



Winter Board Meeting – December 5, 2025, in Saratoga

Summary

- Meeting began at 1PM by President Clifford.
- Absent were Bruce Perryman, Greg Pope and Jaden Bales.
- Board approved prior meeting minutes unanimously on a motion from John Harris and second by Zach McDermott
- Treasurer Butler presented November P&L, balance sheet, check detail, and cash-available reports; reconciliation with the accounting firm and investment statements is ongoing.
- Investment accounts continue to perform well; combined portfolios grew from about \$1.06M to roughly \$1.24M over the past year.
- Fiscal year is now Jan 1–Dec 31; staff contracts and review timelines have been realigned accordingly. The treasurer’s report was approved on a motion by Zach McDermott and second from Cathy Keene.

Old Business

- Event planning covered the Winter Meeting (Saratoga), Reno Sheep Week, and the June banquet in Casper, including committee chair assignments and hotel/venue discussions.
- Communications: Rampage production costs and the mix of ads vs. stories were reviewed; the new monthly email newsletter (launched October) shows ~50% open rates and measurable click-through and purchase metrics.
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- The board discussed a potential University of Wyoming endowed wildlife chair, including scale of funding, fit with existing programs, and a possible chapter/affiliate role.
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New Business

GIA / Project Requests & Recommendations

1. **Laramie Peak & Thorne–Wilderness/WHMA Cheatgrass Control**
 - Scope: retreatment of up to **1,500 acres**, building on effective treatments since 2019.
 - Purpose: protect prior investments and prevent reinvasion within critical wildlife habitat.
 - Partners: Big Game License Coalition, WWNRT, WGF’s Invasive Annual Grass Fund, and others.
 - Recommendation: full funding of the requested **\$20,000**.
2. **Wild Sheep Education – National Bighorn Sheep Center**
 - Components:
 - Camp Bighorn youth programming support.
 - Museum lighting upgrades (including new murals and displays).
 - Travel for youth programs, including our June convention and other chapter/affiliate events.
 - Contribution to a “high-quality wild sheep documentary” that is broader than Wyoming-only.
 - Budget:
 - Overall project budget is slightly over **\$50,000**.
 - In-hand or likely funding: Wyoming Community Foundation (**\$25,000**), a TAD grant (**\$5,950** requested and/or awarded), and a Big Game License Coalition request (**~\$18,000**).
 - Concerns / clarifications:
 - WSF reportedly declined to fund, wanting “boots on the ground” projects.
 - Initial budget math showed them over their stated total if all grants are fully awarded.
 - Board members questioned paying for travel to Reno to support National’s youth programs rather than having National fund that portion.
 - Recommendation:

- Provide **\$12,000**, explicitly excluding the **\$2,000** line item for travel to Reno.
- Emphasize support for Camp Bighorn, Wyoming travel (including to our banquet), museum lighting, and educational materials (e.g., SRI film and Return to the Rocks content).

3. **Split Rock Ranch Water Development – Eastern Chapter Pass-Through**

- Purpose: develop a critical wildlife water source in the area proposed for future bighorn reintroduction, including drilling a groundwater well, installing a solar pump, and associated habitat work (e.g., targeted juniper removal).
- Funding:
 - Total and requested amount: **\$25,000**.
 - Fully funded by Eastern Chapter; they wrote the check to this chapter.
- Reason for membership vote:
 - To maintain internal controls, every project for which we disburse funds must be approved via the GIA process.
 - This ensures transparent tracking in QuickBooks and compliance with our own policies.
- Mechanics: Split Rock will invoice us; we pay from the Eastern funds held in our accounts.

4. **WSF/WAFWA Test-and-Remove Evaluation**

- Scope: compile and analyze results from **26** bighorn sheep populations where test-and-remove has been used (including the Whiskey herd) to:
 - Assess effectiveness on disease dynamics.
 - Identify when and where the tool works best.
 - Improve efficiency in future applications.
- Funding context:
 - WSF and WAFWA are contributing approximately **\$140,000**.
 - Eight other chapters/affiliates have pledged a combined **\$55,000**.
 - Remaining gaps may go to the Governor's Big Game License Coalition.
- Recommendation: pledge **\$5,000** from this chapter.

• **Funding Source Recommendation:**

- For this cycle, draw all four GIAs from the **General Fund**, as Conservation and Life Member funds have been heavily used recently and current General Fund balances are sufficient.

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- **Fiscal Year & Staff Contracts**
 - Fiscal year changed from a July–November odd schedule to a clean **Jan 1–Dec 31** cycle, at the suggestion of the accounting firm.
 - Staff contracts (Dean and Katie) were renewed, signed, and now align with the new fiscal year.
 - Planning calendar now includes an **October** employee committee review each year, with new contracts prepared and board-approved in time to be signed by November/December.
 - **Planning Document & Succession**
 - The board maintains a rolling 12-month planning spreadsheet with tasks, due dates, and completion status.
 - This is tied to Zach’s succession planning work so that new board members can see what happens when, and nothing critical (e.g., transfers, insurance renewals, banquet timelines) is overlooked.
 - **Board Self-Evaluation**
 - Beginning this cycle, each director will complete an annual self-assessment.
 - January meeting will include discussion of personal goals, committee performance, and overall board function, mirroring the process already in place for staff.
 - **Bylaws Review**
 - Bylaws committee has begun edits. Priorities include:
 - Updating the fiscal year language.
 - Considering an explicit AI section to address data protection and expectations for use of AI tools.
 - Target: present a consolidated set of proposed bylaw changes to membership for consideration at the June meeting.
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Communications: Rampage & Newsletter

- **Rampage Magazine**

- Current print cost: **\$9.92** per copy; total unit cost including shipping is about **\$12**.
- Recent issues have become heavily weighted towards sponsorships and advertisements, with relatively few member hunt stories or project features.
- Discussion points:
 - Whether to charge for the magazine to recoup some costs.
 - Need for better balance among ads, sponsor recognition, and substantive stories (e.g., GIAs, projects, policy work).
 - Ad renewals: some companies (e.g., Maven) have clearly qualified for continued ads via recent donations; others are out of date and must be contacted to renew or be removed.
- Kendra asked board members to:
 - Provide GIA/project content leads (e.g., education, habitat, policy wins).
 - Help contact existing advertisers about renewing sponsorships before the next issue.

- **Monthly Newsletter**

- Launched in October; two issues so far:
 - October: ~2,100 recipients; ~52% open rate; ~15% bounces (due to legacy contacts without email addresses).
 - November: ~1,800 recipients; ~52% open; ~1% bounce.
- Metrics:
 - Purchase conversion from newsletter links: **0.6–0.7%**, near the ~1% online benchmark Zeffy cited.
 - Unsubscribes: 8 (first issue) and 3 (second), well under typical 20% thresholds flagged as concerning.
 - Click maps show which stories or links (e.g., Seminole Pump, FERC comments) draw the most interest.
- Email list sources:
 - Raffle ticket and membership purchases (manually added into Google list).
 - Website “send me an email” sign-ups.

- Reno-related contacts previously stored on Dean's phone (initially causing high bounce rates).
 - Strategic uses discussed:
 - Provide regular, concise updates on ongoing projects and policy/comment efforts, not just raffles.
 - Add opt-in for the newsletter to mass marketing channels (e.g., Online Hunting Auctions' 250,000-address blasts).
 - Explore list-sharing partnerships with aligned groups (e.g., TRCP, Josh Minton's networks) while avoiding third-party "onslaught" style over-emailing.
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Events & Logistics

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- **Reno Sheep Week**
 - Dates: January 21–24.
 - Booth staffing: at least two people per shift; sign-up sheet circulated (Tera, Scott, John, others already on).
 - Materials and recognition:
 - Full-page ad in the auction catalog.
 - Posters and online presence from National promoting our chapter, raffles, and membership incentives.
 - Printed postcards (raffles on one side, membership incentives on the other) to hand out at booth and silent auction areas.
 - Silent Auction: about **85 items** totaling roughly **\$90,000** in donations; provides both revenue and exposure for the chapter.
- **June Banquet – Casper**
 - Convention manager: **Bralli** (first year in this role).
 - Major committees and chairs:
 - Venue: Bralli (with John explicitly tied in via Security).
 - Finance/Registration: Dean.
 - Merchandise: Tera.

- Prize Manager: Kurt (with Dean assisting on forms and tracking).
- Life Member Breakfast: Bruce.
- Silent Auction: Bruce (with Greg and John on committee).
- Live Auction: Zach (Dean and others assisting).
- Games & Raffles: new chair to be confirmed; Bruce stepping away from this portion.
- Conservation Fundraising: Scott (with John; more members welcome).
- Auctioneer: Dean.
- Security: John.
- Youth: Katie as chair, continuing to coordinate with National Bighorn Sheep Center staff and local partners; more help may be needed for games at the main convention.
- Underwriting and vendor outreach:
 - Gage and Sean Porter have agreed to help with banquet underwriting and solicitations in Casper.
 - We are contacting vendors/exhibitors; goal is to get the underwriting catalog out earlier than in past years.
- **Other Dates**
 - Interaction Working Group federal language subcommittee: planned for December 12 (Cheyenne or virtual).
 - Camo at the Capitol (Wyoming Wildlife Federation): February 12.
 - Eastern Chapter WSF convention: mid-February (exact dates not detailed, but on Katie's calendar).
 - Next Board Meeting: second Wednesday in January (noted as January 14 during discussion).

Action Items (chronological)

- **Board self-evaluation (ASAP – All Directors)**
 - Complete the new board self-evaluation survey once distributed (target: as early as next week).
 - Prepare to discuss individual and full-board performance, goals, and committee outcomes at the January meeting.
- **Reno planning (Before Sheep Week – All Directors / Dean / Katie / John)**



- Board members sign up for booth coverage slots using the circulated schedule.
- Dean to coordinate transport of the booth; other materials (posters, silent auction items) will travel via Bozeman bins and Dan's vehicle.
- Confirm chairs for the booth and ensure postcards/posters for raffles and membership incentives are available.
- **Fourth-quarter grants and transfers (By ~Jan 5–6 – Dean / Kathy / Scott)**
 - Pay 4Q grants on January 1 and update the cash-available and transfer worksheets.
 - Meet early January to reconcile these payments and finalize the annual conservation/life/general fund transfers.
- **Content and email hygiene (Ongoing – Board / Kendra / Dean)**
 - Funnel story ideas, project updates, and committee highlights to the Rampage editor and newsletter lead.
 - Collect and correct member email addresses when processing memberships or raffle sales; encourage members to whitelist wyomingwildsheep.org and check spam.
- **Prize Manager and donation tracking (Immediate – Kurt / Auction Committee / All Directors)**
 - Kurt accepted the Prize Manager role; he will “whip” the board for donations and oversee donor tracking.
 - All board members must use the online donation form for every prize obtained (takes ~45 seconds, auto-emails donor and Dean).
 - Prize Manager and Dean will maintain a consolidated donor tracking spreadsheet and ensure paperwork completeness.
- **Games & raffles leadership (Before next banquet planning milestone – Bralli / Dean / Kathy)**
 - Confirm a new Games & Raffles chair (potentially Callie and/or Chance) with transition support from Bruce and Dean.
 - Clarify division of duties: game design, sales staffing, and coordination with registration/finance.
- **Casper banquet venues and room blocks (By January meeting – Katie / Bralli / Dean)**
 - Finalize hotel blocks and rates with Best Western, Ramkota, Hilton Garden Inn, C'mon Inn, and possibly the rebranded AmericInn.



- Determine block sizes at various price points and communicate booking details to members.
 - **GIA membership presentation (Before membership meeting – Grant & Aid Committee)**
 - Finalize recommended funding levels and confirm they are to be drawn from the General Fund.
 - Prepare the membership presentation (slides and narrative) on the four GIA projects and the Eastern pass-through.
 - **Interaction Working Group / federal language (Ongoing – Jim / Katie / Zach / Matt /Bralli)**
 - Continue participating in the federal language subcommittee and push for clear sideboards, transparent recommendation pathways, and alignment with the Wyoming plan.
 - Track agency signals (Game & Fish, Dept. of Ag, Farm Bureau, wool growers) and bring any proposed changes back to the board.
 - The board meeting concluded at 3:25.
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