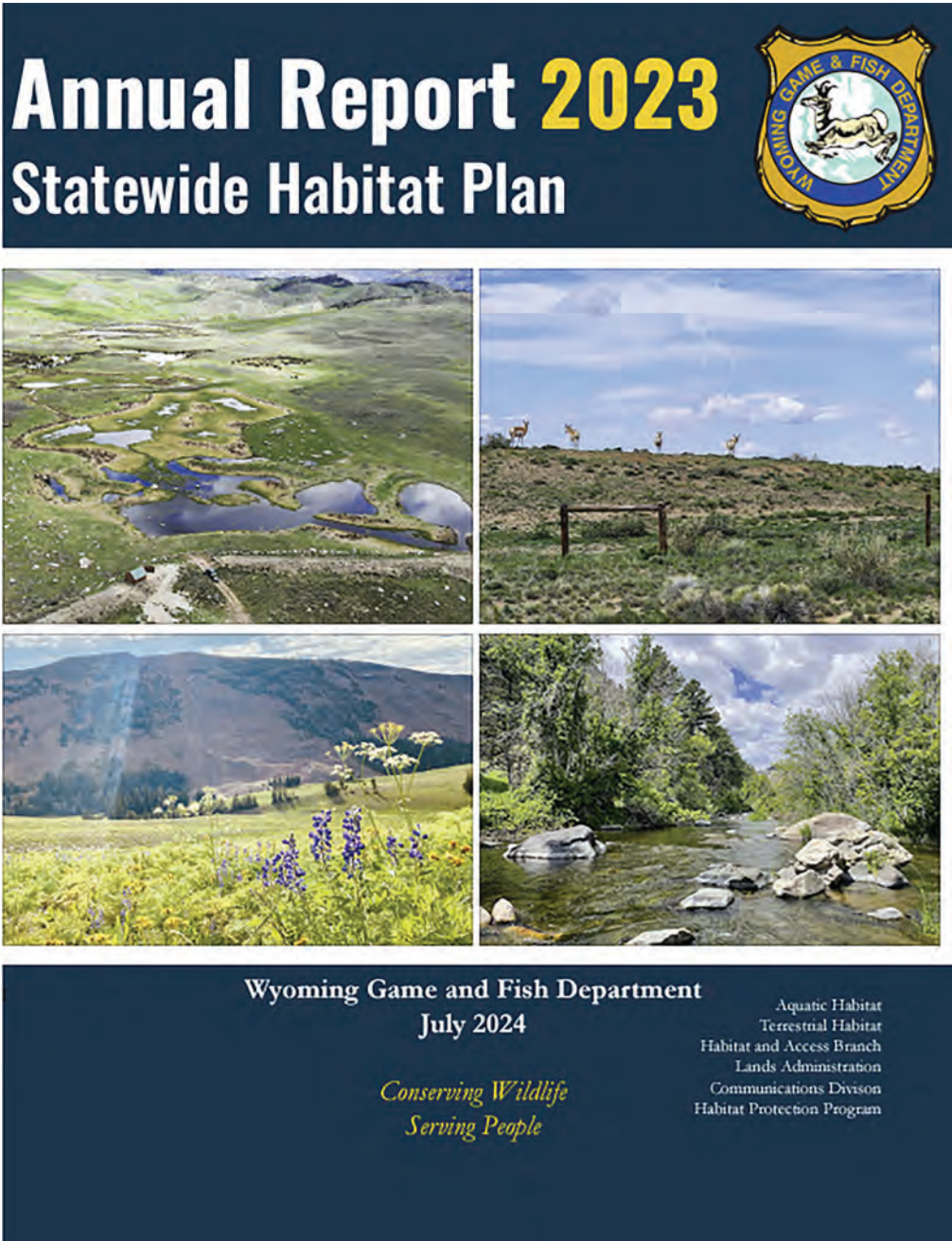
The other report I think many of you will find interesting is the Annual Statewide Habitat Plan Report. This document

is more reader-friendly as it summarizes all of the habitat work accomplished in the state for the year in a relatively short form with figures and pictures. The section of this report I find fascinating is the table showing partner funds spent on projects for the year. This is where we can see WY-WSF's annual impact on wildlife habitat project funding. I was impressed to find in the 2023 Annual SHP report that WY-WSF was one of the sporting organizations with the most significant funding contributions to habitat

projects. In 2023, WY-WSF spent \$118,505 on habitat projects that were implemented state-wide. Our contribution was 16% of total funds from all sporting groups (including those dedicated to fish and waterfowl) and 26.4% of money from big game wildlife conservation organizations. Keep in mind that some of these other big game organizations are large national organizations like Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, and the Nature Conservancy. Given the limited area that bighorn sheep

currently occupy in the state relative to other big game species, like mule deer and elk, the WY-WSF has stepped up in a big way, putting the money we raise to work for Wyoming's wildlife! The WGFD's Annual Strategic Habitat Plan Report can be found here: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/habitat/habitat-plans>.

Knowing the amount of work that goes into these documents and the quality of the information that can be gleaned from them, I'm committed to summarizing bighorn sheep information and projects from both of these reports annually in a way that is quickly digestible and easily accessed on our WY-WSF website. If you are interested in the status of Wyoming's bighorn sheep state-wide, in a particular region, or what habitat projects were done with WY-WSF funds in a particular year, you can easily find it. As we finish compiling information from the 2023 reports, we will share it where you can find it on our website.



President's Message

By Zach McDermott

"WE ARE BACK!" On behalf of the Board of Directors, I proudly announce to membership our summer event will be back in Casper starting in 2025 and will be for the foreseeable future.

With our growing membership and venue attendance, along with inadequate facilities, we had to step away from Casper for a few years. This allowed us to reach out to other areas of the state where we have strong membership roots. We thank Lander and Cheyenne for accepting us with open arms. With that, we had our most successful banquets in the Chapter's 40 year history, breaking both attendance and financial records. It also allowed us to be exposed to a larger market radius with several of the Cheyenne attendees coming from the front range of Colorado. With that exposure and being known for throwing one of the best wild sheep parties around, we have gained a lot of new members along the way.

But in the end, the Board knew the best way to keep all four corners of the state involved was to get the summer event back to Casper. We had heard several facilities in Casper were going through upgrades, so we assembled a venue committee to do extensive research and site visits. We wanted to check every box to make sure Casper was ready to have us back and give our members what they deserve.

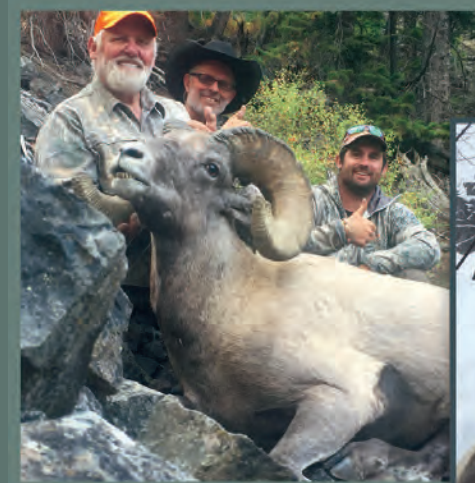
Due to our rapidly growing attendance to the events on both Friday and Saturday, we are changing things up from

our traditional schedule. All of the Friday and Saturday morning events will be held at our host hotel, the Best Western Downtown Casper, formally known as the Parkway. They have gone through an extensive remodel over the last three years including a new AC system....and yes, we confirmed it works! This is where we change things up differently from the past. The Saturday afternoon and evening events will be held at the Ford Wyoming Center, just a few short minutes from the hotel. With the much larger venue space, we will be launching a more convention style afternoon filled with vendors and outfitters from the state and region, creating the Wyoming Wild Sheep Show! The Youth activities will be combined with the

convention floor to create a great family experience in one centralized location. The Convention will roll right into Saturday night's banquet event where the increased space will afford us the opportunity to seat over 500 attendees. The board is very excited to bring this fresh look to membership and hopefully bring a lot more.

On to the Winter Meeting. This year's meeting and Saturday night event will be held in Lander at the Shoshone Rose Casino. I would like to extend a special thank you to Cathy Keene of Shoshone Rose for all of her hard work in helping us with setting this up plus for her and her family's strong support over the past several years.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Lander on December 6th and 7th.



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



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2024 WY-WSF Volunteer Day Summary

By: Katie Cheesbrough

Volunteers gathered on a beautiful late August morning in the heart of bighorn sheep country in the Laramie Range to help remove about a mile of old, dilapidated, and obsolete fence.

The fence was located in the Laramie Peak Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA), which lies 15 miles south of Laramie Peak and 40 miles west of Wheatland, where the Laramie Plains meet the southern end of the Laramie Range. The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission purchased the land to benefit all wildlife species, with an emphasis on bighorn sheep, elk, pronghorn, and fisheries. The WHMA also provides public access to over 37,000 acres in the area.

The fence identified for removal had been on the Laramie Peak WHMA since

well before the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) acquired it in 1971. It was no longer functional or needed and, as part of a larger wildlife-friendly fence conversion project in the area, needed to be removed.

John Henningsen, WGFD Habitat and Access Specialist, has partnered with several sportsperson's organizations on the wildlife-friendly fence conversions on the WHMA, including the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation. As such, we had a diverse group of volunteers from various organizations and walks of life. I am proud to report that the WY-WSF members had a great showing on this volunteer day, making up almost half of 22 participants who gave their time to this project. The WY-WSF also provided lunch for all volunteers to thank them for their time and dedication

to Wyoming's wildlife.

Thank you to our volunteers and dedicated members who continue participating in our volunteer efforts and making us one of the state's most effective sportspersons and wildlife conservation organizations! If you haven't

had the opportunity to join us in our volunteer efforts in the past, please consider it in the future. It's a great way to see different bighorn sheep areas in the state and enjoy time with your fellow members.



Robert “Bob” Jacob
Life Member #88
May 20, 1942-
March 26, 2024



Robert (Bob) William Jacob passed away at his Carpenter Road home in Lander, Wyoming on March 26, 2024. He was born in Hailey, Idaho on May 20, 1942, to Robert William Sr. and Pearl (Lee) Jacob. He was the first of two children: he and his sister Suzanne Kennedy.

While growing up in Hailey, he acquired his deep love for hunting, fishing and the great outdoors. He killed his first deer when he was 13 years old.. Bob also learned about horses and packing while he worked at a dude ranch in Hailey as a youngster. His family moved from Hailey to Ely, Nevada, then to Las Vegas, Nevada where they didn’t stay very long. They then moved to Tucson, Arizona where he graduated from high school in 1960. Bob enrolled at Northern Arizona University as a recipient of a Phelps-Dodge-Scholastic Scholarship in the Fall of 1960. He graduated from Northern Arizona University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry on May 25, 1964. Shortly after that, he moved to Meeteetse, Wyoming where he began work on the Shoshone National Forest. He later worked in Lander, Wyoming and Pinedale, Wyoming. He resigned from the Forest Service in 1973.

After working on several ranches in the Lander area, he and Howard Killebrew started an outfitter and guide business. Following that, in 1976, he began working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs as the Chief Forester on the Wind River Indian Reservation, where he worked until his retirement.

Bob was a lifelong member of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation and served on its Board of Directors in 2003 and 2004. He was a charter member of the Red Canyon Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and a Life Member of the Lander Elks Lodge. Bob was an avid outdoorsman and harvested several different species of wildlife; including two Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep and a Dall sheep which he harvested in Alaska.

Bob was happiest when he was on horseback in the mountains. He did it all; including hunting, fishing, skiing, snowmobiling and later in life, riding his side by side and camping in his RV. He touched many lives throughout his life and will be forever loved and missed by his family and longtime friends.



Life Member, Carrie Thompson putting her Climb to the Peak Prize, Vortex Binocs, to good use.

RHS LM and Board of Director, Matt Hoobler with his Gobbler



Jackson and Jamison Owens are getting the “sheep bug” early in life!

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United States
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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024

No. 88

Senate 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WYOMING WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 40th anniversary of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation.

On June 7, 2024, the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation will celebrate its 40th anniversary. The celebration will be held in conjunction with its summer convention at the Little America Hotel and Conference Center in Cheyenne, WY. The foundation is dedicated to preserving Wyoming's bighorn sheep herds and their habitats, to conservation education, and to hunter's rights.

The 1960s saw a drastic decline in bighorn sheep populations and their habitats throughout the country. This prompted the formation of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep in 1974. It is now known as the Wild Sheep Foundation. The foundation aimed to restore and manage sheep herds and their ranges.

In 1983, Dave Steger, Ron Ball, Alex Wolfer, John Suda, and Terry Reach established the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation. The Wyoming foundation sought the same goals as the national group, but solely within the borders of the State.

Wyoming's rugged mountains and western plains are home to 15 bighorn sheep herds. With over 5,900 wild sheep, Wyoming is a mecca for bighorn sheep.

The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation plays a critical role in maintaining the health and vitality of each herd and the habitat in which they thrive. Conservation efforts to preserve these herds includes bighorn sheep reintroduction, recreational trail closure, and prescribed burns.

The re-establishment of the Ferris-Seminole herd near Rawlins proves to be one of the most successful transplant efforts for bighorn sheep in Wyoming. The low population prompted the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, in partnership with the Wyoming Game and Fish, to capture and transplant bighorn sheep from the Whiskey Mountain and Devil Canyon herds to augment and re-establish the Ferris-Seminole herd. Those continued efforts help the herd thrive and reach population objectives set forth by the Wyoming Game and Fish.

Similar to the Ferris-Seminole herd, the Sweetwater Rocks herd was completely decimated by 1907 and again in 1980. Recently, the foundation established the Sweetwater Rocks Initiative to reintroduce sheep into the region. The foundation is collaborating with the Wyoming Game and Fish and local ranchers to "put wild sheep back on the mountain."

The snowcapped peaks and rocky mountains in northwestern Wyoming are home to the Teton Range herd. The herd nearly died out in the 19th and 20th centuries due to over harvest, disease, habitat depletion, and disturbance of their migration routes. The foundation's mitigation efforts include working with the Wyoming Game and Fish

and Grand Teton National Park to close recreation areas in important bighorn sheep habitats and to collar the sheep to track survival patterns.

The survival and growth of the herds, the vitality of the habitat, and the endless dedication of every member are a testimony to the importance of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation.

The foundation partnered with the Wyoming Big Game License Coalition to establish five Governor's Bighorn Sheep hunting tags. This collaboration helps fund conservation projects for bighorn sheep and ensure hunting remains an integral part of Wyoming's heritage. Since the partnership began in 2003, bighorn sheep tags have raised over \$5 million for conservation.

In 2015, one of Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation's lifetime members Gary Butler approached the foundation to establish a permanent bighorn sheep conservation fund. The plan was to ensure long-term projects were sustainable into the future. Due to the popularity of this fund, it has already exceeded the original goals. As of 2022, the fund generated more than \$400,000 and awarded 11 lifetime memberships to youth. Gary's dedication to bighorn sheep is a testament to the caliber of this organization and to each member's unwavering devotion to the long-term survival of Wyoming's wild sheep.

The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation is an incredible asset for conservation efforts in Wyoming. No project is too small. Each of the foundation's members bears a resolute commitment to the strength of the herd and the habitat, all while maintaining the values of hunting. The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation is led by:

Katie Cheesbrough, Executive Director
Dean DiJenno, Deputy Director
Zach McDermott, President
Scott Butler, Vice President
Bralli Clifford, Treasurer
Bruce Perryman, Secretary
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Greg Pope, Board Director

It is an honor to rise in recognition of this significant milestone for the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation. The impact and opportunities the foundation has created for bighorn sheep, hunters, and youth leaves an astonishing mark on the outlook of bighorn sheep in Wyoming. Congratulations to the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation on their 40th anniversary.

John Barrasso
WSF

Senator Barrasso recognizes WY-WSF on its 40th!

RHS LM and U.S. Senator John Barrasso honored our Chapter by reading this proclamation into the U. S. Senate record to celebrate our 40th Annual Convention.



From Left: WY-WSF Board President, Zach McDermott, U.S. Senator John Barrasso, and Board of Director Matt Hoobler during our 40th Annual Convention.



The Senator pictured while visiting the Wyoming Range

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WY WSF Banquet youth hunt winner Jada Sandman during her cow elk hunt. This hunt is donated annually by RHS LMs Cole and Elaine Benton.

Outfitter Mead Dominick (7D Ranch Outfitters) with Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation member David Claman, with David's 2023 HA 5 ram. David, a retired disabled veteran, purchased preference points during his service with the Army and used them after his retirement. This once-in-a-lifetime hunt was made possible through the assistance of Mead and his associates. A generous donation by Dewey Wildlife Studio (Cody, WY) will preserve the memories with a great head mount. David also wishes to thank Dan Currah (Hunting with Heroes) and all the Wyoming Wild Sheep members who gave him advice during the 2023 Annual Meeting in Cheyenne.

Submitted by Life Member Dennis Claman who became LM 126 in 1997. Dennis was voted onto the Board of Directors in 1998 and became Treasurer in 2001, a position he held for the Chapter until 2011.



Sam Hays utilizing his 2024 Wyoming Bighorn Super Tag. His ram was harvested in September 2024.



WY-WSF Life Member Steve Brock harvested this bull elk west of Cody, Wyoming in September 2024 using his Raven Crossbow.



Zane Flowers harvested his ram in Hunt Area 2, using a do-it-yourself approach.



RHS LM Dan Hinz with his HA-2 ram taken while hunting with Meade Dominick & 7D Ranch Outfitting



Ram harvested by Logan Wilkes in Hunt Area 4.



Preparing for a Bighorn Sheep Hunt

By: Steven Austin

It wasn't too long ago that I started to prepare for my own sheep hunt. I remember it all too well. Packing, unpacking, packing again. That feeling is no different than Derrick Dietz.

Derrick is a disabled veteran who served honorably for 15+ years of active-duty service in the United States Army, cut short due to an MS diagnosis.

a Bighorn Sheep tag being donated. The Bighorn Sheep Type 2 tag, allowing the hunter to harvest a ¾ curl ram, was donated by a gentleman named Jock Brodie out of Lander, Wyoming.

Dan Currah, Co-founder of a non-profit organization known as Hunting with Heroes Wyoming facilitated the transfer

There's nothing like hunting sheep but let's remember, I've only been on one sheep hunt. I've watched plenty of videos and I also stayed "in a Holiday Inn Express" once or twice. Being asked to assist the Foundation on this event has been just as exciting as going on my own adventure. I reached out to Derrick after Dan told me that he had been

Dave Mason (Left), Derrick Dietz, Colten Galambis, Steven Austin (Right)



He has served 20 years with the Casper Police Department. Derrick resides in Casper, Wyoming where he spends his days fly fishing and watching his son play ice hockey. When he's not fly fishing, his mind is filled with sharing stories and hunting big game. Being a veteran myself, working with veterans brings me joy and some closure. Veterans in Derrick's situation fill that emptiness.

So, in June 2024, during the Wyoming Wild Sheep Banquet held here in Cheyenne, I was excited to hear that there was

of the license. Wyoming is the only state that allows a license to be donated to a disabled veteran. The donor has an opportunity to choose a veteran by name or allow the Wyoming Game and Fish Department choose a selection based off certain criteria. However, the veteran must be at least fifty percent (50%) service-connected disabled.

Dan approached and asked me if I would be interested in working with Dean Dijenno of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation in assisting "a veteran on a sheep hunt"?

chosen to hunt the ¾ curl ram (type 2) within the premises of the Bischoff Ranch which sits in Sheep Area 12. When Derrick answered the phone, you could tell he was a bit taken aback. I began to build the hype, not that he didn't already have his own hype. We discussed lots of particulars about the hunt. He wanted to know what he may encounter; he was worried his conditions may limit the opportunity. I reassured him he had a very good chance at harvesting a ram.

My visions of hunting sheep are one that conjures up images

of steep and very rugged terrain where grizzly bears and giant bull elk roam below. This tag isn't associated with one of these locations. These sheep are residents of sage riddled flats and coulees. Any good soldier or hunter learns as much as they can about the area to achieve favorable outcomes and Dean introduced me to both Katie Cheesbrough and Kurt Eisenach, a current board member and past president of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation. We began to plan right away for the hunt and approached some leads within the town of Lovell, Wyoming who know the ranch all too well. Dave Mason and the local Game Warden, Colten Galambis, helped us learn the ranch's perimeter and showed us some coulees to strongly consider.

Our scouting trip paid off and we were able to lay some eyes on a very nice ¾ curl ram. We completed our orientation day along the Bischoff Ranch with a total of 85 miles in a Honda side x side. Derrick remains both excited and hopeful on his upcoming week of hunting in the month of October, but most of all, humble in my opinion. I drove him back to Casper to multiple comments of "why me?" made by Derrick.

Opportunities of such kindness



Southern View onto the Bischoff Ranch From the Northern Gate

go a very long way in our veteran community. It is truly not possible without the members of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation. Without the Foundation's willingness to be a part and facilitating communication between the donor and Hunting with Heroes Wyoming, opportunities like Derrick's would never exist.

As a recipient myself, I cannot express how grateful to my donor and especially my Outfitter; Lost Creek Outfitters I am. My dream hunt

provided some much-needed key memories which provided me the opportunity for building closure. Both Jimmy and Jozie Coy have become my extended family. I am forever indebted to their kindness and heartfelt selfless service.

I am sure Derrick will complete his journey and feel the same way to the donor, members of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, and those that so selfishly took time away from their personal commitments to allow Derrick to discover what a sheep hunt really is all about.

View From the Bottom of Deer Creek Canyon



Stay tuned for Part Two of Derrick's sheep hunt, the outcome and his recollection of his experience. I am sure we will have some positive results and thank you again to: Jock Brodie, Dean Dijenno, Katie Cheesbrough, Kurt Eisenach, Dave Mason, and Colton Galambis.

We are truly grateful and appreciative.

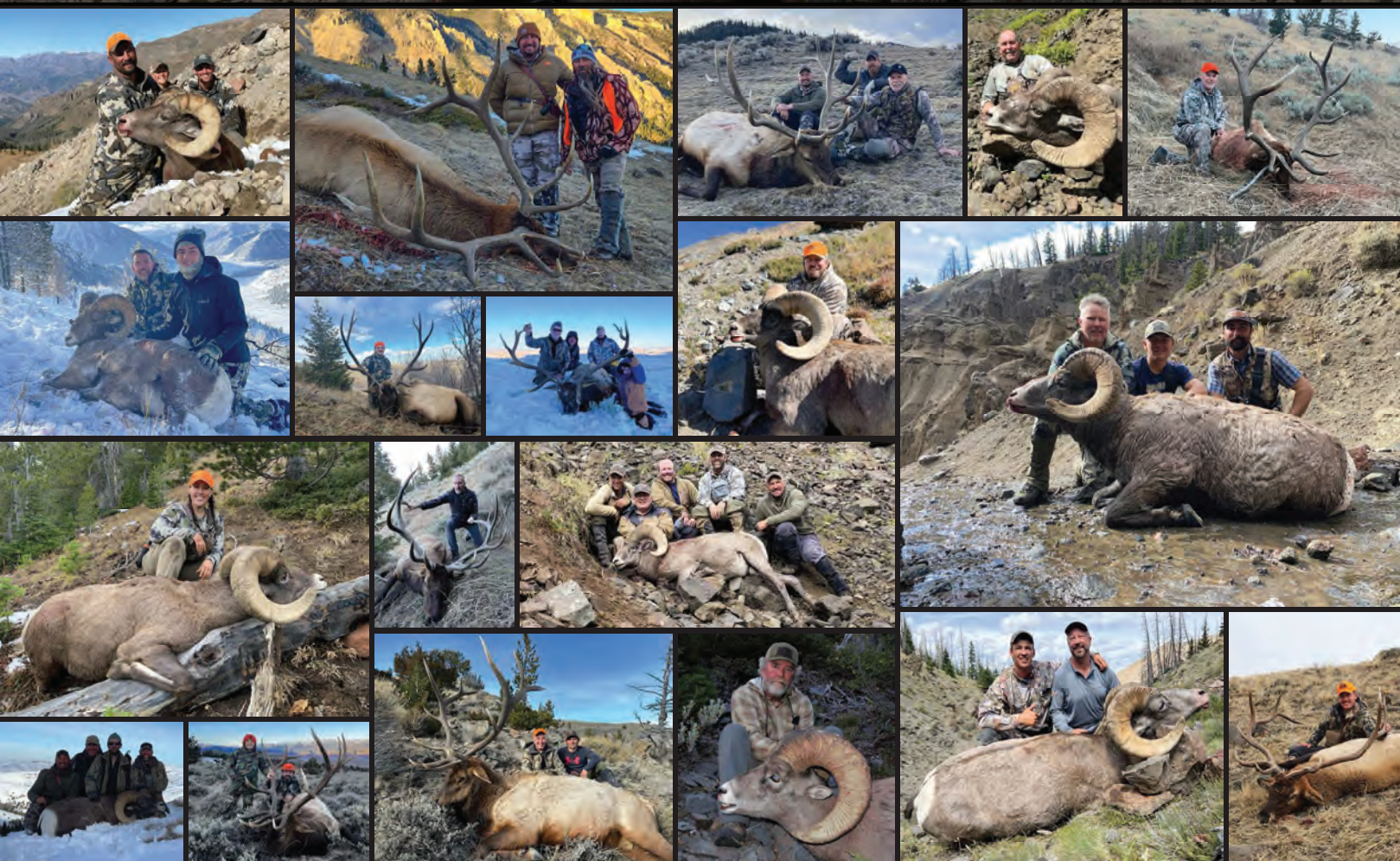
Editorial Note: A sincere thank you to the Bischoff family and the Bischoff Ranch. Their continued dedication to bighorn sheep and resource management makes the Devil's Canyon sheep herd and hunts like this one possible.

7D RANCH OUTFITTING

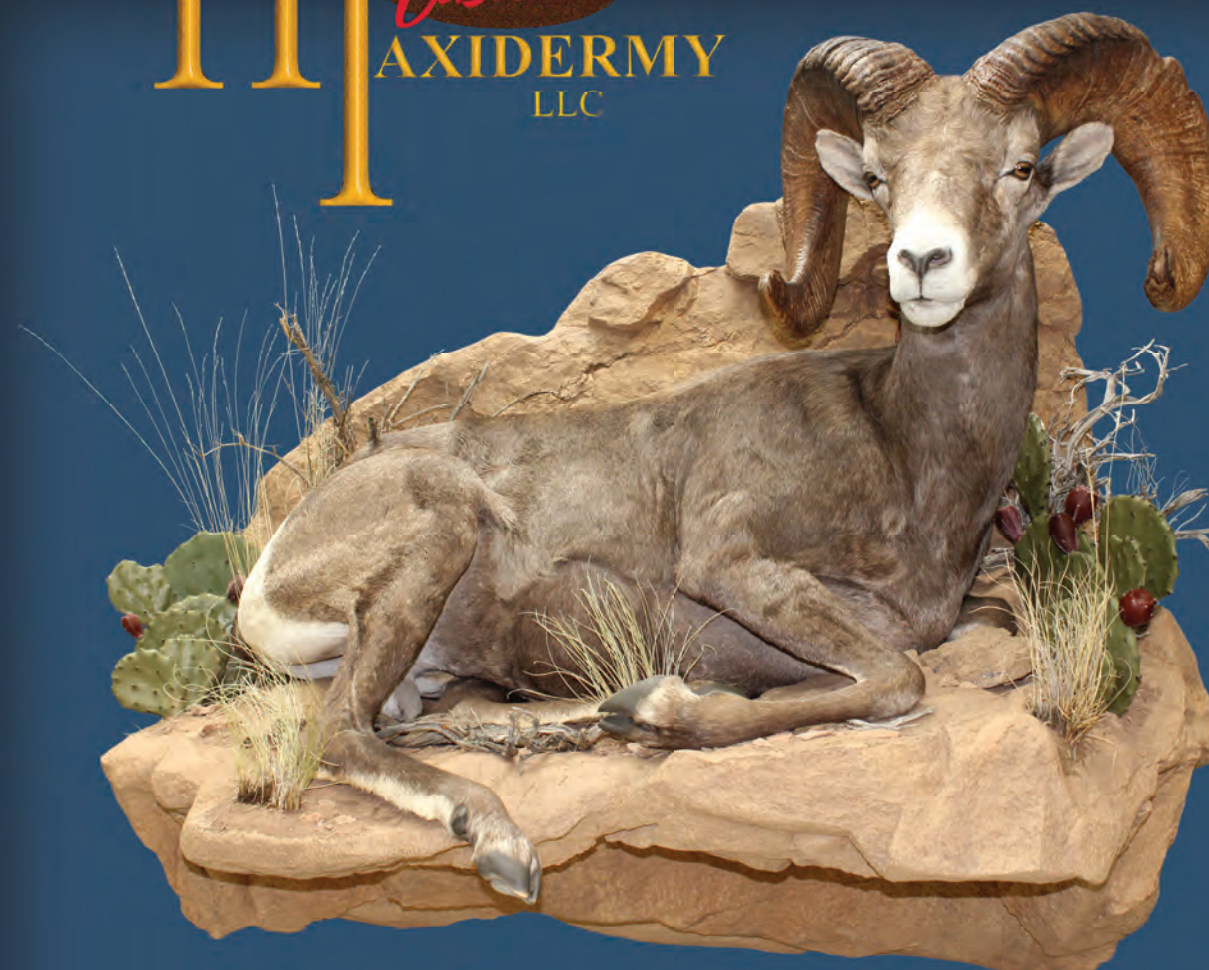
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More Than Gatherers

By: Grayson Highfield
Outreach Coordinator - Wyoming Wildlife Federation

"Katie," she leans in and pokes lightly at her friend. Her tone is light but her message is sincere and Katie knows it: "When are you going to include more women in the seminars at this banquet?"

The banquet she's referring to is the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Summer Banquet, a gathering of Wyomingites dedicated to the conservation of wild sheep. She had just listened to a lengthy talk from a finance manager about the best way to procure major donors to a nonprofit. She gives credit to its relevance, but craves a little more excitement from these annual talks.

Katie smiles at her in a friendly fashion, but there's

an edge to it: "Just wait, Jess," she urges her friend.

Unaware of this conversation happening just across the aisle, I stand up to speak. I relay a quick and effective story of my experiences as a late-onset, new-to-the-industry female hunter and conservationist, and when I move to return to my seat, Jess waves me to sit down next to her instead. As guests filter out of the room, we remain in place. She asks about what I do for work and I explain that I am a writer at heart, but it's hard to make a living; that I am, and have been, looking for work in the conservation sector. I say that I've been a little lost lately, and the most passionate and purposeful I've felt is serving as an ambassador for

the women's hunting program I am now part of and had just presented on: Women Hunt®.

Excitedly, she asks if I can send her a resume and cover letter by noon the following day. I say sure, despite the fact that I'm driving six hours from Cheyenne to Cody after the banquet finale to make a Sunday afternoon meeting for one of my many freelance gigs the following day.

Even more excitedly, but with a hint of cautious optimism that I just barely winded, she tells me about an all-women's hunter safety and conservation education course she thinks she'll be launching in August. "You should come and help out," she expresses,

"Range Day" Photo Credit: Bekka Mongeau



and I hastily type the dates in my calendar as we stand up to break before dinner.

Not an ounce of foreshadowing crossed my mind that almost exactly one month later, I'd not only be her colleague, but I'd be helping her plan and launch this enormous and spectacular undertaking that she lovingly coined *More than Gatherers*.

That is how I met Jess.

At the time, I had no earthly idea that it was just a few days prior that she got the backing and support from the Wyoming Game & Fish Department to actually make this event happen. It was only a short month before that when she had started discussions about turning this concept into a reality, and only a swift season's turn ago that she had offered two of the first twenty-four participants the

opportunity to learn from her.

"Cassidy and Bekka," she tells me in the aftermath of the event, "they're my friends. Cassidy used to work for WWF. They had come to me and were interested in hunting. We had talked about it before, but I sensed that there was some trepidation about getting into it... a fear of firearms, or a misunderstanding. They were intimidated by hunting, and these initial conversations led me to wonder whether the generic hunter's safety course was enough to lower that barrier."

She reiterates to me the sense of enormity in the undertaking of learning to hunt, especially from those of us who did not have familial mentors or the financial resources to fall back on; and even more so, from women.

"More than Gatherers" was designed to be a space where women can ask the 'dumb' questions, feel safe and comfortable learning new things in an unfamiliar environment, and not have to battle the culture of a community at the same time," she tells me. "Hunting doesn't have a recruitment problem with women, it has a retention problem... I think this is a fixable problem, especially if we create women-led spaces for them to learn in and become part of."

Culture of a community gave me pause. Subconsciously, I understood this culture she spoke of, but I'd never talked about it before.

Anthropologically speaking, the narrative asserts that hunters were men and gatherers were women. Not because women were incapable



"Campfire" Photo Credit: Bekka Mongeau

of hunting as able bodied members of society, but rather because of the mid-century conception that women were required to remain close to home for childcare and general housekeeping. It was through this 20th century lens that so many archaeological discoveries surrounding hunting and gathering were analyzed, and thus, it was supposed that womanly responsibilities did not include participation in *The Hunt*.

Jess and I discuss this historic record with skepticism, and she references a Smithsonian Magazine article about an ancient Peruvian huntress who evidently hunted big game (*This Prehistoric Peruvian Woman Was a Big-Game Hunter, Livia Gershon, 2020*). Apparently, it was not so uncommon or novel for a woman to hunt in ancient history.

The notion of gender roles in hunting and gathering cemented itself in the storyline and evolved to match developing sentiments and cultural themes. From aboriginal hunters donning hand-sewn hide clothes, carved atlatls and flint-knapped arrowheads to the

industrialization of the West, so many iterations of the “hunter” have graced the public through popular culture.

“The romanticism of The Mountain Man,” I say to Jess, “I see it a lot here. I don’t think women relate to that.” *Here* is a little corner of Northwestern Wyoming, where horse-packers, outfitters, cowboys, and men of the wilderness are coveted, revered.

Jess agrees with me, and herein lies a problem: The field is largely dominated by men, the rhetoric largely written by men, and the culture largely cultivated by men. It’s rough around the edges, impatient, and loud with little space for the vulnerability of a woman.

I circle back, “Do you think there’s a retention problem because of this ‘community battle’ you referenced? Because women feel like they are required to be inauthentic in order to assimilate?”

She looks pensive before she replies, “I think that’s a large part of it. I don’t think it’s malicious, but I don’t think there’s enough diversity in hunter’s voices.

The more voices we have talking about hunting, from a variety of perspectives, the stronger our messaging about hunting becomes. Different demographics relate to different things. If we open the narrative, the hunting industry becomes a more approachable community. It’s not about devaluing the male voice, but rather adding the female voice to make the rhetoric *more* valuable.”

Apart from an advocated diversity in the hunter’s narrative, there’s an awareness that women’s voices are vulnerable in a way that feels fresh and critically authentic. Perhaps it’s redundant to say, but it’s apparent that men in modern society must work harder to express emotion, especially in relation to historically masculine endeavors. This mindset lends difficulty to the admittance of failures; more often than not, we only bear witness to stories of great successes, big bucks and bulls down, trophy mounts and freezers full of good food. Where are the tales of mistakes? The moments that leave questions of intention and force you to redefine what it means to be a hunter? Where are the stories of hard lessons learned?

More than Gatherers found its niche in the necessity of fresh narratives, the critical need for community, and the privilege to hold space in places wherein women can be genuine, vulnerable, raw and real. Women need and deserve spaces in which they feel supported and encouraged by other women. Even more so, *More than Gatherers* attempts to fill notable education gaps, especially for non-hunters and late-onset hunters. “Teaching someone to be a hunter is not enough, you have to teach them to be a conservationist,” Jess

says. She has been working for the Wyoming Wildlife Federation for a decade, and began her hunting journey thirteen years ago. She was not long in the industry when she took the step that would launch a passionate and circular career: she champions wildlife conservation because she hunts, and she hunts because she cares deeply for conservation. The two are inextricably intertwined.

In the early weeks, we developed the additional curriculum by tossing ideas back and forth until something landed; some originated from evident holes in hunting education, some from lessons Jess had learned in her decade and a half chasing wildlife for sustenance, some were stories of successes, some were stories of failures, and some from my own eyes and of tales I’d been told in my travels. Through this brainstormed mess of thoughts and topics, “The Reciprocity of Hunting,” became a campfire conversation we knew we couldn’t afford to lose.

Twenty-four participants, one infant, her grandmother, and a handful of instructors each packed into the library room of the Whiskey Camp’s original homestead that Saturday evening of the program’s first weekend. Policy, education, and the importance of voting, volunteering, and remaining informed all were discussed in depth. Difficult topics were addressed, including predator management, hunting ethics, imposter syndrome, and how to portray hunting effectively in imagery as well as in the written and spoken word. There are a thousand and one ways to give back, there is so much room to tailor it to an individual’s skill-set or interests, and so much necessary education in conservation efforts and



Photo Credit: Bekka Mongeau

how they are funded and executed. The overarching lesson is reciprocity.

“To engage smartly we have to be educated in all aspects of hunting, not just the recruitment, retention and reactivation.” Jess tells me. “That’s where we need that fourth R... Responsibility. That is something I think we fail to teach hunters often, and it’s really hard to put in a curriculum. I want it to be a driving force behind *“More than Gatherers.”*

The impact is immeasurable, though through our partnership with Wyoming Game & Fish Department’s WyHuntFish program, we know that four women have subsequently signed up to volunteer at Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing stations this fall, and all have purchased some form of general hunting tag for the upcoming seasons. Those are hours of precious time donated toward vital conservation efforts, and dollars spent toward invaluable wildlife management resources.

The program’s future success lies within its ability to be flexible: “I want to remain

diverse in approach.” Jess says. “There’s this idea that you have to be the most hardcore, do the most involved hunt, get as far into the backcountry as you can in order to be a ‘real’ hunter. Hunting looks different for everyone; some people don’t have time for those epic adventures, and I want *More than Gatherers* to be capable of educating any kind of hunter... because whichever way you choose to engage in it, that’s not what gives you value. What gives you value is your ethic, your behavior, and your education.”

Beyond conversations about conservation, *More than Gatherers* rallied an incredible cadre of instructors from the Mountain West to mentor these twenty four women over two full weekends in August. Several Wyoming Game & Fish staff members and even one commissioner, Ashlee Lundvall along with her daughter Addison, arrived to talk about the tagging system, hunting in bear country, inert firearms, and hunter safety basics. We saw women of all different backgrounds show up to supervise live firearm use and educate on range safety and shooting techniques.

“Library” Photo Credit: Bekka Mongeau



Hannah Leonard of Sporting Lead Free drove from Missoula to demonstrate the difference between lead and copper jacketed bullets, participate in range firing, and she even procured countless shells from BOSS for the women to practice with. Jess Laughter of Way Up West Outdoors made the journey from Idaho to offer her expertise and even some of her personal firearms for the women to try. From across Wyoming and even as far as Texas, we saw female hunters of all backgrounds direct a game butchering demonstration. While we had been offered an auxiliary tag to harvest an elk, the hunt for that cow was a valuable lesson for the women in that hunting is not always successful; however, a mule deer doe was hit by a car the night before the butchering, and we were given permission to harvest and prepare the meat to donate back to Game & Fish for use as bear bait – a true testament to the reciprocal and cyclical nature of the course. Kifaru donated two packs to raffle between participants and Kenzie Gates came down as a representative from Riverton to show the women how to properly fill and weight a hunting pack for a long trek out of the woods. The women even had the opportunity to participate in Wyoming Wildlife Federation's 2024 Wild Game Cookoff event, which, for some, was their first experience cooking with game meat (elk donated from WWF's personal stash).

The outpouring of support was immense: from sponsorship by means of financial and gear donations

to volunteered time, we were privileged to bear witness to something perceivably special in nature. Like other womens'-specific hunter education courses, the result was a powerful community of women, prepared to be the most educated conservationists and advocates for a cause of notable importance yet so commonly misunderstood.

It is apparent from the response that women-led environments and communities within the totality of the industry are not only desired, but necessary.

Jess and I finish an hour-long discussion about the program; I was there for it, witnessed it, procured sponsors, drafted materials, instructed bits and pieces of the course... but talking through it in the aftermath is different.

"I still struggle to call myself a hunter," I admit to her. I've never pulled the trigger. I've been on a handful of hunts now. I have written piece after piece detailing the enormity of a hunt and how insulting it seems to reduce it to a moment as small

as pressing a finger against bare metal. The action is dripping with responsibility, but where does that come from? Ethic? Education?

Evidently, it is a sentiment shared by many; even those who have pulled the trigger once or twice before. How do you define a hunter? What gives you permission to wear the title? "If I can give these women one barrier that I've torn down," she tells me, "it's the imposter syndrome. You said it yourself. The moment you decide you want to learn to hunt, you are a hunter. You don't need the validation of killing something to prove it. I battle a lot of imposter syndrome, within the industry and with the conservation work that I do. I want these women to feel welcome, I want them to feel part of this community."

It is a culmination of grand ideas, difficult topics, imperative lessons, and essential passion; most importantly, it makes hunting accessible. The future of hunting lies within its ability to evolve, involve, inspire, and include. *More than Gatherers* does that.



"Hunter Safety" Photo Credit: Bekka Mongeau

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The Daily Double

By: Bralli Clifford



Mountain hunting is very much about overcoming challenges, both physical and mental, and some hunts present challenge after challenge. It is these hunts that you pull from on a daily basis and over the years to continue to overcome and excel. Our 2024 Fall Mountain Goat hunt in British Columbia proved to be one of our most challenging hunts, but one that will continue to inspire us to push ourselves.

Mountain goat has been on our bucket list of hunts for a very long time, and with any mountain hunt, we know that as we continue to get older, our abilities to do these hunts will continue to diminish. We finally pulled the pin and booked our hunt in early 2023 after visiting with dozens of outfitters through the years. British Columbia is one of the most beautiful places in the world and we were very much looking forward to returning to coastal BC for this adventure.

The mountains did not disappoint, our 9 mile hike-in was filled with some incredible views and we were full of nervous anticipation. We had knowingly increased our difficulty level, booking a 2 on 1 hunt with hopes that both Greg and I would harvest mature billies. We had just arrived at our camp location for the evening and dropped our loaded packs. Greg and I sat down in the evening light to glass the mountain sides, hoping to see some animal activity. Within 10 minutes, Greg had spotted two billies, our success odds were increasing! We continued to watch the billies over the next two days as they traversed across the mountain, often together but also sometimes in completely different locations. The night before the season opened, with excitement, we noticed that they had once again come together. They fed across and down a knifepoint ridge that even from across the canyon looked formidable, finally bedding together next to a steep and long cliff edge. We kept them in sight until the light no longer allowed and settled in for another night under the stars, willing but not really finding sleep.

Opening morning proved early, as all 3 of us were awake with the first slivers of light, hoping for a glimpse of the two billies and with a strong desire to see them still together. We could only find and track one, which didn't necessarily mean they were not together, just that they continued to be good at hiding in every crevice. We loaded our packs with only the

true necessities and began to make our way down the steep mountain side and then back up the extremely vertical ridge on the opposite side.

Historically, when we both have tags, Greg always insists I shoot first. However, I had made up my mind prior to leaving Wyoming that this time I would insist that he go first. We have become very good, over the years, at discussing options and making plans together and we had agreed (begrudgingly on Greg's part) that indeed, he would be the first shooter with one caveat, if the two billies were together I would shoot first and he would then work to harvest the second goat.

Based on the last location we had seen the lone billy, we shed our packs and finished the last of the hike with only our rifles, Greg in the lead, followed by me and then our guide, knowing that the sheer cliffs on either side would allow limited time to see the goat, get a rest and make a shot. Within a few dozen yards Greg dropped low and came back towards me. "He is right in front of us, bedded, but I only see one. What do you want to do?" he asked. I quickly and excitedly said, "I want you to take him!" The shot, although close, was not an easy one, but Greg made efficient and accurate work putting 3 bullets into the billy in very quick succession. In the meantime, the guide and I scanned both sides of the ridge hoping to see the second goat, then ran as fast as possible straight up, assuming he must be higher. We quickly realized that the other billy must have

left the ridge and wandered to a different area, and we returned to Greg and his goat to celebrate. The guide left us to enjoy the moment, take some photos and start caping while she grabbed our packs and tried to find the other billy.

I was ecstatic, and Greg had a permanent smile on his face. His goat had only one (very loose) tooth and we guess his age at 10+ based on the growth rings on his heavy based horns. His cape was beautiful despite the early season and we could not have been happier. We finished with our photos and got him caped and processed for the hike back to camp, loading our packs and preparing our brains. Just as we started to put our gear back on, the guide said, "There is the other billy!!!" and pointed her finger off the ridge to an area we had previously seen both goats. We quickly changed directions and got a rest set up and I prepared for a shot. Unknown to us, the wind was briskly blowing down the mountain where the billy was and my first shot was a miss, hitting to the right and behind him. This proved to be a positive as he thought the

shots were coming from behind him and he began running towards us, closing the gap. My final shot proved fatal and the goat dropped immediately without risk of launching off of a cliff or rolling down the mountain.

The mountains are always much larger when on foot and our two hour trek straight down the mountain and then once again straight back up, was challenging despite the excitement of finally getting to see my goat. Once we arrived, we quickly realized that our initial interpretation of the "flat rock" he was laying on, was quite incorrect. His final resting place was steep, coupled with the glacial waterfall and slick rocks, there was no moving him for photos and processing him was an extra effort, but again

our smiles were infectious. The 8+ year old billy was a bigger body than Greg's, and saturated with water, making my pack heavier than his and I was glad for it all!

We made our way back to the other two packs, which we had left lower, and reorganized our gear. The entire time wondering how it was possible that we had successfully harvested, and were packing out, two mature mountain goats on opening morning. Our trek out was a combination of slow and steady, down steps and on our butts sliding because of the limited options to descend and the sheer decline we faced. We arrived back at camp hungry, tired, and completely elated at our success. The next day's 9 mile pack out was even heavier than our initial walk in, but it was a heavy that we very gladly endured with smiles and laughter as we relived and reveled in the luck and success we had shared.





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Fire in the Thorofare. Photo taken by Jimmy Owens near Lake Creek in the Fall of 2024.



If I Were Lucky Enough...

By: Josh Taylor



Tyler Kuhn, Ivan Augedahl, Travis Braten, Josh Taylor, Dan Rowson

Well, d*mn the luck. I found myself in a pile of rocks above tree line, trying to breathe, and barely able to yell at Troy to stay on his mule and not let the others scatter. We had just topped the ridge and encountered eight grizzlies feeding on a moth site. My pack mule had leaped onto my riding mule. He apparently thought a grizzly had a hold of him, and away we went. I had an 87-point ride going 'till I lost a stirrup and went airborne. I hit the rocks and was in an immense amount of pain. It was too agonizing to ride, so I had to walk the three hours back to camp. Thank goodness Dr. James Crow was there. I took a few nips from the bottle, and we left spike camp walking for the trucks. This was a heartbreaker for me as it was just two days before the season. I had waited for twenty-one years for opening morning. After I sent in the doctor assessment to the Wyoming Game and Fish, they were gracious enough to let me roll

my tag over 'till the next year.

Fast forward to 2024. I'm on a fire assignment in Alaska and get a text from a man named Sam. I have never met Sam; he had a tag in my area in 2023, and in 2024, he was up in my area looking for winter kills. He texted a video of a ram that

piqued my interest. I was very grateful that he would share this information with me. It was then that I knew I had to get a closer look for myself.

I finished my assignment at the end of June and headed home. Then, loaded up the mules with my great friends Cameron, his girlfriend Lauren, and an old timer named Scott. We spent the next couple of days trying to locate the ram with no luck. The last morning, we finally found him with seven other rams. The next hour we spent watching him and a text from Scott to my mother sums it all up. "I had a great time with your son. He will tell you about this big, beautiful ram that when he was feeding his horns were past the brim of his nose. The right side going probably 40 inches, the left side broomed a few inches. A ram most of us normal hunters would die for. Your son and Cameron were staring at him for a good hour, drooling nonstop. They started critiquing him and said



Jax Taylor, Lash Dominick, Jhett Taylor

that his left side was a few inches shorter, his bases were not quite fifteen inches, his hair coat was a little ruffled, and his eyelashes didn't line up just right. Can you believe the discussion I had to hear?? I wanted to jump off the cliff hearing he may not be big enough. See, I am not crazy about what I saw. CAN you believe that, after you look at that ram! I think you better be a good parent and have a child talk with him like you did when you explained the birds and the bees, talk some sense into that boy of yours." My point of view was it was an amazing ram, but I had cleared my season of sheep guiding and I wanted to be out there for two months, just enjoying it all with the family. Cam had said something to me on that trip that changed my perspective. "If it means so much to you to have your family there why not, it's a great ram." The more I thought about this, it made complete sense. The reality of how many days I could have the boys miss school was a problem, that believe me, we go through it every hunting season. For two months, I tried my best to keep tabs on the ram. Every trip I was able to dig



Scott Moore and Josh Taylor

him up and he was not moving all that much. I went on my last fire assignment for the year and got off on the 26th of August.

The 27th I was heading in; Meade and Buck did a drop camp above tree line for me and two other buddies, Ivan and Dan. We got there mid-day and after we got camp set up, spent the rest of the day glassing the basins searching for the big guy. We were unable to find him that night and the next day, until Ivan spotted him right before dark. I had my bow in

tow, but my wife Jenny and two boys Jax (10) and Jhett (8) were planning to come in with Meade and his son Lash (11) on the 29th, along with old timer Scott and two fire buddies, Travis and Tyler. They all arrived at a lower camp and were able to see the ram from about a mile away across a huge canyon. This is when it hit me hard, I could talk on the radio with my family and the ram I was after was not more than 800 yards away. I sat on that ridge and was reminded of how lucky of a person I am. I have everything I have ever wanted in this whole world; a great healthy family, the best friends a guy could ask for, good stock and hound dogs, and a great place to live. I have been fortunate to have had many great hunts with clients and have lived a life free and wild in the backcountry. My dream of getting a ram with my family and friends was about to come true. Right before dark, the rams made it over into the next drainage and a bear went right through the middle of them and scattered them to the wind. The next two days, we were digging the best we could but to no avail. The day before the opener, Meade and

Jhett Taylor (8) Lash Dominick (11) Jax Taylor (10)





Jenny, Jax, Jhett, Josh

old timer Scott made the steep climb to the higher camp and dropped off the family, along with Travis and Tyler. It was not conducive to stalk, so they headed back down to the lower camp. The sun was starting to cast its long shadows and still no ram. I was about to pack it up and head back to camp to see how the family's trip was. I gave it one more look and found a ram that we had seen before. It was a good solid broomed ram, and he was always hanging by himself. I was watching him for a while and out of the corner of my glass, I saw the big guy come up out of some nasty rocks. He started working right up toward me and linked up with three more rams that were right below me the whole day. They started whacking heads and I got to watch them as the sun set behind the mountain. FADP (*personal expression*), I was so happy, I looked up skyward to Court (*In Memory of Courtney Feeley*) and gave him a fist bump and a thanks. I arrived back at camp and kept it together. I asked how the family trip was and if anyone had seen the ram. Everyone said no and started planning on

what we should do tomorrow. Ivan said that he had seen the lone broom ram. I told him that I had seen him as well and pulled out my phone and asked him if it was this guy he saw. It started to sink in on his face, everyone was super excited for the next day.

It goes without saying, no one slept that night, and we started the hike in the dark to the last place I saw him. Travis stopped short on a good glassing knob, the rest of the group was to

the north to watch it go down. Ivan and I went to, hopefully, the shooting spot. The hunters that have hunted with me know that I have a strong stance on long range and if it's not within 500 yards, we are not going to try it. I was sticking to my guns and if the rams did not feed right up to the cliff edge, I was going to have to reposition and make a trek around to the north because that was the only way through the cliffs. Ivan and I crept down until we were cliffed out. We just dropped our packs and started glassing. Ivan pipes up, "Got four rams to our left." I looked over and the higher one was the big guy. He got the spotting scope out of his pack, and I got a shell in the chamber. He was facing away and only had to take about ten steps and would be over the ridge. We confirmed that it was him. He took a step up-hill, turning broadside. The shot rang out and he was never to move again. The sun just crested the mountain, and it was such a magical moment, I don't know how to explain it. We hugged and cried and just sat there in pure awe. It's a powerful moment to get to experience that with



Josh Taylor

the greatest people on earth and to have taken a monarch of our mountains. I couldn't help but feel a great respect and appreciation for taking its life. Some people would think after guiding all these years, you would get numb to it, but I don't. They are the most sacred animals in my eyes and people that don't respect them shouldn't be out hunting them. We got our stuff gathered up, picked up Travis, and headed for the rest of the clan.

Hugs all around and we headed down the rocky slope to retrieve our trophy.

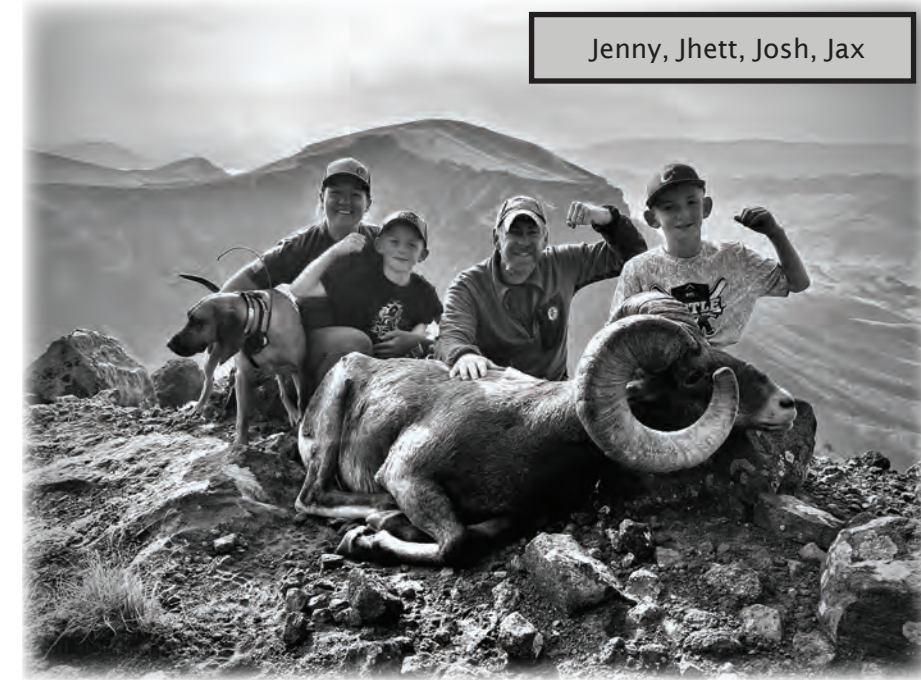
To watch those three boys slide down the mountain with Ivan gave me a great sense of accomplishment to know that all the hard work of taking the boys everywhere was paying off. They are becoming capable young men, and those sheep better look out in the next five years. We all made it to the ram and after an emotional picture session, we broke down the ram and loaded it into backpacks. What an easy pack out with all those people. Even the boys had the back-straps in their packs. Before we headed out, I carried on Meade's ritual of burying the heart and giving thanks to the animal and all the great people that were there to experience the great day. Meade and old timer Scott met us with the stock at the top of the mountain. We all headed back up to our higher camp and loaded it on the mules' backs. Jenny and the old timer Scott took the stock to the lower camp and all the rest of us hiked out. To top the day off Meade found a ten-year-old winter killed ram that the boys ran up and grabbed. How could this day get any better?

Sitting around the campfire that night sipping on Old Crow, I couldn't have imagined a more

fairytale story if I made it up myself. The hunt was absolutely perfect. I often catch myself wondering and even worrying about the sheep and the next generation of hunters. If I were lucky enough, everyone with a sheep tag in their pocket would cherish and respect the big ram that they were after. Every hunt would be filled with grand memories of big mountains, great friends, good whiskey, hardy stock, and love and laughter. If I were lucky enough, every governor's tag holder would actually pretend to enjoy the hunt and not be compelled to tell ya' what they are worth. I would have every hunter drink from the fountain of youth so they could have their 30- year-old legs back and actually hike up the earth. If I were lucky enough, I would get rid of social media all together, and we would not be hunting for inches or posts; but instead for the adventure, experience, friendship, and hardships of harvesting an old mature ram that you could sit around the campfire and boast about. If I were lucky enough, every hard-earned dollar that was spent or donated to all of the many sheep foundations

would find a way to solve the riddle and come up with a plan to get the populations back up across this great nation. If I was lucky enough, every outfitter, guide, and hunter, would not take a long range or questionable shot; but they would think of the animal first and not their egos, even if that meant going home empty-handed like it or not. If I was lucky enough, to live past my prime and witness one of my boys drawing a Wyoming sheep tag in my family clan. If I still got air in my lungs and can get a leg over a mule to watch that I would for surely die a happy man. Don't think for a second that I'm trying to say I'm better than anyone and don't get wrapped up in all that I have just said. But I do try and keep my morals and values intact and think of the sheep first. They are the monarch of our mountains, and it is up to us all to try and keep it for our next generation. Thanks to everyone and may all your sheep tips reach for the sky!

PS. To top it all off, my plug number for my ram was 007. Jenny just shakes her head and smiles. That's my lucky number!



Jenny, Jhett, Josh, Jax

“THE RON BALL MEMORIAL AWARD”

THE WYOMING WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION’S HIGHEST HONOR



By Kevin Hurley, LM #20
Vice President of Conservation
and Operations
Wild Sheep Foundation
Bozeman, MT

Each year since 2003, the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation has presented what is known as the “Ron Ball Memorial Award”, in recognition of one of the Chapter’s original five founders.

Ron Ball was a rancher and outfitter from the Big Piney area who served as either President or Vice-President of Wyoming FNAWS (at that time) for 11 of our first 14 years of existence. Ron was a big man, whose presence and contributions were also huge. Ron and his family were dedicated volunteers who organized many early Chapter events, meetings, and live/silent auctions. Wording on the Ron Ball Award speaks highly of the type of individual Ron was, and what he did for wild sheep in Wyoming. This award reads:

“Presented Annually, In Recognition of Outstanding Achievement Toward the Betterment of Wyoming’s Bighorn Sheep”

I was fortunate enough to be the first recipient of this special recognition in 2003, and this award holds a special spot on my wall. As you can see, over the past 17 years, a virtual “Who’s Who” of dedicated individuals have been recognized by the Wyoming Chapter for their contributions to Wyoming’s bighorn sheep.

The Ron Ball Memorial Award is presented during the annual June banquet. Nominations may be made by the WY-WSF Board of Directors and/or past award recipients; selection of the recipient is made by the past winners. So, if WY-WSF members know of someone they would like to see nominated for this award, please notify one of the current Board of Directors, or one of the past recipients.

None of us do what we do for wild sheep to receive credit or recognition. However, there are some individuals that do so much, and help lead the way, that taking a moment to look back, helps all of us move forward!

- | | |
|------|-----------------------|
| 2003 | Kevin Hurley |
| 2004 | Jim Collins |
| 2005 | Gov. Dave Freudenthal |
| 2006 | Melanie Woolever |
| 2007 | Steve Kilpatrick |
| 2008 | Terry Cleveland |
| 2009 | Gary Butler |
| 2010 | Fritz Meyer |
| 2011 | Cole Benton |
| 2012 | Dennis Claman |
| 2013 | Bob Sundeen |
| 2014 | Tom Easterly (D) |
| 2015 | Doug McWhirter |
| 2016 | Lynn Stewart |
| 2017 | Freddie Goetz |
| 2018 | Ryan Amundson |
| 2019 | Joni Miller |
| 2020 | Dean DiJenno |
| 2021 | Jerry Galles |
| 2022 | Jack Welch |
| 2023 | Hank Edwards |
| 2024 | Mike Porter |



RHS LM #323

Mike Porter honored with the Ron Ball Award



After becoming a Life Member in 2009, Mike dedicated himself to the preservation of Wyoming’s Wild Sheep. He was elected to the board of directors in 2009 and served as board president from 2011-2015. The entire Porter family are each Life Members as well.

The litany of “firsts” that Mike has brought to the chapter includes: building the first web page, selling the first on-line raffle tickets, and the first life member incentive prize that raised our LMB attendance from 30 to over 100 yearly. He also was solely responsible for starting our investment funds and creating the first endowment project leaving a legacy for future generations. Since leaving the board, Mike continues to volunteer many hours of his time to help with our investment and endowment programs and can always be counted on to appear at every winter/summer meeting usually with a few donations to add to our fundraiser.

Mike drew his first sheep tag in 2002, (the year son Gage was born). Kevin Hurley was a Biologist at the Cody Game and Fish at that time and he introduced Mike to the organization. Mike is very passionate about sheep hunting and preserving sheep for future hunters. Two of his cousins drew tags in 2024 (see page 64).

Mike is known for his visionary, deep-thinking, quiet, and professional approach. He and his family have left a legacy on several fronts within the WY-WSF Chapter that will provide benefits in the future and truly merits inclusion in the Ron Ball Award Society.



From the left are: Gage and Abby Ellbogen, Stacie, Mike and Whitney Porter.





Bar HT Photography
By: Kendra Young

Indirect Impacts of Disease on Wyoming's Bighorn Sheep

By: Katie Cheesbrough

We are excited to share the outcome of years of cooperatively funded bighorn sheep research from the Monteith Lab at the University of Wyoming involving the Midwest Chapter's adopted herd. Doctoral student Rachel Smiley published her six-year study on infection-nutrition feedbacks in bighorn sheep in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* this past month. A PDF of the study can be found on the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation Website in our references tab.

Knowing that many of you are deep into preparation for your upcoming hunting seasons and may not have time to read this excellent study, we thought we'd summarize Rachel's findings for you here.

As bighorn sheep enthusiasts, you are likely familiar with the direct effects of respiratory disease in bighorn sheep, resulting in devastating all-age pneumonia die-offs. However, this study looks at the indirect effects of these pathogens when they continue to persist in a herd. After initial pneumonia outbreaks that often cause mass-mortalities, pathogens

can persist in a herd in individuals who don't show typical clinical signs of disease. Through these individual carriers, the pathogens become endemic (or enzootic) to the herd, creating impacts on the herd through low body condition, lower lambing rates, and poor lamb recruitment.

To make things worse, the consequences of carrying the pathogen can be exacerbated if bighorn sheep are nutritionally stressed due to a harsh winter, displacement from ideal habitats, or low-quality forage. This could negatively affect the herd's demographics and contribute to increased infection rates or subsequent disease outbreaks. However, the complex interplay between nutrition and disease, as well as the resulting indirect effects, have been hard to disentangle. Rachel's study set out to describe the impacts persistent pathogens have on bighorn sheep in the Greater Yellowstone Area of Wyoming.

The study began in March 2015, and data collection was completed in March 2021 on three bighorn sheep herds within the GYE: the Whiskey

Mountain herd outside of Dubois, the Jackson herd in the Gros Ventre Range in the Bridger-Teton National Forest, and the Upper Shoshone population in the Absaroka Range. Four different bacterial pathogens associated with pneumonia had been identified in all three herds prior to and during the study and included *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (M. Ovi) and three Pasturellaceae family species (*Bibersteinia trehalose*, *Pasturella multocida*, and *Mannheimia hemolytic/gluco-side*). The study design included capturing adult (4+ years old) ewes through helicopter net-gunning and chemical immobilization every March and December. At each capture, the researchers estimated body fat, gave each animal a body condition score, determined lactation status, estimated age (via horns and teeth), and took nasal and tonsil swabs to determine pathogen presence. The swabs were sent for diagnostic testing at the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Wildlife Health Laboratory, where the presence of bacterial species in the samples was determined.

In total, 128 individuals were caught in 470 total captures. They were able to acquire 90 oversummer transitions (March-December for same individual) of 52 sheep and 93 overwinter transitions (December-March for same individual) of 56 sheep within the three target populations. The average fat for all sheep was 13.92% in December and 8.6% in March. The age of sheep captured ranged from 4 to 13 years old, with an average age of 7.8 years old.

This incredible amount of data collection was then analyzed at the Monteith Lab. Rachel and her team found that the amount of fat a sheep carried influenced that sheep's ability to clear pathogens (specifically M. Ovi). They also determined that infection with respiratory pathogens

decreased fat reserves. In fact, the cost of infection to fat reserves was close to and sometimes surpassed the cost of raising a lamb. Fat reserves also influenced the probability of clearing pathogens, pregnancy, and over-winter survival. To put it into simpler terms, Rachel states that a bighorn ewe "could survive for up to 23 days on the amount of fat that was lost to high levels of infection." With this in mind, it's clear that persistent pathogen infection creates an energetic burden that amplifies the tradeoffs between survival and reproduction. When animals use all of their available energy to survive, they have lower pregnancy rates, and if they manage to give birth, they may not be able to raise healthy lambs. Thus, the indirect consequences of persistent pathogens have long-term implications for population dynamics, especially when nutritional resources are lacking or unavailable.

So, what do we do with this information? We already know that respiratory disease in bighorn sheep is bad in terms of outbreaks and mortality. Now we understand that even when we aren't having mass die-offs, persistent pathogen loads can have major long-term impacts on the ability of populations to rebound due to energetic stress. Outside of finding a silver bullet to eliminate these pathogens or throwing up our hands in despair, it appears our best bet is thoughtful habitat and population management.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department continues working with the Monteith Lab and their findings to develop appropriate strategies to manage bighorn sheep in a disease landscape. This includes identifying where we can increase nutritional quantity and quality within bighorn sheep habitats and implementing effective habitat enhancements. Sometimes, this means looking at the limits of the available habitat and managing populations to a level commensurate with that habitat. In the case of the Jackson herd, this has resulted in the implementation of ewe hunts from time to time to maintain



the population at a sustainable level of 400-500 animals. For the Whiskey herd, Wyoming Game and Fish Managers are implementing test and remove strategies to remove chronic carriers of M. Ovi from the population to increase lamb recruitment.

We are grateful to our cutting-edge researchers, our open-minded wildlife managers, and our generous funding partners for continuing to work together to figure out how we can best put and keep wild sheep on the mountain.

Picture Above: Conducting forage transects on the lambing grounds

Picture Below: Members of Dr. Monteith's survey team with a captured and collared ewe.

Picture Left: Lambs were collared at birth.



Protecting Sheep on the Mountains

By: Ryan Amundson

Disease transmission between livestock and wildlife, in North America, primarily has occurred since the introduction of modern farming. In some cases, domestic species tend to withstand the negative ramifications that come with these diseases; our native wild species (i.e. bighorn sheep), have not always been so lucky.

Once pathogens enter a population, clearing animals of that pathogen can be difficult, if not impossible. Respiratory pathogens (Mannheimia haemolytica, Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae,

etc.) pose a very high risk, but nutrition status, stress, and other infectious pathogens can also affect overall health and reproductive success of these herds (lungworm, intestinal parasites, Chlamydia abortus, Johne's disease, etc). The outcomes from disease transmission events can vary. Sometimes mortality can appear suddenly, resulting in all age die offs in a short time period (e.g., In 2022-2023, Mannheimia haemolytica, a bacterial disease, was the cause of a large scale mortality event in the Wyoming's Devil's Canyon bighorn sheep

herd). Sometimes disease can become persistent and chronic. These cases can result in years of poor lamb recruitment, which eventually lead to a population decline.

When it comes to disease, having a plan for how to deal with real life situations (e.g., what happens when domestic animals and wildlife hang out together?) is not just a good idea but it is critical to stop disease in its tracks; which is why a group of experts from the western United States and Canada put together a standard policy for minimizing disease



Wandering bighorn sheep commingling with a domestic sheep between Creston Junction and Baggs, Wyoming. August 2023. Kim Olson

Phil Dam Wanderer, July 2024



risk to wild sheep populations (Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Wild Sheep Initiative). One of the recommendations was to "remove wild sheep that have likely been associated with domestic sheep or goats and develop a policy to promptly respond to wild sheep wandering from occupied wild sheep ranges". This recommendation helps reduce the risk that a wild sheep brings disease back to the larger herd. The distances that wild sheep can move around (foray) can be significant (> 20 miles) and unpredictable which is why the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) has

original herd or introduce into another herd.

Disease transmission can be hard to determine in these wandering sheep. Infection is not always immediately obvious. It can take days to weeks for some pathogens to grow enough so

instituted a similar protocol for removing wandering bighorn sheep ("wanderers") where contact with domestic sheep has been suspected or confirmed in order to protect our wild herds. When wandering sheep are observed, we don't know what animals they have come into contact with, or for how long and we have no idea of what infectious pathogens they could have picked up to potentially take back to their

that we can detect them in the lab. Trying to hold these animals until infectious status can be determined just isn't feasible due to ethical considerations for the animals and logistical concerns.

Managing population size, to match the carrying capacity of available habitat may reduce the number of foraging sheep (rams and ewes) and the WGFD has begun utilizing hunting season structure to manage herd levels while adding new hunting opportunities. Bighorn sheep type 2 licenses allow a ram of less than a ¾ curl to be taken in two hunt areas this fall. Type 6 and 7 licenses will allow a hunter to take a ewe or lamb in 3 hunt areas this fall. By keeping population numbers in check, we can likely reduce the number of foraging sheep that would need to be removed. Removal of wandering sheep is not taken lightly by the department; it

Wandering ram removed from the Sierra Madres, traveling on a known domestic sheep trail, November 2023. Kim Olson



is seen as a necessary tool to protect our wild sheep. Baggs Game Warden, Kim Olson, has had a career of these very tough decisions and gives us a very personal account:

I have never drawn a bighorn sheep permit, but I have lethally removed many of them. The summer of 2023 was particularly busy when 5 wandering bighorns were found within the Baggs warden district and were all lethally removed. Of those 5 bighorns, 2 were ewes. Over the course of 14 years in the Baggs district, I and the wildlife biologists stationed there have removed many more wandering bighorns. The Baggs district has several domestic sheep herds by numerous different owners and the commingling of bighorn sheep with domestic sheep cannot be tolerated. It is the unfortunate reality of living in a district with domestic sheep, and having a bighorn sheep unit just over the mountain to the east. We cannot confirm that any of these bighorns have come from the Encampment herd, but it is highly likely.

It is one of the hardest phone calls to get when someone tells you they just saw a bighorn sheep, because I know what the ultimate outcome has to be.



Young bighorn removed from the population.



Young bighorn removed from the population.

The transmission of diseases from domestic sheep to bighorn sheep is very possible, and if an infected bighorn were to return to its' native herd, then an entire herd could be wiped out due to disease transmission. That is an extremely large price to pay. I was truly amazed last year when 3 wandering bighorns, traveling together for quite some time, still ended up mingling with a domestic sheep that had been left out on the range for more than a year. They are exceptional at finding similar species and sticking together, as sheep of all kinds tend to do. Several years ago, a young bighorn ram was found standing in a corral of domestic sheep just north of Baggs. He had found the only critters that he thought he could call friends.

The lethal removal of bighorn sheep is just one of the not-so-fun duties required of WGFD personnel. No different than the ferruginous hawk that severed one wing off and I had to euthanize it today. But I am tasked with doing what is best for wildlife, and that can come in many forms, pleasant and unpleasant. If the sheep appears healthy, I do donate it to a needy person. All 5 bighorns lethally removed last year were donated. The heads are taken to the lab

Wandering ram removed from domestic sheep pasture near Baggs, Wyoming. Kim Olson



for testing and are sometimes kept for educational purposes. The urgency to remove these bighorns is very pressing, and every effort is made to get

to the location as quickly as possible. Accurate sightings from the general public are key and can greatly assist in the department's efforts,

or hinder, for that matter. I know some people who do not call in such sightings, as they know what the outcome will be. Unfortunately, this is very selfish behavior and could lead to a catastrophic event. Everyday life is full of things we don't want to do, or would prefer not to do. In the end, the big picture and what is best for the majority needs to be remembered.

As much as we would like to provide more opportunity for hunters to harvest bighorn sheep, it is just not logistically feasible as an option for removing these wanderers. We move very quickly when we receive a phone call about a wandering bighorn sheep, as they do like to keep walking and can be very tough to catch up with. Location, timeliness and availability of a non-department shooter would all be very difficult to maneuver in such an urgent situation.

Many bighorn sheep populations are struggling due to disease transmission, not just in Wyoming, but across the west. History has shown that some of our healthiest and most robust bighorn sheep herds can be decimated with the introduction of a novel pathogen. While some of the available management tools can be difficult to implement because they result in a mortality, we do know that if we allow that animal to bring disease back to the larger herd, the results can be much worse. Minimizing the spread of disease to bighorn sheep is the first and very critical component to helping these herds. We all share the same goal, to put more sheep on the mountain, but we cannot forget that we also are responsible for protecting those sheep.

The Youngest Hunter

A Once-in-a-Lifetime Bighorn Sheep Hunt

By: Rhett Goolsbey

My once in a lifetime Wyoming bighorn sheep hunt started before I even knew it was possible due to me only being 11 during the season. My dad put me in for a chance to draw a tag after he had done some research to find out that I was legal to hunt as long as I turned 12 during the calendar year. He didn't tell anyone he had done this, so Mom and I didn't know that I was old enough to draw a big game tag until one night we received a letter from an outfitter saying he would like to guide me on my bighorn sheep hunt. My mom didn't believe it because she didn't think I was old enough, so she got onto the Game and Fish website and sure enough I drew a bighorn sheep tag! I couldn't believe it and I was super excited! My Mom called my Dad who was irrigating at the time and then I called my Grandpa to tell him that I drew the tag. Grandpa was really surprised, and he didn't believe me at first!

A good friend of my Dad and Mom, who owns Ishawooa Outfitters, reached out to us and said that he would give us a deal on a guided hunt. Dad and Grandpa talked it over and with the hunt during the middle of barley harvest, they decided to take him up on his offer. After a long summer of waiting, it was finally time to get ready to go hunting. I went to the outfitters house the night before to get stuff packed. He wanted me to try his 6.5 PRC as a backup gun just in case my gun didn't work. Once I started shooting it, it was decided for me to use that gun and use my gun as the backup. The next morning after we had

Rhett, Father-Bill, Ishawooa Outfitters Guide-Jonas Williams, Ishawooa Outfitters Owner-TJ Redder



left, my dad realized that he had not put my gun in the pickup, so I had no choice on what gun I was going to use!

Once we got up to the trail head, we unloaded and started to saddle all ten of the horses and mules. While my Dad and the guides were saddling horses, I went and checked out the river and found a rabbit and started chasing it. Then I went and started to help with the pack saddles and pack pads, and I combed the pads. Then we loaded up and started heading up the trail. After a while, we came to some pretty gnarly country and then we crossed a river for the second time. We ended up in Fall Creek that had a lot of rugged terrain. It was a super steep and treacherous trail. Once we got out of that, we finally arrived at where we were going to camp. After we set up camp, we went out scouting for bighorn sheep. We came across eight ewes and lambs that we watched for a while and then we went back to camp. On the way back it was pretty steep, and I tripped

a lot coming down. When we got back to camp, I started a fire, we ate dinner, then we made a plan for the next day.

The next day, we rode out the head of Fall Creek to look into the head of Bruin Creek, and looked over into the head of Silver Creek. We glassed all of the areas looking for sheep. In Silver Creek, we saw a pack of six wolves, they were so big we thought they were bed rolls laying out there. Some of them had collars on them. After that, we started heading back and then we saw a sow grizzly with her two cubs. Not seeing any rams, we headed out to look into a different drainage. While riding along the ridge line so we could glass for sheep in two different drainages, we came to a place that was too steep with loose rocks to be able to ride, so we had to lead the horses and mules. It was bad enough that the outfitter had my Dad lead my mule for me. After glassing the two drainages and not seeing any rams, we started heading back to camp. We couldn't go back up the spot

that we had led the horses and mules down, so we went down and across one drainage. After climbing out of that area, we had to go down an elk trail to get back to camp. The elk trail was so steep and rocky that it switched back and forth to go up and down it. Then we ate dinner and sat around the fire and afterwards we went to bed.

On Day 3 of the hunt, my Dad and I were glassing while one my guides was scouting out another drainage area. He was scouting higher than us and he came across a grizzly bear. The bear almost charged him, but luckily it ran off! Once he came back to us, we ate lunch, and after a while we headed back to camp because a storm was rolling in. We sat around the fire and talked. After this, we made a homemade bow and arrow out of a long stick that was wet so it would bend. We also used some thick string for the string of the bow. We made some arrows out of a pine tree branch that I could shoot. I practiced shooting at a box with my new bow. We ate some dinner and then went to bed.

On the fourth day, I didn't get to hunt at all because a big storm came in and rained us out. We finally decided to take a nap because we couldn't do anything else. I was SO bored!

On Day Five, I finally got to hunt again. We went to Silver Creek again to look for sheep. We spent all day riding and glassing for sheep. We found many ewes and lambs, but no rams. Right about the time we were getting ready to head back to camp, we saw two big rams and one little ram. It was late in the day when we saw them, so we went back to camp to make a plan and decided to try for them the next day.

On the sixth day, we went and were hunting Silver Creek because we had seen two huge rams the day before. We started glassing the spot where we had seen the rams and they weren't there, so we decided to ride down into Silver Creek and see if the rams had moved around the other side where we couldn't see. After glassing and riding much of Silver Creek, it was decided to ride into Lake Fork. We glassed into this area and didn't see anything. Dropping off into this spot is one of the steepest, rockiest spots that you can take a horse off of! Then we were riding down to find a spot for a spike camp for the night and to do some glassing, we saw two rams! They were on the side of a hill just laying down, so we hurried and got into some trees. We glassed them to see what size they were. After glassing, we decided they were pretty big, and we decided to put a stalk on them. One of the guides stayed in the trees to glass and keep watch on the rams. The two guides had earpieces so that they could talk to each other. We started a stalk while the guide below told us when to move forward and when to stop if the rams were looking our way. Soon the rams walked into a basin where we couldn't see them, so we just kept walking towards which direction we thought they had gone. After a while, we spotted them again. We used a range finder to see what distance they were at. After range finding them, they were too far to shoot at, so we had to move closer. We got a lot closer, and they were within range. The range finder said that my shot

was 417 yards. So, I decided to get ready to shoot. I got my gun ready over a rock so that I had a good rest. I was shaking so bad that I couldn't get steady and aim on the ram. The outfitter put his bag between me and the rock to help slow the shakes down. I got on the ram to shoot but the outfitter asked me which ram I was on, and we realized I was on the wrong one! So, I switched to the other ram because the first one was broomed off. Broomed off means that the ram has rubbed off the end of his horns. I couldn't find the second ram in the scope at first so the outfitter zoomed the scope out so I could find him easier. Once I found him in the scope, I got ready to shoot even though I was still super shaky. I finally got on him and I took a deep breath in, squeezed the trigger and closed my eyes.

When I opened my eyes, he was running, so I quickly put another bullet in the chamber and was about to shoot him again when he fell and started

Rhett riding his mule into base camp.





Rhett with his ram.

rolling! I finally got my ram! I was super excited and I pumped my fist because I had gotten him. With one shot! We started the long trek to him, and I was so excited that I could hardly walk to him. I kept stumbling on all of the rocks as we went down. When I got to him, he had fallen into a little creek and down a big drop off. I had to push him down the hill so that I could dress him out. After lots of pictures and big smiles, we started to dress him out. It got dark, so I had to use a flashlight from my dad because I was on bear duty while I was watching them dress out my ram. Once he was dressed out and into the game bags, we headed down the hill to the horses to find a spot to camp for the night. I saw a porcupine on my way down to the horses. I wanted to shoot it, but my Dad said that I had been blessed with a nice ram and I needed to let the porcupine live. Once we were to the horses, we went down the basin to find a good spot to camp. While they were unpacking to set up camp, I gathered firewood, and I started a fire for dinner. I was really tired, so I fell asleep while my Dad and the guides were making dinner. My Dad woke me up and he started

to whittle spoons because we had forgotten ours at the other camp. We ate Mountain House with our wooden spoons. After eating, I put on all of the clothes that I had brought because I knew it would be a cold night. Then I went to sleep.

On Day 7 for breakfast, we hadn't brought enough food, so we cooked part of the tenderloin from my ram for breakfast. It was super good! After we ate, we gathered up our gear and we started back to the camp after one outfitter and I put out the campfire with water from the creek. It was a very steep ride coming out.

After a lot of riding, we were finally close to camp, and we saw a giant herd of elk! We watched them as we rode. We got back to camp and then we caped out my ram so I can get him mounted. That night for dinner we had ribs and for the appetizer we had Rocky Mountain Oysters from my ram. They were so good! We stayed by the fire for a long time talking that night because we were heading home the next morning. I went to bed and had a good night's sleep.

On the last day, we had the long ride out to head home. I was so tired but so excited to get home and show my Mom and brothers my ram. It was about an eight-hour horse ride and then a couple hour pickup ride to the house. I had a super fun time on my sheep hunt, and I wish I could do it again but it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. I googled it and I'm pretty sure I am the youngest kid to have legally shot a bighorn sheep in Wyoming. I was only 11 at the time of my hunt. This wouldn't have been possible without my Dad and Ishawooa Outfitters helping me. This experience was the best ever! I told my parents I want to be a hunting guide when I grow up!

Goolsbey Family: Rhenn, Bill, Ryatt, Rhett, Russell, Kalee, Rowdee, Rhylee



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“Next”

By: Jordan Seitz
Encampment K-12 Teacher



SHEEP STUDY UPDATE 14:
The Spring of 2024 was quite the contrast to '23. Probably because there wasn't a looming

feeling of death from the winter kill! Biologist Teal's "State of the Sheep Address" on one of our hikes was positive.

Our Spring card pulls in the canyon were met with the usual excitement, plus a twist. We were hoping for footage of our "Uni-horn" ewe and "Chubs" the marmot. We were rewarded with two clips of our ewe, and just days before our card pull, Chubs came out of hibernation to continue his usual route across the rocks. With decreased snow levels, we only had a single sheep bed down in the historic use bed (see Update #13 for more background info).

Something new was having our



school's 5th-grade class and teacher (Jake Johnston: now our principal) join us to share in the adventure, and get excited about more trips in the fall as 6th graders. I tried to take them on an easier route to the bottom of the canyon to retrieve our river crossing camera. Considering the route ended up worse than expected, and the camera footage was a bust in terms of sheep, they had great attitudes and felt success and excitement for future adventures. We had trouble finding our camera thanks to the creek water rising high enough I had to wade out past my knees to retrieve it. Even though it didn't capture any sheep, we confirmed our theory that the location would provide images of more predators than prey. When we set up the camera, we left an antler on the ground to see if anything would take notice, and



in the spring, a bear stopped to smell it! On our travels to and from our camera location, we saw an astounding number of sheep in multiple locations. The highlight was taking a class picture with our big band of rams (~20) in the background, something I've never seen before with

students (nor have many of the locals for that matter)!

Every Spring and Fall I spend a lot of time pondering my next steps to keep the Sheep Study new and adventurous. With this in mind, I wrote another local Rec Board grant and currently have a couple new cameras sitting on my desk. Our focus this fall will be on water crossings. We will place a couple cameras where we saw sheep cross the creek last year, and I'll work on scheduling adventures with other classes!



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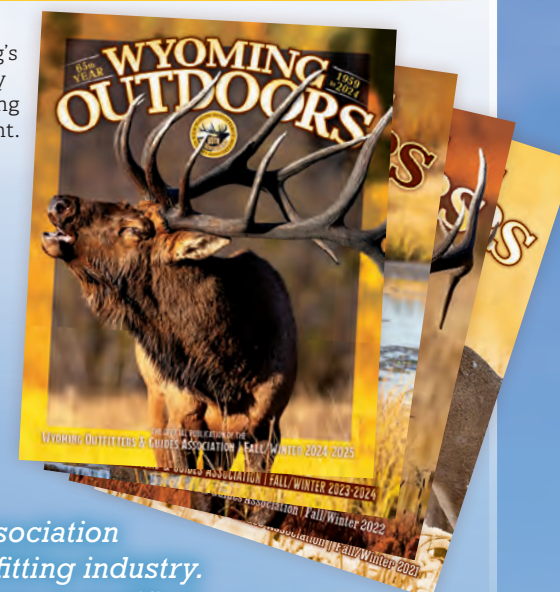
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Women Hunt®

By: Grayson Highfield
Outreach Coordinator - Wyoming Wildlife Federation
Women Hunt Program Alumni

"I'm lying prone in damp Texas hill-country sand. Weatherby rifle in hand, the butt is nestled deep into my right shoulder pocket, a place where it had found a comfortable home in the past forty-eight hours. Crosshairs settle sharply onto a buck's broadside, my finger holds the tension of the trigger in that moment immediately before I'd pull, and I falter. Two-and-a-half hours into my first hunt, and I fail to pull the trigger.

Plenty could be blamed for that, and plenty of reasons were offered: 'it was cold; you were shivering; the little light we had in that weather was quickly disappearing; it's hard to maintain a good line of sight when the rain is hitting your scope and it keeps fogging up...' All of these were true, and then some.

My nerves got the best of me. I had the shot, and I couldn't slow my breath enough to take it. A thousand thoughts crossed my mind and my heart thumped in my chest. The crosshairs swayed over the 'kill-zone' and I couldn't steady them enough. So I didn't take it."

It's a tale I've told a hundred times.

I wrote this passage twenty-four hours after I was in that moment, having given myself time to reflect. Reflection, though, is subjective and vulnerable to circumstance. Time has offered me recognition that the relevant impact of a moment has an inherent tendency to develop and change.



Credit: Women Hunt®

This lesson that I've had the privilege to reiterate to newcomers (though at times it's hard to believe there are minds fresher than mine) has been scrutinized within a new environment. One year ago I had never hunted. Eighteen months ago I refused to eat meat. I wasn't raised around firearms (though I had shot a few throughout the years), nor was I taught to believe that hunting had purpose other than the sport of killing. No, I was as far removed from the world I now occupy as you could imagine. A poster-child for the other side, you might say.

Women Hunt® was a choice; in hindsight, the series of motions that occurred to lay me there, cushioned by heavy camo and soft desert sand, staring down the barrel of a rifle at a living, breathing thing for the very first time... were immeasurable. Heartbreak, propensity for change, desire to prove my capabilities, respect

for and curiosity about a way of life, thirst for knowledge in the multiple facets of conservation and ultimately, a rationale for existence in an otherwise harsh and unwelcoming environment; the reasons are not quantifiable.

This story remains the first lesson, and arguably, the most important lesson I have and will ever learn in hunting. I know that perhaps it seems a bold statement to assert so early in my learning journey, but I stand behind it for a simply significant reason: Autonomy.

This lesson provided me with autonomy in choosing how I hunt, when I hunt, how I define hunting, when I label myself a hunter (despite the imposter syndrome that creeps in), and, in the end, if and when I choose to pull the trigger. Women Hunt® gave me that.

"No amount of precision training can prepare you

for your own reaction when you place an animal in your crosshairs for the first time," I wrote in those subsequent 24 hours, and then: "It can, however, prepare you to make the most ethical choices."

A guide at the FTW Ranch, Ephraim (or Ef, as he preferred), and someone I was lucky enough to claim as a mentor even for a brief time, spoke candidly with me in the aftermath: "You should *never* regret the shots you don't take," he exclaimed at me in the dark of a fall evening under the dim yellow-lighted overhang of the lodge's front porch, and I can only imagine the bedraggled, half-soaked, windswept, physically exhausted and emotionally taxed, fighting back tears vision of a young woman in front of

him. "Can you imagine if you took a shot you weren't ready for?" My mind flashes back to the moment; he watched me patiently, expectantly, and perhaps wondered if my palpable enthusiasm for learning in the previous days was culminating into something substantial. I relaxed my grip, nudged the safety on with my thumb, and backed off the scope. My eyes drifted up to his; the only part we could see of one another in the bundle of technical gear that swaddled us. "I can't do it. I can't slow my breathing," and the words left my body somewhere between a whisper and a gasp, as if I had been breathing so quickly that no substantial air had actually entered my lungs, and I had just released the last of it in a desperate rasp. Without hesitation, he

softly replied, "that's okay."

Back under those neon porch lights, he pauses in unloading our rifles from the Jeep's bed to wrap me in a warm hug. My throat is tight as I grapple with the gravity of reality. *What if that was my one opportunity, and I threw it away?*

Pulling the trigger felt like the difference between authenticity and facade in identifying as a hunter. Time and perspective allowed me to understand that this moment was more than a means to an end; it reiterated the process of hunting as an encompassing experience. What does it mean to hunt? Hunting is simply not definable by something as insignificant as pulling the trigger.

It took time to circle back



Credit: Women Hunt®

on this lesson with fresh context, but not as much as I would've anticipated. Not even a full twelve months passed from that moment and I found myself freshly titled as the Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator for the Wyoming Wildlife Federation, Wyoming's oldest conservation organization. My mind was still miles behind and wondering, *how did we end up here?*

A first task was to assist in the launch of More than Gatherers, an all-women's hunter education and conservation course between Lander and Dubois, Wyoming. My relationship with Women Hunt® was an invaluable asset to lean on, and they generously sponsored one of my first major opportunities to give back through what they gave to me.

Between two weekends in August, More than Gatherers

developed a community out of twenty-four strangers. A camaraderie from women of varied backgrounds, skill-levels, conservation knowledge, and geographic areas. I was privileged to put it on, call myself an instructor, and learn from these women who were not so different from myself in at least one notable way.

It was here, and through other conversations with female hunters in my travels, that my lesson in autonomy illuminated itself in rarity and utmost significance. Not everyone had the opportunity and liberty of learning in the way I did, and some (more than I'd hoped to hear) experienced an egregious opposite: "Take the shot... Take the shot! Take the shot!!!"

Campfire stories under the alpine told me horrific tales of pressure and expectation. That a woman still felt the need

to undertake this journey for anyone but herself and that she would then feel the persuasion to take a shot she might not be ready for? Inconceivable, yet reality, and it underscored the critical need for women-led spaces within male-dominated industries. Here I was, helping establish one.

True autonomy is a beautiful and precious thing, I realize, and understand that were it not for the careful curation of curriculum that Women Hunt® and the FTW Ranch staff partake in, I might not possess the same confidence in my ability to say yes, no, or otherwise. I am grateful beyond measure for the lessons they bestowed upon me, for the people they selected as instructors, and for their insistence in never allowing me to believe that my decisions in hunting should be anything but mine to make. It is my torch to pass on.



Credit: Women Hunt®



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2024 Sheep Hunt: Alberta, Canada

By: Ray Maack

This story starts out like many other sheep stories, the hardest part is getting the tag. Applying for tags in the state draws for the last twenty-plus years and coming up unsuccessful. My buddy, Dominic Rowley, said he was going to Reno for Sheep Week and asked if I wanted to come along. Dominic told me, "There are many raffles, the Less Than One Social Gathering, and many options of winning a tag." With my cousin Alan Piombo retiring and moving to the Reno area, I thought this would be a cool opportunity to visit Alan, and the three of us go to the Sheep Show. Off to the Show we went on Thursday. We went to the Exhibit Hall, started walking around, and came across the raffles the Wild Sheep Foundation had. I bought a handful of tickets, and put eleven in the hunt for a Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in Alberta, Canada with Carter

Outfitting. Fast-forward to Saturday afternoon, the raffle drawings began. One by one, the winners were announced. They got to this hunt and my name was called. Standing and hearing my name, I just stood there in shock, knowing I heard my name, but it was not registering in my brain. Dominic and Alan started hooting and hollering and yelling at me to walk up to get my winning hunt. After filling out my paperwork, Carter Outfitting had a booth there, so I went and introduced myself to Scott. Scott told me about the hunt; what to expect and what paperwork I would be needing to enter Canada. He told me the hunt would be this Fall, the first of September, and that we would be in contact.

End of August. Dominic and I started making our way to Hinton, Alberta. Upon arriving in Hinton, we met up with my guide Rhett, went over last

minute things, and headed out to the staging area where they had a pack-string of horses. We went through our gear and started packing horses. It was a seven hour ride to camp. That was hard on the bottom end, with one ten minute break halfway in. Once in camp, we settled in and took the next day to rest and get adjusted to altitude (for as this boy came from sea level on the Oregon coast). A day of scouting and the hunt began every day with long horse rides and climbing of MOUNTAINS. We saw many ewes and lambs, spotted with the occasional band of rams. It quickly became obvious that turning up a good ram was not going to be easy. A blister on the back of my heel on Day One did not make things any easier.

On Day Eleven, the assistant guide Nick and wrangler Trey turned up this ram that evening. Nick camped up on

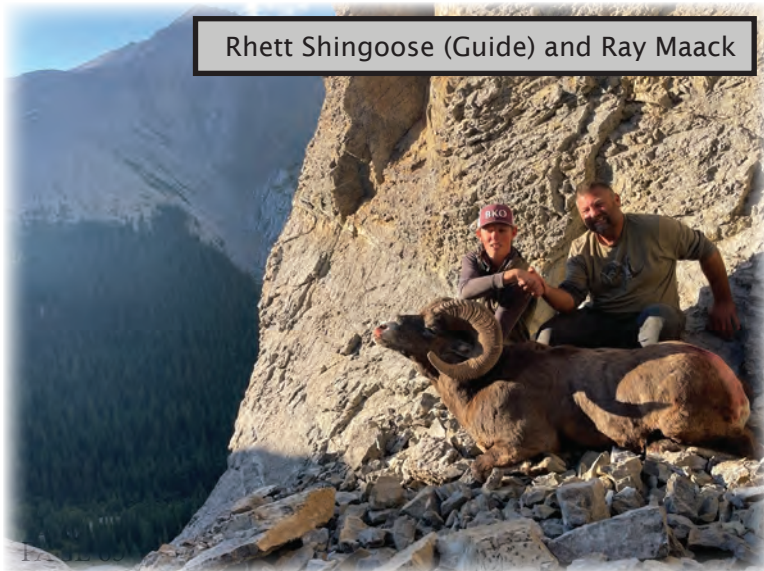
the hill all night to keep track of him. It rained that night. We were up early with a several hour horse ride to the base of the mountain, and had a long steep climb to the top that about killed me. Once arriving to Nick on the top of the mountain, we were greeted with fog. Glassing through the fog breaks, we could not turn up the ram. Rhett decided we should ease down the ridge, looking off of both sides as we went. Nick climbed a higher paralleling ridge to glass across to us. The ram was gone. Nick looked over the other side of the ridge he was on and found the rams, then motioned us to hurry over. I took one look at how far down we had to go, then back up the other side, then asked Rhett, "Are you guys trying to kill me?" We both laughed and busted our butts over there. Once arriving, Nick had the ram in the spotting scope. Rhett and Nick talked back and forth, and quickly determined the ram was legal and we needed to kill it. We moved down the ridge to get in a better shooting position; 514 yards was the closest we could get. Settling in behind my Night Force scope. I asked if everyone was ready for the shot. It was a yes and the shot rang out. I heard, "You hit him good, but put another round in him," which I did. Then all I heard was, "He's down." I fell

over backwards. The mental and physical exhaustion felt like it just released from my body. I heard Rhett and Nick screaming and hollering, "You got him! You got him!" followed by the dogpile and celebration. This was all on the twelfth day of the hunt (September 12th, 2024). We made our way down to the ram through the rocks, to find the ram had slid down the hill about 150 yards, then fell off a 40-foot embankment. Luckily it stopped there because it would have fallen off a 200-foot embankment from there.

The pictures, caping, and de-boning started as darkness was not far away. After loading our packs, the rock climbing began, followed by the steep

descent down the rock shale to get to the creek bottom. It was almost dark when we got to the creek bottom, and with at least another four hours plus of packing to get to the horses, we decided to stay the night there with nothing. We started a big fire, had sheep meat for dinner, and had a long, cold, miserable, but yet, fun night. Finally morning came, and we loaded our packs to head up the canyon to reach the horses. At least a four hour pack later, and what a great sight it was to see Trey and Dominic coming over the ridge with the horses. Back at camp the next day, we packed up and rode out on Saturday. I had to stay until Monday, September 16th, (which is my birthday) to have my ram checked by the Fish and Game. What a birthday present. From the Fish and Game office in Edson, Alberta to home was a fifteen and a half hour drive straight through, which I did, getting home at 4:30 in the morning. It was one h*ll of a hunt with great people. It was the hardest funnest thing I have ever done, hands down. Having patience and a never-give-up attitude is what paid off for this hunt. Thank you to everyone that made this trip possible and to the Wild Sheep Foundation for having opportunities like this for the common person to be able to have the hunt of a lifetime. Thank you. Thank you.

Rhett Shingoose (Guide) and Ray Maack



Right After The Shot



Dominic Rowley and Ray Maack

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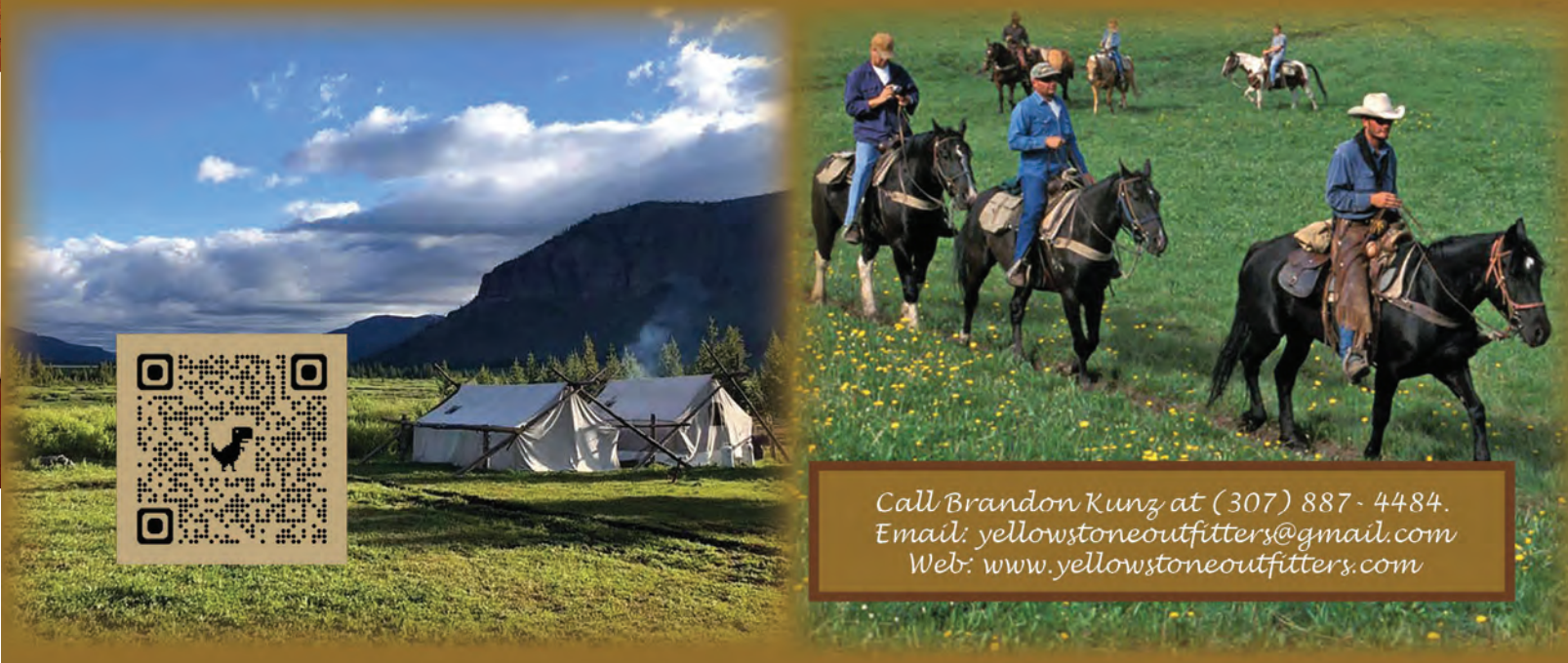
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Members are encouraged to submit photos for publication in the RAMPAGE as well as our website galleries by emailing to: Rampage@wyomingwildsheep.org.



Tagg, Levi and Mick Mickelsen with Mick's HA 19 Ram. Photo by brother Rick.



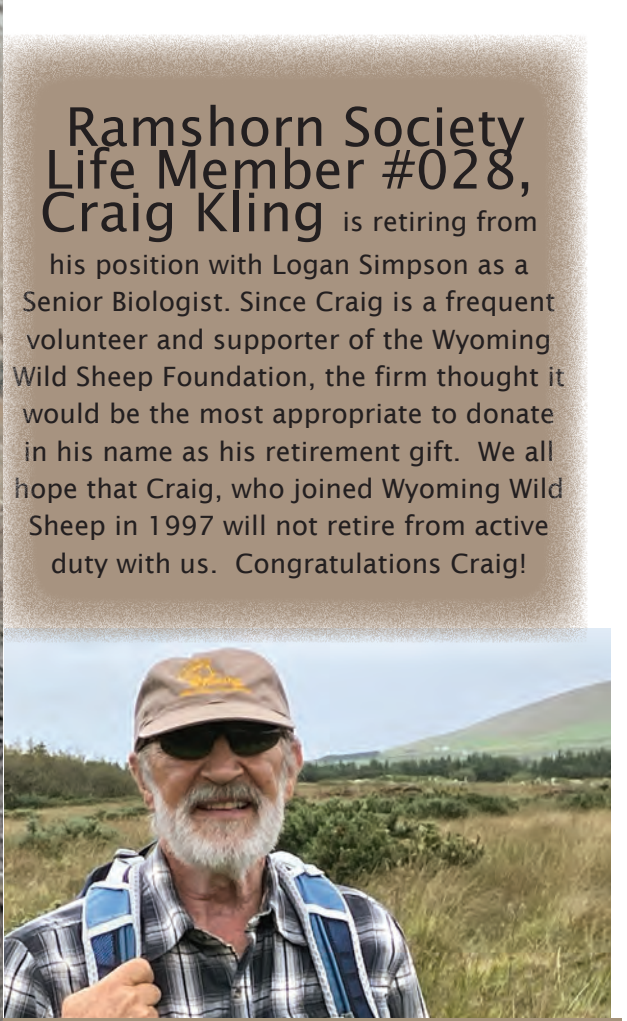
RHS LM and Board Member, Jimmy Owens with his NWT Dall's Sheep.



Life Members Gary Butler, Pat Pace, Tanner Pace, Bill Gerhart, Scott Butler and Chance Butler are on the hunt for Bill's 2024 Ram.



Dave Bumann finished his Slam while hunting with Lost Creek Outfitters

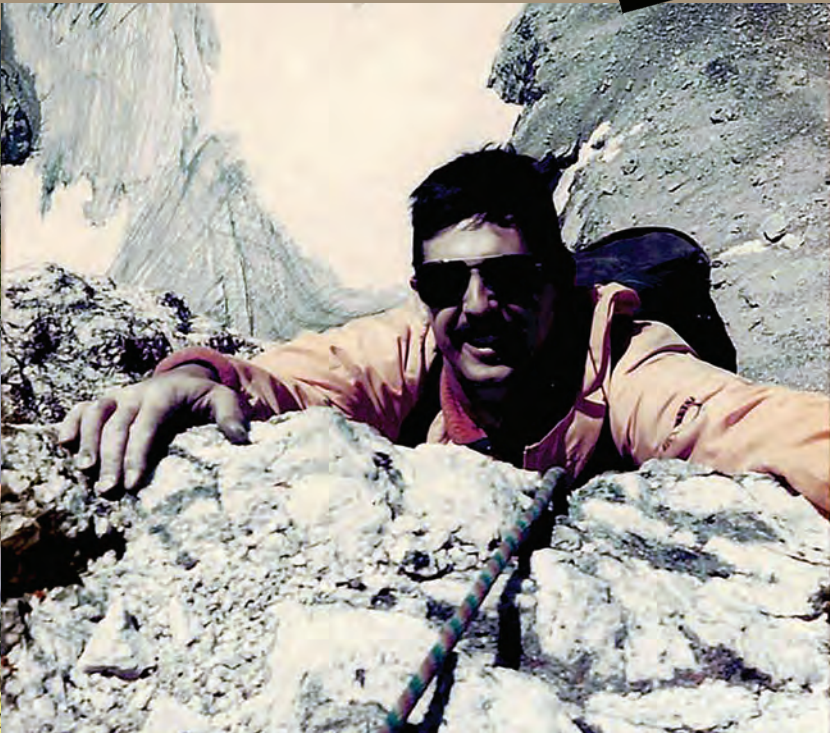


Ramshorn Society Life Member #028, Craig Kling is retiring from his position with Logan Simpson as a Senior Biologist. Since Craig is a frequent volunteer and supporter of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, the firm thought it would be the most appropriate to donate in his name as his retirement gift. We all hope that Craig, who joined Wyoming Wild Sheep in 1997 will not retire from active duty with us. Congratulations Craig!

Member's Gallery

BLAST FROM THE PAST

DO YOU KNOW THIS GUY? (Answer on Page 5)



Dusty Porter's Ram Down! After 22 years of applying, in 2024 I finally drew my Once-in-a-Lifetime Wyoming Bighorn Sheep Tag. This hunt pushed me to the limits both physically and mentally. After 8+ days of being on the mountain, I came to develop an ultimate respect for these animals and the rugged terrain they call home. I am forever grateful to an amazing group of family and friends who came along and supported me on my DIY Backpack Hunt. I owe these guys a huge debt of gratitude and couldn't have done it without them! Memories to last a lifetime...

Shawn Porter's 2024 Sheep hunt, Once in a lifetime! By far the most grueling, challenging and rewarding hunt I've ever done. On the 7th day things finally came together, the stalk, shot & pack off the mountain took almost 11 hours, got off the mountain well after dark and not to camp until around 11:30. Then to have my dad on the hunt was awesome. Special thanks to Corey Fischer, with Crandall Creek Outfitters, friends for over 30 years, on the amazing hunting trip and experience that we had!

National Bighorn Sheep Center Updates

By: NBSC Staff

From the Desk of Executive Director Amanda Verheul:

As Executive Director for the National Bighorn Sheep Center, I am honored to work alongside the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation. The Center is an affiliate and the education arm of the Wild Sheep Foundation. Today, I settle into my office after a weekend of antelope hunting with my family; one word comes to mind: adventure. I harvested my first antelope, a nice 15" buck. I anxiously await that nourishing meat as we set in for the winter in the Wind River Mountains. My children feel refreshed and excited when they experience the wilderness in its glory. Along this hunt, we saw some nice rams and a few ewes, each with a lamb. That's exciting news for the Absaroka herd in Wyoming. Our lambs on the Dubois side are beginning to make their way down the mountain, and they look healthy.

We get a little excited talking about our wild sheep. The bighorn mam is iconic in our little town of Dubois, Wyoming. It is our town brand and school mascot. Unfortunately, M.

Ovi has devastated our wild sheep herds over the last 30 years, and we are dedicated to bringing more sheep to our mountain. We will test some local domestic sheep and goats for M. Ovi this month. These domestic animals roam near our wild sheep on our local sheep ridge. This is a big step toward educating others on the dangers of allowing infected sheep to roam near our wild sheep herds.

In the last year, we have nearly tripled our Butler Conservation Education Fund and doubled our outreach numbers. This fund, an agreement between the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, the Wild Sheep Foundation, and the National Bighorn Sheep Center, was established by Gary Butler and his family to educate more youth about the outdoors and wild sheep. It is our goal to increase this fund to 250K in the next three years. With the help of enthusiasts like you, we can make this a reality!

From the Desk of the Marketing and Brand Coordinator Anna Mabie:
Glacier-capped granite peaks

and the calming sound of Torrey Creek trickling in the background make for the most idyllic setting for Camp Bighorn. Surrounded by the pristine Fitzpatrick Wilderness nestled in the Torrey Valley lies the Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp. Held July 1st through the 6th, in attendance from all over the country, 31 children from nine states unpack their bags for five days, for an unforgettable camping experience. From field journaling, petroglyph exploration, fly fishing, and wild edible and plant ethnobotany, campers get to participate in many educational and physical activities. Wyoming Game and Fish Department owns and operates the Conservation Camp, whom allows us the opportunity to host Camp Bighorn yearly and also participates in educational programs for the kids. After a day of learning and exploring, campers gather around a campfire to share their experiences and make memories with their new friends.

Camp Bighorn 2024 was a testament to the power of immersive, hands-on learning. Save the date for Camp in 2025, June 29 - July 4th.

Do you know of a teacher that deserves to be recognized for educating students by working with conservation organizations to inspire and educate youth about wild sheep and the importance of conserving wildlife and wildlands?

Submit your nominations today!
www.bighorn.org/outstandingbighornaward

From the Desk of



Wyoming Outdoor Weekend Amanda Verheul and Anna Mabie

Education Manager and Biologist Beth Cable:

School is back in session! The National Bighorn Sheep Center is inviting all educators to experience, explore, and excite their students through a variety of educational opportunity choices: A visit to and tour of the Center, an Adventure Tour into the Torrey Valley, or checking out and borrowing an educational trunk. A few school groups are already scheduled, including the University of Wyoming Lab School Middle School, Fort Washakie Elementary fourth grade, and Thermopolis High School eleventh and twelfth grades.

Additionally, a second education trunk will be produced and this program promoted and grown. The trunks can be loaned to educators or brought to events and classes. They include bighorn sheep materials and lesson plans about sheep biology and ecology.

As a new Education Manager on board, I am looking forward to connecting and working with both local- and national-level educators and building the National Bighorn Sheep Center educational program. Attending the Wyoming

Alliance for Environmental Education at Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp will allow me to build relationships and networks state-wide. We will continue to educate students of all ages about national conservation of wild sheep, wildlife and wildlands!

From the Desk of the Museum Coordinator Anna Miller:

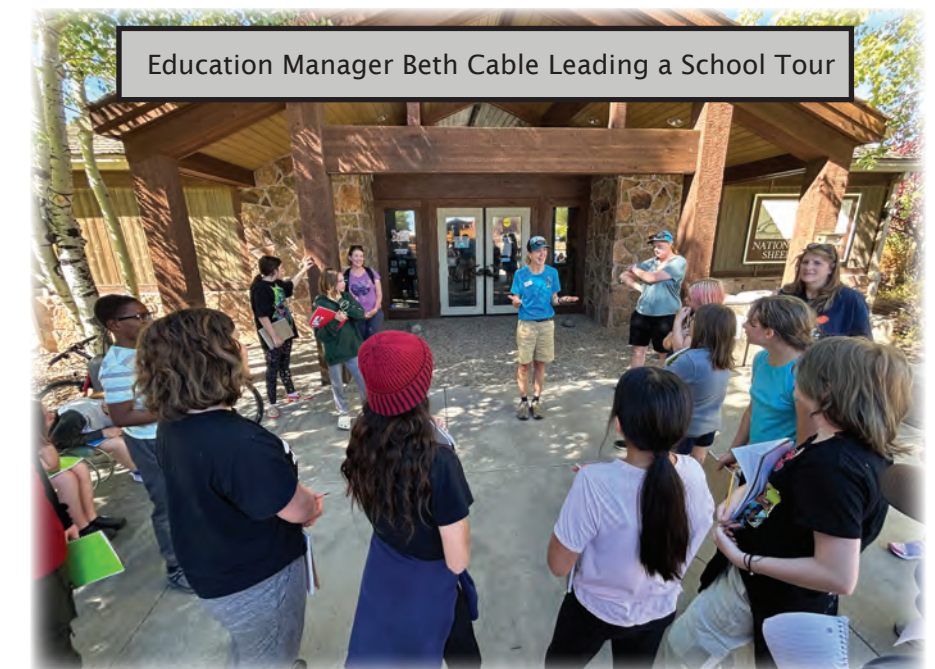
Our museum has had increased admissions from 2023 to 2024 and we have received numerous compliments on our museum from visitors this year. We are in the beginning stages

of updating the museum to continue to give our guests the best experience possible. In July, I conducted a museum survey report that considered target audiences at each exhibit, evaluated general flow between exhibits, and generated suggestions for updates and repairs. My survey found that the current layout of the museum does not have an intuitive flow and several exhibits require a lot of reading and it is not always easy to find the key takeaways. After completing the survey, I reached out to a museum fabrication company to assist us with upgrading our current exhibits. The update will include interactive features, new signage to reflect current information, and help the flow of the exhibits to give the visitor the best experience. We are looking forward to bringing these ideas to life in the coming months.

The membership of the National Bighorn Sheep Center is strong with over 350 members. Life Memberships have increased from 23 members at the end of 2023 to 38 Life Members as of September 24, 2024. We thank our members for their dedication to the Center and its mission.



Shoshone Elder Speaking to Youth at Camp Bighorn



Education Manager Beth Cable Leading a School Tour

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Explore Kits



Would You Burn Your Points on Wyoming's New 3/4 Curl Bighorn Sheep Tag?

By: Jaden Bales

Reprinted Courtesy of Eastman's Hunting Journal

If you grew up in a small western town like me, then you might have run into a situation where all of the ladies in your class had been asked to prom already, and as a result, you usually brought dates from nearby towns to your tiny high school dance.

Young bighorn sheep males looking for love do the same thing. Except when they return to their hometown dance floor, they could be bringing back a deadly pneumonia that wipes out most of the herd.

It is that premise that the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission recently approved new 3/4 curl or less bighorn sheep ram tags for two hunt areas in 2024.

These licenses specifically target young rams in herds with high ram populations. The way that the 3/4 curl definition is written, broomed horns are not acceptable, and the curl measurement is taken from the back of the eye. This will mean mature rams with broken horns will not be available on these licenses.

Against the backdrop of long odds for a bighorn sheep license anywhere, these licenses open up opportunities without increasing pressure on the mature ram age class. The type one license holders in Wyoming can still find a strong crop of older age-class rams to

chase, and it may even lessen competition for their food resources, producing larger old rams in the meantime.

If that seems impossible at first, it's akin to trophy elk areas across the west offering spike hunting opportunities while also producing older age-class bulls. Think of Utah's famed bull units and the big three in Oregon, for example.

The 4 hunting licenses in the Ferris/Seminole herd will hopefully redirect pressure away from the older animals available for the half-dozen ram tag holders while helping bring the male ratio down. This herd is at its objective and next door to the Sweetwater Rocks,



where a big reintroduction effort is underway. Keeping these rams contained is important to showing livestock producers Wyoming can be trusted to keep their bighorn sheep from wandering into domestic sheep operations.

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation's Katie Cheesbrough says of the hunt, "The Ferris-Seminole herd is currently the healthiest herd in the state and will likely be the source herd for transplant should a Sweetwater rocks reintroduction happen. It's important to keep this herd healthy so that it can be used for reintroduction and expansion in the future with these hunts."

North on the west side of the Bighorn mountains, the Devil's Canyon herd was hit with back-to-back disease outbreaks in two years with the last one in August of

2023 disproportionately affecting ewes in the herd. The remaining 32 rams counted in the unit outnumbered the ewes and lambs, setting up a perfect storm for them to start wandering and possibly bringing back yet another disease to the remaining ewes. Those 5 licenses will hopefully take out a few of those potential wanderers.

You may be a nonresident thinking they might get out from under the weight of their Wyoming points that seem worthless at this stage of the game. I regret to inform you these licenses are only going to be offered to residents in 2024. The WGFD balances out the 90/10 split across all bighorn sheep licenses, and with two Super Tag bighorn sheep licenses going to nonresidents, there is a deficit of two tags from the nonresidents in this year's draw.

The Wyoming bighorn sheep drawing woes will continue for nonresidents to the Cowboy State. However, residents behind the curve may see these as an opportunity to take their first bighorn sheep before their legs give out and they cannot reach sheep country anymore. For folks like me, who are sitting nearly 70 years behind the top point holders at last year's sheep license numbers, it's yet to be seen whether these will offer a consistent low-point option or if the higher point holders who want to get out and hunt sheep will take these once-in-a-lifetime 3/4 curl tags and run.

There were no publicly outspoken opponents to these hunts at the April 16th Wyoming Game and Fish Commission meeting, and Chapter 9 of the proposed regulations passed unanimously.



A Wyoming Bighorn Sheep Hunt

By: Jesse Peterson



Jesse Peterson has always admired the rugged beauty of Wyoming's wilderness, but she never imagined she would be part of a bighorn sheep hunt. Encouraged by her husband, Rob, she decided to apply for a tag. It was her first time applying, and to their surprise and delight, she was successful. They were about to embark on a DIY sheep hunt, a challenge that would test their physical and mental limits.

The summer before the hunt was a blur of preparation. Jesse and Rob trained tirelessly, knowing that the rugged terrain and high altitudes would demand peak physical condition. They hiked, ran, and ate healthily, pushing each other to be their best. Rob called this getting in "Sheep Shape." Their friends offered to help pack them in on horseback, a 15-mile journey into

the heart of sheep country. Without their generosity in helping, this hunt wouldn't have been possible.

The plan was simple but ambitious: Their friends would drop them off and return in two weeks. Jesse and Rob were determined to make the most of their time, aiming to find a mature ram and complete the hunt as much as possible on their own. They knew it would be tough, but both were ready for the challenge.

The night before the harvest, they hiked two miles with their packs and essentials, spending the night on the bare ground with nothing but their sleeping bags. They woke up early, feeling a mix of excitement and anticipation. Rob glassed a few rams that were miles away, and they discussed how to approach



them. Moments later, Jesse looked to her left and saw two rams, one more mature than

the other, bedded down and enjoying the warm sun. They were about 400 yards away. Jesse patiently for the opportunity, steadying the rifle, controlling her breathing, and finally, Jesse squeezed the trigger.



The shot echoed through the valley, and the ram fell. The moment was surreal. Jesse and Rob stood in awe, their hearts pounding with a mix of triumph and gratitude. They had done it. They had accomplished their goal, and the sense of pride and accomplishment was overwhelming. The physical and mental challenges had been immense, but they had faced them together. However, the real challenge was beginning. They thought the pack-out would be fairly easy, but it turned out to be an exhausting 10-hour task. The walk down to the ram was not easy, and they had to navigate a potential rockslide. They hoped to pack to the bottom of the plateau and have a straightforward walk to camp, but the terrain had other plans. It cliffed out, forcing them to find an alternative route. They climbed rock walls that were 8-10 feet tall, testing their

endurance and determination.

In the end, it wasn't just about the ram they harvested but the journey they had taken together. They had chased the adventure and faced the challenges head-on. As they looked at the ram, they felt a deep sense of pride and gratitude for the experience they had shared.

Jesse and Rob have developed a deep passion for hunting in Wyoming. Their enthusiasm for the sport is not just about the thrill of the hunt but also about embracing the natural beauty of Wyoming and spending time together. They hope to inspire other couples to explore the outdoors and discover the joys of hunting together, fostering a shared appreciation for nature and adventure.

Their story is a testament to how hunting can bring people closer, not only to each other, but also to the environment. By sharing their experiences, Jesse and Rob aim to encourage more couples, men, women, and youth to step outside, enjoy the wilderness, and create lasting memories in the great outdoors of Wyoming.



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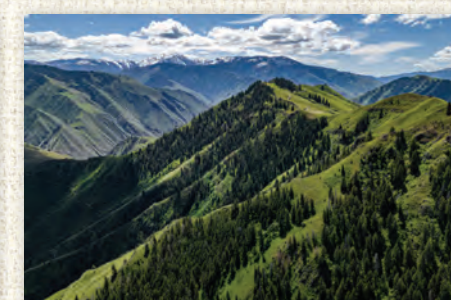
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Swiss Steak - Game Style

- 1 Pound Round Steak (Any Species), Cut Into Small Pieces
- 1 Can Tomato Sauce
- 1 Can Diced Tomatoes (With Garlic And Olive Oil)
- 1 Can Water
- 1 Small Onion, Chopped or 1 T Dehydrated Onion
- 1 T Italian Seasoning
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 2 T Butter or Olive Oil
- Salt and Pepper
- Flour

- 1) Brown meat in butter or oil, after coating with flour
- 2) Place in a crock pot with all other ingredients for six to eight hours
- 3) A Dutch oven can be used for cooking as well

Wild Game Recipes

Good Old Fashioned Stew

- 2 Pounds Boneless Chuck (Any Species)
Cut Into 1 Inch Cubes
- 2 Cups Hot Water
- 1 t Lemon Juice
- 1 t Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 Clove Garlic (Minced)
- 1 Small Onion (Diced)
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 2 t Salt
- 1/2 t Pepper
- 1/8 t All Spice
- 1 t Sugar
- 6 Carrots, Halved and Chunked (Vegetable)
- 3 Small Onions (Vegetable)
- 5 Potatoes, Quartered or Chunked (Vegetable)

- 1) Brown meat on all sides in oil
- 2) Add all ingredients, except for vegetables, continuing to stir until the diced onion is tender
- 3) Add vegetables and cook on stove top until vegetables are done
- 4) Stew can also be placed in a crock pot or Dutch oven to finish cooking

The RamPage is starting a community wild game recipe page. Send your favorite bighorn sheep (or any wild game) recipes to RamPage@wyomingwildsheep.org

*See you in Lander at
the Winter Meeting!*



Register Today!



Josh Taylor and his son after a successful sheep hunt.