

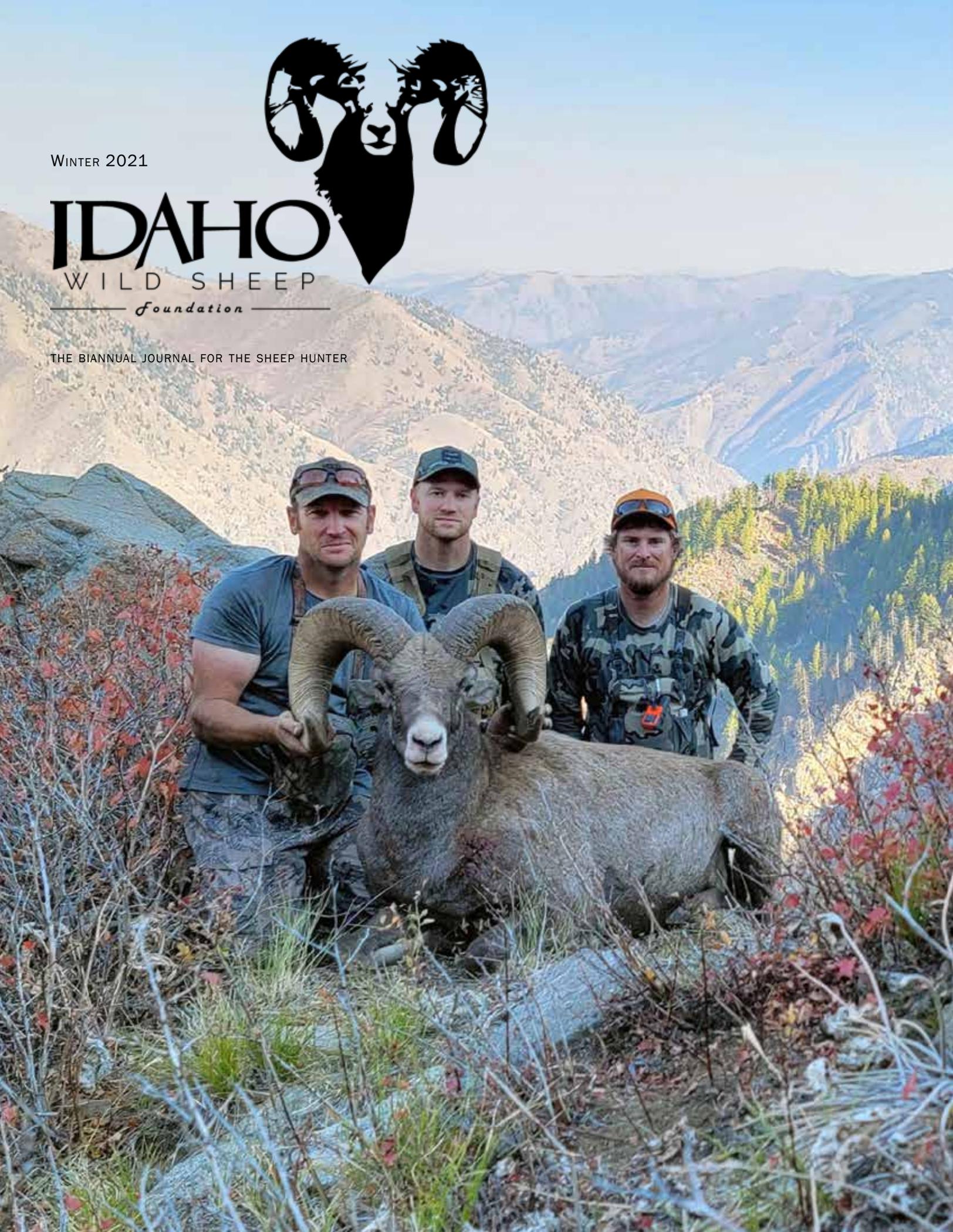


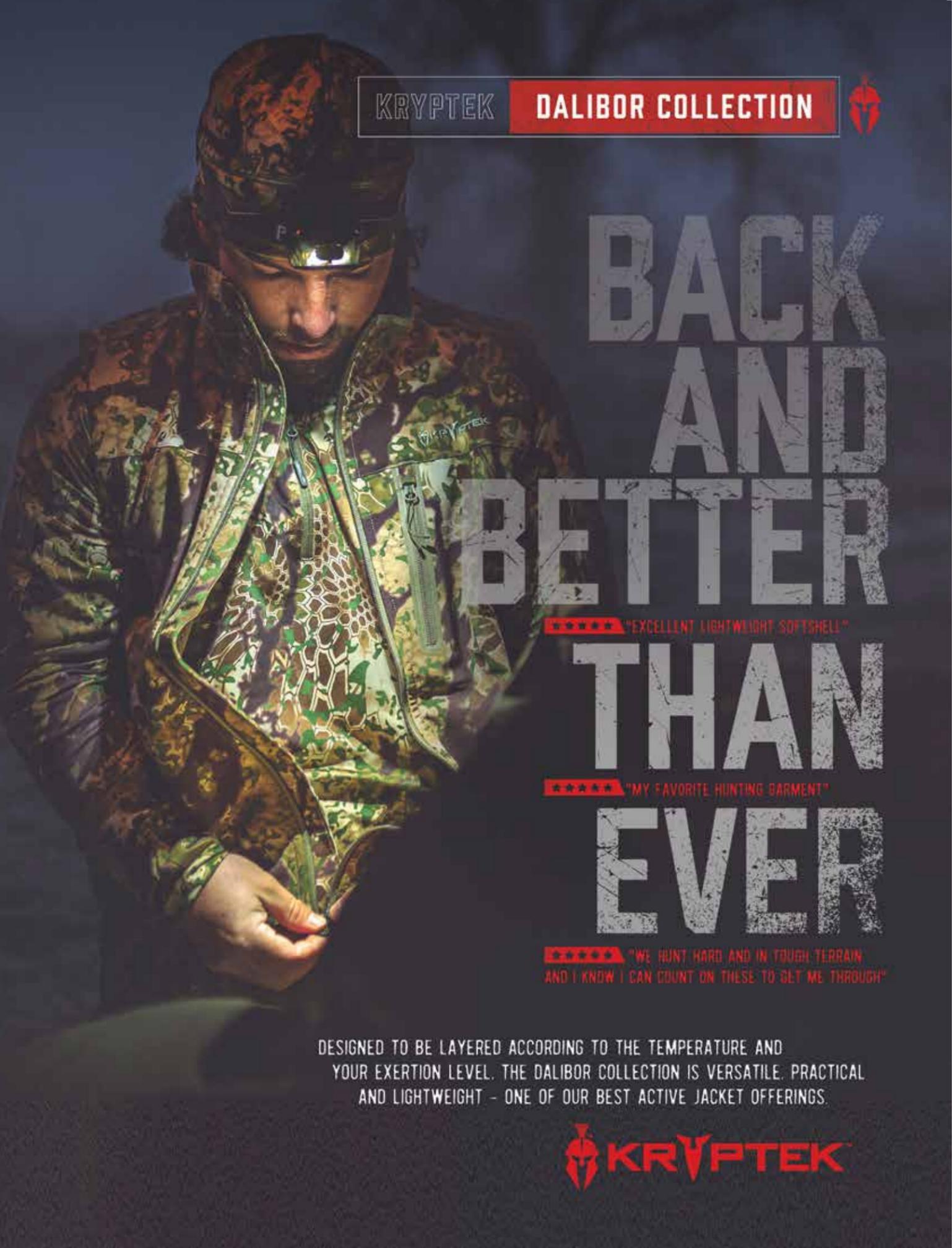
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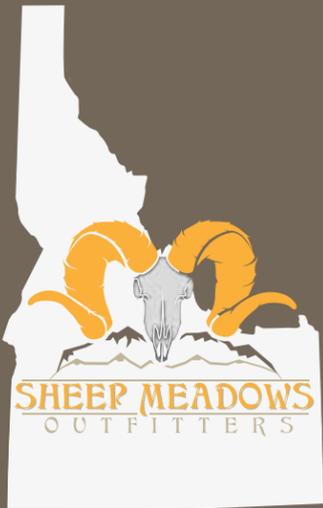
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WINTER 2021



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**CONTACT THE PUBLICATION**

Contributing photos, articles, stories and research pertaining to wild sheep or the interests of members of the Idaho WSF are always welcome.

Contributed material will be published at the committees discretion.

All membership dues include a subscription.

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## *Working to Put and Keep Wild Sheep on the Mountain since 1982*

### MISSION

The mission of Idaho Wild Sheep is to enhance wild sheep populations in Idaho, and with partners in adjacent states, for public enjoyment, education, and fair chase hunting; to promote professional wildlife management, and protect sportsmen's rights.

### HISTORY

The Idaho Wild Sheep was founded in 1982 by two dozen concerned sportsmen who wanted to "put more bighorns on Idaho's mountains." From that core group, many of which are still very active on our board and committees, we have grown to a thriving organization with over 700 committed members.

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## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

It's the time of year to look back on fall hunts, to share tales and pictures of epic hunts in brutal weather on rugged terrain. It's a time to reflect and a time to realize that the day will come to forgo the most brutal and the most rugged, a time to let the younger huntress and hunter tackle those. They too deserve to have wild places with wilder game that make them feel as if they are the first person to have ever climbed there. How do we sustain what's been built by us and the generations before us? How do we expand our sphere of influence in wild sheep conservation in Idaho and the west? What will be the legacy of the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation of 2021 and 2022?

Years ago, a wildlife professor told me that to manage wildlife an army must be amassed. Well, The Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation (Idaho WSF) is doing just that. Just nine years ago, Idaho WSF was thrilled to have 250 people attend the banquet and net \$30,000. Membership has almost tripled since then and banquet profits are eight-fold. Your increased enthusiasm for bighorn sheep has allowed the Idaho WSF to be more active on more fronts.

This issue contains tales of hunts and stories such as Idaho WSF members assisting Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) with the capturing and collaring of bighorn sheep on the Salmon River as part of the capture-test-remove program for Movi control and funds being sent to Nevada Bighorns Unlimited to fill water guzzlers for thirsty desert sheep during drought. Other articles include Idaho WSF as a member of Idaho Representative Mike Simpson's Task Force on the USDA Agriculture Research Service, Sheep Station in the Centennial Mountains, education efforts for small domestic sheep flock owners,

and sponsorship of Stacey Dauwalter in the WSF Women Hunt program. As the role of Idaho WSF expands so will the need for a larger army, more fervent members, and more fundraising efforts.

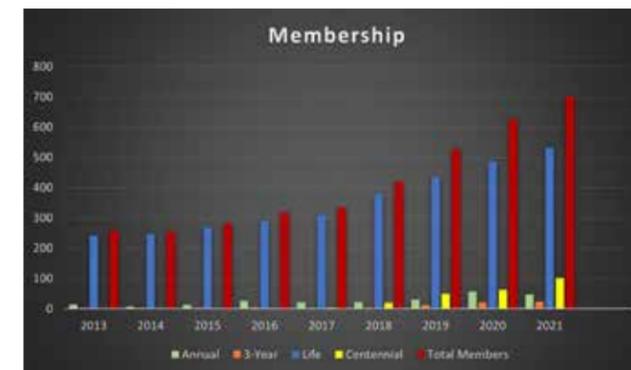
Tomorrow's sustainability will be strengthened by engaged passionate members who will leave a legacy that worked To Put and Keep Wild Sheep on the Mountain<sup>®</sup>. Your involvement is important! Please plan on attending the April 9th, 2022, banquet in Boise and socials next spring and summer around the state. I encourage everyone to sign up to volunteer whether for field work or the for banquet and even consider becoming a Board member. This is an exciting time to be involved in bighorn sheep conservation.

In closing I'll leave you with a quote from one of the great philosophers in recent history:

"If you want to catch beasts you don't see every day, You have to go places quite out of the way. You have to go places no others can get to. You have to get cold and you have to get wet, too."

— Dr. Seuss

Bill London  
President  
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# 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER

The 2021 Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation banquet/fundraiser was an astounding success!

The Idaho WSF Board of Directors thanks everyone one of the members, guests, volunteers, sponsors, and donors who made it happen. The Ford Idaho Center Amphitheater allowed 640 Idaho WSF members and guests an outdoor experience with social distancing and Covid safety measures. Simultaneously, many people joined us virtually through Facebook Livestream and on OnLine Hunting Auctions.

To be candid, it was a calculated risk, a gamble. Would people show up? Would it rain or be too hot? Would funds be raised for wild sheep conservation? You did show up – in droves. Attendance may have been driven by enthusiasm for wild sheep or by cabin-fever, but you were there to visit with old friends, meet new ones, and be a part of the Idaho Wild Sheep family. It was a “Goldilocks Day”: Just right. It rained two days prior, and the 100-degree weather arrived the next day. Your generosity was amazing, \$490,429 was spent, with a net income of \$243,470, setting a new banquet record. Particular kudos go to those people and businesses that gave cash sponsorships to the Games, Life Member Hunt, and the Raffle.

It was an honor to recognize wildlife professionals and military heroes, with the Idaho WSF Outstanding Achievement Award and the Idaho WSF Warrior’s Tribute. Mike and Linda Foster were both US Forest Service wildlife biologists on the Lost River Ranger District. They were instrumental in developing and implementing the “Risk of Contact Analysis” to identify which domestic sheep grazing allotments posed the greatest threat of



infecting wild sheep with diseases. Their work became the be foundation for prioritizing the efforts of wild sheep advocates across the American west.

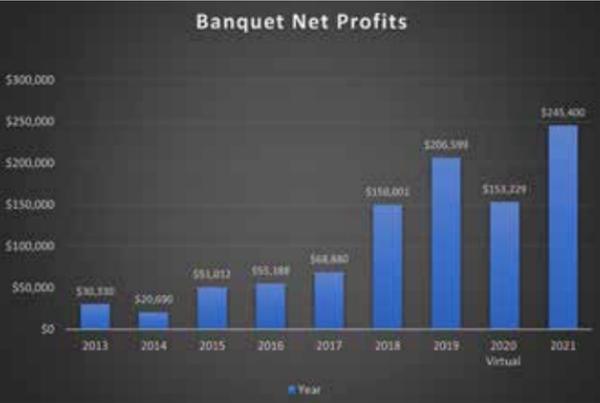
The Idaho WSF Warrior Tribute was awarded to retired Air Force Staff Sergeant Nevada Grassie. Nevada served three combat tours in Iraq, since returning he has been tireless in assisting disabled veterans enjoy outdoor pursuits, including hunting. Nevada has been carrying these vets on hunts, but no longer. A track-chair was given to Nevada by Idaho WSF, and an anonymous donor, for disabled vets to use in outdoor activities.

We are proud and humbled to have these people in the Idaho WSF.

Next year’s Idaho WSF banquet will be April 9th, 2022, at the Boise Centre in Boise, ID. My wife, Shannon, and I look forward to seeing you all there.

Bring a friend, it’s going to be fun.

Bill London  
Idaho WSF President



PATIENCE,

PERSEVERANCE,

## AND A LOT OF LUCK

BY DON COLTER

My wife and I were sitting at the house on a Saturday afternoon in March when I got a call from a California phone number. I didn't recognize the number figuring it must be a solicitor, so I didn't answer. A few seconds later I got a call from someone I did know. Hey Zach, how's it going I responded? Actually, this is Donald C. Martin how are you doing? Do you want to hook up for a beer tonight? Quizzically I asked, do I need to have a beer? Don responded with "You have a reason to celebrate because I just drew your name on Facebook live and you are the winner of the 2021 Dall sheep hunt with Ultima Thule Outfitters." I asked, are you kidding me??? I'm serious as a heart attack Don replied. I wondered to myself; did this just happen?

My dream became reality, it really happened, I am going to go sheep hunting. I wasn't sure it would ever happen, but I have dreamt about it for long time, heard many stories of the challenges and rewards of a sheep hunt, talked with a lot of sheep hunters, became a member of the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation and National Wild Sheep Foundation, supported sheep conservation, talked to anyone that would listen about sheep conservation, and yes, bought raffle tickets from numerous chapters in hopes of someday going. I figured the odds of winning were low but always felt great knowing that the funds raised go to fulfilling the mission of sheep conservation.

The preparation began. Running along the Greenbelt to build aerobic capacity, hiking with a weighted pack in the foothills to build strength and mountain legs. I knew that sheep hunting was challenging and wanted to make sure that I was physically and mentally prepared to meet the hunt head on so I could drink in the adventure that was to come. I assessed what gear I had, talked to other sheep hunters on gear, poured over catalogs and websites, made lists of new gear I NEEDED, ordered new gear, and tried it out. Some new gear worked well, some not as well. Needless to say, I am almost on a first name basis with the folks at KUIU.

My wife and I decided to make a big vacation out of the hunt. We would spend nine days being tourists. It would be the first trip to Alaska for us, what a great way to start a once in a lifetime hunt. I have to say, Alaska did not disappoint, the scenery, the people, the culture were great.

August 23, my wife headed home, and it was time for me to head to McCarthy. Don Martin picked me up for the trip along with three hunters for the drive to McCarthy. Three of us were winners of sheep hunt raffles, which is a testament to Ultima Thule's generosity and commitment to sheep conservation. The drive included lively discussion, getting acquainted, enjoying the incredible scenery, often punctuated with talk about sheep hunting. Upon arrival in McCarthy, we were met by Paul Claus owner of Ultima

Thule Outfitters, who flew us to the main lodge. After the quick flight to the lodge, we unloaded our gear, had dinner, and met our guides. After dinner, my guide, Dustin Hannafious, and I did a gear check, and I got my backpack loaded for the adventure that was to begin in the morning.

August 24, we had breakfast, followed by double checking our backpacks, then a trip to the range to check rifles. It was time to head into the backcountry. We loaded the Super Cub for a flight to a high ridge somewhere above a glacier. Dustin got dropped first and I followed 45 minutes later. Good sign, by the time I arrived Dustin had already located 21 rams scattered in three different groups. The plane departed back to the lodge; it was now time to work our way down a long ridge, 3,000 vertical feet, to the camp located adjacent to the glacier. The hike down wasn't bad except for the last half mile down a steep slope covered in a spongy layer of mossy plant material that slipped out from under foot just in time for the thick brush to grab your legs and trip you. One upside of the brush was that I got to hear ptarmigans for the first time, as I was on my back after tripping in the brush before they flew away. Once we got to camp and dropped off our gear, we headed up the drainage to look over the closest group of rams. The group of eight rams were well in the distance and we got as close as possible without being seen. From that distance, one looked good, but we couldn't tell if he was legal. Besides we had just flown, and we couldn't pursue until the next day.

Hunting day 1, the morning broke with clouds and light rain. Time to look over the 8 rams and see if one was legal. The rain and clouds didn't cooperate with most of the day spent trying to stay dry and watch the rams when the clouds and fog permitted. I truly began to understand the need for good equipment and layering. After a long day on those rams, Dustin decided that the largest of the rams wasn't legal.

Day 2, we hiked the short distance to the edge of the glacier to look over the two groups of rams and singles seen on travel day. The weather was the same as the day before, rain and fog. In between the rain and fog, we got a chance to look over another group of 6, no legal rams. As we were perched at the edge of the glacier watching the

rams, the cracking and popping of the giant river of ice was fascinating, another reminder of how big and imposing Alaskan mountains can be. Back at camp we planned for the next day, we would look over the remaining rams previously seen, hoping for a legal one, otherwise we would have to call to be moved to another area.

Day 3 broke to moderately better weather. Same story, some nice rams, but nothing legal. Mid-day, we got moved to another area. The flight into the new area was awesome, as were all the flights. Flying in expansive canyons below jagged mountain peaks in a Super Cub offered a phenomenal view that can be experienced in no other way. The Ultima Thule pilots are masters at their craft and magicians with the ability to safely land a plane on a piece of glacial moraine or high ridge that feels no larger than a postage stamp. The new camp was on a tundra plateau with grassy benches and steep rocky drop offs that sheep love. Dustin arrived before me and was excited to report he saw 12 rams on the flight. We quickly made camp and grabbed our backpacks to do a little scouting before dinner. We couldn't hunt since we just flew in. As we scouted, we made our way to the edge of a long ridge. I felt hopeful after looking over the area and seeing an abundance of sheep sign. However, as with previous days, light rain began as the clouds dropped, limiting visibility. We made our way back





to camp and had a delicious Mountain House dehydrated meal. The plan was made, getup at 5:00 am, eat some breakfast and go find those rams. I said, "Hey Dustin, tomorrow is the day, I can feel it."

Day 4, sleeping bag unzipped, tent unzipped, I was ready to roll..... fog down to the ground, zero visibility. Back in the sleeping bag, hoping the weather would clear soon. Nope, the fog stayed around most of the day. Hour after hour in the sleeping bag, broken up by boiling water for coffee and reading. Over 20 hours in a sleeping bag. I'm sure glad other sheep hunters told me to bring a book because it's practically guaranteed that you will have bad weather that will keep you in the tent. By later afternoon, the fog lifted enough to work the mile or so towards the edge of the plateau where we had seen sheep sign. That too was short lived; the rain came again, back to camp we went. We decided there would be no Mountain House that night for dinner, we only had one each left, and we decided to save it for the next evening since we had a low output day. The weather hadn't been cooperating; leaving us unsure if the planes would be able to fly tomorrow and drop more food. Good thing I saved some snacks, and we still had some

jerky from the elk I got last fall. Despite the bad weather, I was confident everything would come together, I just had to be patient. Again, I said "Hey Dustin, tomorrow is the day, I can feel it."

Day 5, I took a tentative peek outside the tent, the cloud layer had lifted allowing modest visibility, however, it wasn't gone completely. A quick cup of coffee and oatmeal and we were off to find those rams. Maybe today would be the day, I reminded myself to be patient and just soak up the experience. For me, hunting is an experience that encompasses the preparation, the animals, the terrain, the weather, the sights, smells and tastes that may or may not result in the taking of the quarry being pursued. Some of my best hunts have been ones in which no game was taken.

Dustin and I worked towards the edge of the ridge above the grassy benches likely to hold sheep. It felt like a game of cat and mouse, the fog and clouds would drop and limit visibility, we would stop and wait, the clouds would lift, and we moved forward, then the clouds would drop again, the cycle to be repeated endlessly through the day. Mid-day, the clouds were low with modest visibility. Dustin peeked over

the edge and immediately backed up and pointed. There were two small rams feeding at 250 yards, I felt my excitement build. We slowly worked farther along the rim above the grassy bench and there they were, a group of eight rams bedded, 500 yards away at the edge of a steep drop off. One of the rams looked bigger than the others. When the clouds parted long enough, Dustin studied the rams through the spotting scope. The clouds moved in and out for the next couple hours, all while the rams remained bedded. The weather was cold and damp, I wore a wool shirt, vest, down coat, raincoat, long underwear, rain pants and down mittens just to stay warm as we waited.

After what felt like days, Dustin peeked over the edge again, the rams were up and feeding towards us. I looked through the spotting scope to get a closer look at the rams. Dustin continued to assess the rams, then whispered to me "He's legal do you want to shoot him?" "Hell yeah, I want to shoot him" I answered. The clouds continued their game of in and out. Briefly the clouds parted, and we managed to get a range on the ram, 355 yards, I felt good with that. I belly crawled, inching toward the edge, pushing my backpack forward to use as a rest. I got my rifle settled, scope turret dialed to 355, waiting for the clouds to clear away, all the while wishing I could get another range on him. Finally, the clouds parted enough to find the ram in my scope and get the crosshairs aligned. Deep breath, let out half, gentle squeeze, bam. I saw the ram in my scope, he lifted his head, but wasn't hit. Luckily, he didn't run, just dropped his head, and resumed feeding. I felt my anxiousness build as I chambered another round. Trying to calm my nerves I took a deep breath and again settled the crosshairs on the ram. Bam, "He's leaking" I said to Dustin. The ram turned and started to wobble back towards the edge overlooking the steep cliffs. I chambered another round as Dustin calmly said to shoot him again. Bam, the ram was anchored. As I approached the ram a mix of emotions came over me, respect, admiration, happiness, relief, sadness the adventure was nearing the end. I couldn't believe what was once a dream had become reality, a beautiful full curl ram was on the ground.

It was a bonus to take the ram midafternoon, which allowed plenty of time for pictures, working up the ram and soaking

in the experience. With backpacks loaded, I took one more long look, trying to absorb the moment. The pack back to camp was a good one, especially as sheep country goes. We slowly worked up the slope, up and over the ridges with a gentle grade back to camp. As we neared camp, a flock of ptarmigan, with their mottled plumage in transition from summer brown to winter white, excitedly took flight and cackled off into the distance. Back at camp we were greeted with high scattered clouds, mostly clear skies, and a magnificent scarlet sunset. Mountain House chicken fettucine washed down with fresh cold glacier water tasted excep-



tionally good that night. I slept well that night, replaying the day's events over and over.

Day 6, the morning broke to cackling ptarmigan and sharp clear sunshine. The weather was the best we had seen the whole trip. Our plane was scheduled to come late afternoon, which left most of the day to feel the sun's warmth and take care of chores. I splurged and had 2 cups of coffee and 2 packets of oatmeal for breakfast, now that's high living. One more tradition, I needed to eat some sheep meat out in the field. There was no wood to start a fire, so we used a flat rock over the Jetboil flame to create a griddle. As the rock heated, it exploded. On this plateau the flat rocks are more of a coarse stone that hold moisture, which had expanded, causing the rock to explode. Luckily no one was hurt, we were mostly surprised by the sound as we watched the fat from the ram beginning to sizzle. Not to be discouraged, we skewered backstrap on sharpened willow sticks put directly over the Jetboil flame. The meat was delicious, despite the hint of butane.

After checking in my ram at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game office in Glenallen, I felt exceptionally grateful and lucky. The biologists let us know that Dall sheep harvest had been down statewide from previous years due to harsh winter conditions in recent winters in some of the major sheep areas.

What an awesome adventure, that exceeded all expectations. It was a true sheep hunt: steep mountains, stunning vistas, inclement weather, amazing bush plane flights, lots of hurry up and wait, that resulted in taking a magnificent full curl ram.

*I loved every second of the experience.  
Patience, perseverance, and a lot of luck.*

I want to thank Ultima Thule Outfitters for their generous support of the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation and wild sheep conservation. The hospitality of the folks at Ultima Thule was amazing, truly icing on the cake. I especially want to thank my Guide, Dustin Hannafous, for his knowledge and passion for sheep hunting. He's a great guy to spend time with out in the back country, someone I would share a camp with anytime.



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HISTORY BOOKS



1987  
Governor Cecil Andrus signs the 1987 bill authorizing the first bighorn sheep tag to be sold at auction. Pictured with Andrus, left to right, are Jerry Conley, Mike Best, Ken Norrie, Joy & Stan Potts, Burk Mantel, Harold Eschelman, and Dr. Bob DiGrazia.



1996  
Jack Acheson from Butte, Montana giving keynote address "Sheep hunting of the world."



1993  
Roger Warrick receives lottery ticket number one from Dr. Bob DiGrazia (right) while shaking hands with Dr. Hunter (center)



1993 Banquet  
Burk Mantel and Glenn Gearhard



Archery expert Neil Thagard with his 1997 Dall ram



2008 National Convention  
President Dennis Batie and Bill Louderback at the Idaho Chapter booth



2010  
Biologists and volunteers inoculate sheep, do health evaluations, and place radio collars.  
Photo by Dale Towell



2010  
President Pete Stewart (r.) with Board member John Caywood at the 2010 IWSF banquet



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# BIGHORN SHEEP LOTTERY TAG DRAWING

by  
Jake Konrath

I will always remember the day my ticket was drawn for the Idaho lottery bighorn sheep tag; it was hard to believe. My wife Cassi, and I happen to be watching the Idaho WSF Summer Social live on social media when my number was drawn out of thousands of tickets. I received the phone call from Idaho WSF President Bill London, and I just couldn't believe that I was the winner.

After the phone call reality set in, I have no idea which area to hunt, when it opens, should I hire an outfitter? Phone calls to friends and family to tell them the big news brought on more excitement.

By the next day I found I had the full help and support from the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation to plan my hunt. I had made the decision to hunt with Big Lost River Outfitters. I felt some relief knowing we had a plan. With a month left I knew I needed to be in better shape and practice shooting a little further than usual.

By 'go time' I'm feeling good about the hunt. The excitement was unbelievable since I was also bringing Cassi on this hunt. The eight-hour drive from our home in Wyoming couldn't go fast enough as we were both anxious to arrive in Mackay, Idaho. In Mackay we met up with outfitter Will Marcroft. Will led us

to the lodge where we would stay and we met Fred Imler, the owner of the lodge, he showed us around with top notch hospitality.

The next day we scouted before opening day. Will, Cassie, and I left early that morning hoping to see some rams. As we arrived at the first glassing point, I was



excited to see my first bighorn sheep in Idaho. It didn't take long for Will to spot rams. Most of the day scouting we were looking at bighorn sheep. We ended the day with eight mature rams located.

We went back to the lodge and had dinner, talked about the plan for opening morning. We looked at several ram pictures taken while Will and his guides had been scouting. Will had a good plan to get us on several rams opening day.

Opening morning finally came with little sleep and tons of excitement. It was officially starting! We grabbed a quick breakfast, loaded the truck and we headed out. We arrived at the trailhead at first light to start the long hike. Jared Marcroft, Jake Johnson, John Henry, and Landon joined Will, Cassi and me.

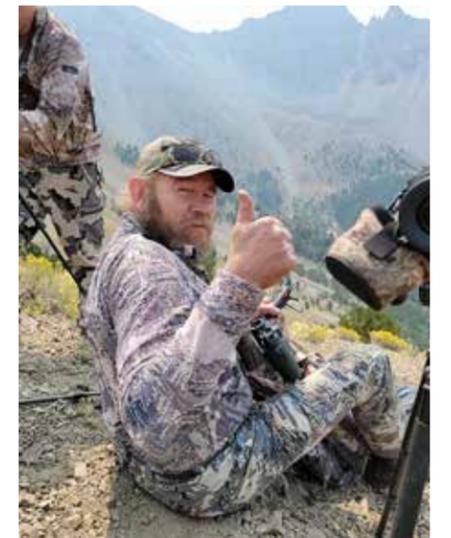
As we hiked up the trail, I could feel the excitement that everyone had to get back to where the sheep were. We were covering ground quicker than I realized. By about 10 am we were over five miles in and several thousand feet up and we

found sheep, several ewes and a few rams. We caught a glimpse of a dandy ram that was going to bed.

*At this point I'm thinking we would plan for a stalk. "Oh no!" Will says, "He isn't going anywhere. We're still shopping, let's go over the top and see what's there." To see how much fun he was having, doing what he loves, I was like, "OK let's do it!"*

We arrived at the top, sure enough, we find a band of rams over 1,400 yards across the canyon. Everyone is on the spotters picking the rams apart. Will quickly shows me two shooter rams in the bunch, he figured the older ram at eight years old. We made a plan. Jared, Jake, and I would quickly make our way towards the rams as they fed by a spring. We hoped to come out on the farthest ridge between us to give me a less than 400-yard shot.

We took off and made quick work to arrive on the ridge between the sheep and us. As we peaked over for a look, we found the rams. Jake confirmed 325 yards, perfect. Now which one is he? We went back and forth on which one to shoot. It wasn't long we were just waiting for him to clear the other rams for a broadside shot. While waiting for him to turn I stayed as calm and steady as I could. As he fed up and cleared the other rams he turned broadside pawing



Will Marcroft  
Big Lost River Outfitters



at the ground. I let the trigger break and the shot rang out through the canyon. We didn't know if he was hit as he ran 30 yards then stopped. We quickly realized it was a good shot and he was about to go down.

The ram's down and the emotions hit me, I can't believe I got my ram on day one. A lot of high fives, then hearing Will whooping and hollering across the canyon. It was awesome! As we walked up on my ram, I immediately saw how big bodied and heavy horned he really was. With some weight lifted off our shoulders Jared, Jake, and I sat on the side of the mountain waiting for Cassi, Will, John, and Landon to make their way to us.

Once everyone showed up, we took pictures and got to work, life size caping and quartering the sheep. We had a six-mile hike back down. It was going to take a while with heavy packs.

It was hot out. We were heading steep downhill, on a side hill with loose rock and shale, it was taking its toll on me. Cassi and I were just grinding to keep up and couldn't wait to see the truck. I ran



out of water and needed to get to a spring fast. We came to a good spring, and we all were drinking up and filling our water bottles before making the last push to the truck.

After getting a good drink I was feeling better and knew we were almost there. As we rounded the last corner, we were relieved to see the truck. When we arrived at the lodge everyone was excited to hear the story and continue the celebration.



I am very grateful to have had this opportunity for a once in a lifetime hunt.

Thank you to the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation and the Idaho Department of Fish & Game for making this possible.

Thank you Will Marcroft and Fred Imler with Big Lost River Outfitters for a once in a lifetime hunt experience. You are truly a top-notch outfit.

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Idaho WSF President Bill London presenting the check to Fish and Game Chief of Wildlife Toby Boudreau.

Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation

# Summer Social & 2021 Idaho Bighorn Lottery Tag Drawing



Legendary sheep outfitter and author, Stan Potts

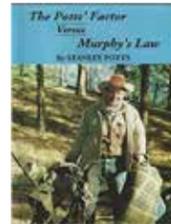
The Idaho WSF held a Summer Social and the 2021 Idaho Bighorn Lottery Tag Drawing on July 30th at Powderhaus Brewing in Boise. Over 60 members and lottery tag ticket holders gathered to share a pint, win raffle prizes, eat snacks, and watch the tag drawing. The event was also on-line through the Idaho WSF website. The legendary sheep outfitter and author, Stan Potts, was on hand to draw the tag.

The bighorn sheep lottery tag has raised nearly \$1.8 million for wild sheep in Idaho over the past 30 years. This was the 5th consecutive year this drawing has raised a record amount, with \$189,047 raised, and \$175,492 going back to Idaho Fish and Game for bighorn sheep conservation. Fish and Game Chief of Wildlife Toby Boudreau was on hand to accept the check. The 2021 tag recipient was Jacob Konrath of Wyoming. Mr. Konrath was one of over 1,600 people from 48 states and Canada who bought anywhere from one to several hundred chances, supporting the efforts of the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation and IDFG to “keep wild sheep on the mountain.”

Stan Potts, born and raised in the Mackay area, purchased the very first ‘Lottery Tag Ticket #1’ at auction back in 1994. Stan was a premier Idaho outfitter for 46 years in the Middle Fork country and guided 76 successful sheep hunts. He is also the first native born Idahoan to harvest a Grand Slam of North American Wild Sheep. He’s been a long time life member of the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation and was instrumental in writing the bill that implemented the lottery tag.

Stan is currently retired and living in southern Idaho.

Stan Potts books: The Potts Factor versus Murphy’s Law, The Potts Factor’s Return, The Potts Factor’s This Olde House, the Potts Factor’s Cinco Libros and Look Down On The Stars.



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## 2022 IDAHO BIGHORN LOTTERY TAG

### GUIDELINES

- › The 2022 Lottery Tag shall be valid for use in any open controlled bighorn hunt, **INCLUDING UNIT 11**.
- › “Tickets” are controlled hunt applications.
- › Ticket purchasers and persons named on tickets must be at least 18 years old and must be eligible to hold a hunting license in Idaho.
- › Tickets are void where the ticket/tag sale is prohibited.
- › This tag is non-transferrable.
- › This tag (and hunting license, if needed) will only be issued to an eligible applicant (the person named on the ticket drawn).
- › Drawing will be conducted July 29, 2022.
- › **ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME RULE IS WAIVED** for this tag.
- › Need not be present to win.
- › Additional rules apply.

### Ticket prices

- 1 ticket for \$20
- 6 tickets for \$100
- 14 tickets for \$166.75
- 25 tickets for \$250

NO limit to number of tickets purchased per individual.  
Deadline to purchase tickets is July 25, 2022.

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# CONSERVATION UPDATE



Photo credit: Frances Cassirer

By Mike Schlegel

## SHEEP STATION.

Positive head way is occurring with wild sheep advocates and the Dubois, ID sheep station. Two years ago, Idaho Representative Mike Simpson suggested a task force be appointed to discuss and provide input toward the future research conducted at the sheep station, specifically, “the collaborative efforts of the diverse stakeholders working towards ensuring the US Sheep Experiment Station remains a valuable asset and focuses additional research opportunities on areas of mutual interest”. This language was included in the FY 20 appropriations bill. Additionally, “Working cooperatively, it is our goal to develop topics at USSES, under the ARS umbrella, exploring the relationship between grazing and sage grouse habitat conservation, bighorn sheep populations, and the continued presence of apex predators such as grizzly bears to inform practices for productive sheep ranching relative to wildlife, such as researching grazing methods to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire to preserve sage grouse habitat. An important component of this cooperation is an agreement that USSES will forgo domestic sheep grazing over the next decade on pastures where wildlife conflicts are high in order to study the vegetative response to an absence of grazing pressure. All parties agree this will provide valuable insights into rangeland management.” The initial task force meeting was held in Boise, July 25, 2019.

Hailey Wilmer, PhD range scientist, was recently assigned to the sheep station to conduct range research. Dr. Wilmer submitted a questionnaire to the stakeholders, asking for input regarding research projects for the sheep station. Once input was provided, a zoom meeting was held on October 25, 2021. The goal; to gather input on the direction of future rangeland research. Idaho WSF provided input, and was well represented during the zoom meeting. We are encouraged about the task force process, the cooperative attitude of the groups involved, plus the progress we are making.

A second zoom meeting was conducted November 1. Again, Idaho WSF was well represented and presented important input regarding research direction for the station.

## SMALL FLOCK PROGRAM – ASOTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

In 2019 the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Oregon Department of Fish Wildlife, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation, Oregon Chapter Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, and the Washington Wild Sheep Foundation entered an agreement with the Asotin County Conservation District (ACCD). Equal funding is provided by the six groups to initiate an outreach/education program with small flock domestic sheep

owners in the Hells Canyon area.

The project is gaining momentum; a full-time veterinarian is on staff, as well as ACCD personnel. Contacting owners, sampling, plus outreach and education remain the focus of the program. ACCD staff attend regional county fairs, with an informational booth with handouts and the included poster. In cooperation with Idaho Department of Fish and Game, a YouTube video has been produced: “How to Swab Domestic Sheep and Goats”. ACCD also has an Access Database, plus a website regarding with a Bighorn Health page, which includes an interactive map with an overlay of bighorn sheep habitat, plus information for domestic sheep and goat owners. To view this page, go to: ‘asotincd.org’, ‘programs’ and select ‘sheep/goat & bighorn sheep – Movi’. This video, plus an IDFG video regarding the Salmon project, is available on the Idaho WSF website.

This program is dependent on the cooperation and support of the owners of domestic sheep and goats. Although testing and treatment are free, uncooperative owners are encountered; there are no rules, regulations, and/or ordinances that require them to participate in the program. In general, however, this program has been well received, and the majority of contacts have been positive.

## SMALL FLOCK PROGRAM – IDAHO FISH AND GAME SALMON REGION

Idaho WSF applied for and received an Idaho Fish and Game Commissioner matching grant in the Salmon Region for \$10,000, IDFG and \$10,000, Idaho WSF. The grant money will be used to enhance the existing IDFG small flock testing and education program in the Salmon Region. This is a one-year grant, however, there is a clause to extend the agreement, if warranted. Two temporary employees will be hired, one to work in the Salmon impact area, the other in the Challis/Mackay area. The protocol will basically mirror the procedure of the ACCD program. Updates will be reported when available.

## HELLS CANYON UPDATE

The “test and remove” technique to increase survival of bighorn lambs in Hells Canyon, to date, have been very successful. Basically, ewes in the various herd populations in the Hells Canyon Complex are captured, sampled, radio-collared and released. When test results demonstrate a specific ewe is significant shedder of Movi, she is recaptured and removed from the population. The theory is that certain ewes within a population are “super shedders”, and as such, are the main source of passing Movi within the herd. By removing these ewes lamb survival within the herd will improve. To date, the data suggests this is a valid theory, see Table 1 (courtesy Frances Cassirer, IDFG). The data in this table covers the timeframe April-October, 2021. The survival rate is remarkable this year,

in light of the drought, the Snake River Fire Complex, which involved Game Management Unit 11, the Redbird herd and Asotin Creek, plus bluetongue and EHD infections in some of the sheep. Population survey data will be conducted in December and March.

## LOWER SALMON RIVER PROJECT

Idaho Fish and Game has initiated a major bighorn sheep project in the lower Salmon River drainage, specifically from Riggins, upstream a few miles above the South Fork of the Salmon. Capture work has begun to collect biological samples, plus attach radio collars. In addition to general population data, test/remove will also be implemented. Idaho WSF is contributing volunteers, jet boat charter and financial assistance.

## AIRSPACE OPTIMIZATION FOR READINESS FOR MOUNTAIN HOME AFB, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Idaho Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (Idaho WSF), Oregon Chapter Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (OR FNAWS), Elko Bighorns Unlimited, Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF), Nevada Bighorns Unlimited (NBU), Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited-Midas Chapter, and Nevada Bighorns Unlimited-Fallon Chapter offered a joint input letter to the Air Force concerning their Draft EIS. The wild sheep groups support the Air Force training mission and recommended measures to reduce conflict and adverse reactions concerning wild sheep, particularly during lambing season.



Photo credit: Frances Cassirer

Table 1. Test/Remove Results, April-October 2021

Herd	# Marked ewes	% Marked ewes observed w/live lambs in April	Lamb survival to October	October Lamb:ewe ratio
Mtn View	19	79%	73%	0.58
Wenaha	11	82%	100%	0.81
Black Butte	6	100%	50%	0.50
Redbird	32	78%	60%	0.47
Asotin	20	85%	65%	0.55



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# Wild Sheep Foundation

## Chapter & Affiliates

### Summit XIII

By Mike Schlegel



The Idaho, Oregon and Washington state chapters of the Wild Sheep Foundation hosted the Chapter and Affiliates Summit in Lewiston, ID, June 23-26. Including the WSF staff, 70+ members from 15 chapters/affiliates, plus the Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance, attended.

The following overview of the summit is provided by Keith Balfour, WSF, in the Mountain Minutes Newsletter V21: “Overall, our meeting was upbeat and positive,” said Gray N. Thornton, president, and CEO of the Wild Sheep Foundation.

“We have a lot to be thankful for, especially when our collective efforts are paying dividends with new herds and many populations healthy and stable, yet there is more that needs to be done. We have herds still struggling with disease transmitted from domestic’s sheep, and it’s already shaping up to be a tough water year in our southern latitudes.”

“The number one problem negatively impacting wild sheep populations is disease (M.ovi) passed from domestic sheep to wild populations. Presentations included an update on the Hells Canyon initiative (est. 1995) to study, monitor, trap, test, and remove disease infected individuals from contaminating entire herds; new findings and strategies for disease mitigation; the impact on bighorn sheep from open-pit coal mining; a new WSF program titled Women Hunt™; and the challenges being brought to wild sheep populations from exploding, non-native Aoudad populations.”

“Attendees were treated to a grizzly bear experience and tour of the new Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) at Washington State University and a jet boat trip up the Snake River to view what has become the shining star of modern-day wild sheep conservation, the bighorn herds of Hells Canyon in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.”

“The last time we took this trip, if we saw a bighorn spring lamb, it was coughing and sneezing, a sure sign its days were numbered,” Thornton explained. “This trip, we were ecstatic to hear of a 80% lamb survival.”

The high lamb recruitment is the result of the Hells Canyon Initiative led by Frances Cassirer, Research Biologist with IDF&G and Scott Peckham of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the removal of all domestic sheep from the canyon, and the “test & remove” protocol of removing M.ovi positive wild sheep.”

“The area of most concern was the current extreme drought situation in southern Nevada and elsewhere in the southern Rockies.

Thornton said, “The entire state of Nevada is a conservation success story with their bold approach to putting and keeping wild sheep on the mountain. But unfortunately, water developments installed for sheep and other wildlife collect water only when it rains. Over the last year, precipitation has been scarce to nothing, so we’re taking action.”

Eighty thousand dollars was raised between the WSF Chapters and Affiliates to fly water via helicopter into dry water entrapment stations throughout southern Nevada.”

After the Saturday night BBQ dinner an auction yielded enough money, combined with other receipts, to fund the annual fees for each of the three-state chapter contribution for the small flock project through the Asotin County Conservation District.



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## The Wild Sheep Foundation Women Hunt™ Program.

By Stacey Dauwalter

On October 6th 2021, twelve strangers met in San Antonio, Texas as the first group of women chosen to participate in The Wild Sheep Foundation Women Hunt™ Program. The women were chosen out of roughly 50 applicants, and I am truly lucky to have been one of them. The 12 of us came from 8 states and 2 Canadian provinces, all with different careers and life experiences, but with the same goal: becoming a hunter.

The Women Hunt™ Program was developed with the goal in mind to clear barriers women may have to becoming hunters. The hope is that if more women participate in hunting, then their interest will expand to promote other conservation efforts. I am a wildlife biologist in Idaho and consider myself already involved in the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, however I want to participate in a way that is not considered part of my job and to harvest locally sourced wild game.

So what had been holding me back from hunting you may be asking? Personally, I had several things holding me back; the first being my lack of confidence in marksmanship and the second was time; dedicating time throughout the year to work on marksmanship as well as taking time-off to actually hunt. The third was finding someone to teach me. One of the things common among the women who gathered in Texas was that each of us knew people who hunted (spouses, partners,

and family), we also knew they were not the best teachers or mentors for us. I think there is some rule of thumb about not teaching or coaching your own children. That statement should probably be expanded to include spouses and partners.

The Women Hunt™ chair, Reneé Thornton of The Wild Sheep Foundation, has really taken into consideration the many needs and concerns of new women hunters and put together an impressive program, one that is going to be hard to improve on. With sponsors such as SITKA® Gear, YETI®, Weatherby, Inc., Boyt Harness Company, Kenetrek Boots, Leica, Wild Sheep Foundation and the FTW Ranch, you better believe the swag was off the hook. All sponsors provided gear that made our week special and future hunts more attainable. That in and of itself may be one of the barriers keeping women from the field. This program and the sponsors gave a big leg up by providing not just instruction, but clothing, boots, and discounted rifles and scopes (women specific, of course!).

After meeting in San Antonio for the first night of introductions and dinner we made our way to the FTW Ranch the next morning, where we toured the ranch, settled into our cabins, and got to know our instructors. The owner and the staff of FTW Ranch provide instruction for new hunters with their S.A.A.M. curriculum, the acronym stands for Sportsman's All-weather All-terrain Marksmanship. The program is patented by the FTW Ranch and provided us invaluable knowledge

and training. Just as each of us had differing reasons and experiences for wanting to be part of the Women Hunt program, we all had differing levels of anxiety, nervousness, and excitement when meeting our instructors and getting on the range. All the anxiety and nervousness quickly fled, and the atmosphere changed to eagerness, encouragement and confidence. We were treated as individuals, with individual needs and strengths. The instructors were patient as they worked with each of us, using our strengths and helping us with our weaknesses. After classes on gun handling, scope mechanics, developing range cards, and gun cleaning we headed to the range. We all started our target shooting at 100yds, learning to zero-in. By the end of the second day shooting everyone was hitting 700yd targets. While we got to shoot long distance, the mantra of FTW Ranch and S.A.A.M. training was in our heads, "You only get one first shot". This means that it is the hunter's responsibility to kill an animal with the first shot and not to take a shot you are not confident in. Ethically, for me that is not 700yds, it is 300yds or less. But it is still fun and incredibly satisfying to aim at the longer-range targets and hear the instructor yell, "IMPACT!".

The last four days of Women Hunt consisted of a morning and evening hunt. I harvested my white-tailed doe on the third day, one of four deer harvested from the group. We all helped to skin, gut, and process the meat. Everyone got to take some home, sharing the harvest. The excitement of the successful hunts was felt by everyone. As each hunting group made it back to camp there were cheers and whoops when we found out who had been successful. All the questions started, and details were needed!

It's hard not to sound like a Pollyanna with only good things to say. Trust I me, I can into this pretty apprehensive.

I was told of this program by my supervisor and encouraged to apply. She knew of my goal to start hunting and thought this would be a great opportunity to finally commit the time to learn and benefit from good instruction. Frankly, the thought of spending a week with 12 other women, in close proximity, eating meals together, going to class together, and going to the range together was a bit much for my introverted self to get excited over. The beautiful location, laid-back atmosphere, friendly staff, and supporters made it hard to take the experience for granted. The women chosen were all there for the same reason and we bonded over our shared

goals and interest. One of the biggest things I took away from the experience (beside my new-found confidence in shooting) was a reminder that no matter people's age, sex, politics, or cultural background we can find common ground and friendship in the hobbies we have. We don't always have to agree on every single thing, but if we can find common ground on one or two things, continue to encourage each other in our goals, we might just have a better understanding and patience with each other (maybe I am a Pollyanna after all?).





## IDAHO WOLF WARRIOR TRIBUTE

By Tammy Scott

At the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation's 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Banquet and Fundraiser, Past-President Zach Higgins told us about the Wounded Warrior Tribute (Not verbatim and minor edits have been made): "This past year we had a very generous anonymous individual that wanted to help one of our wounded veterans. They wanted to allow the recipient to purchase a prosthetics or track chair, giving the disabled veteran the opportunity to hunt and enjoy the outdoors. To assist with the selection, Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation put together an application process and sent it to our membership.

The beauty of this chapter, this organization, is that we had two Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation Centennial Life Members from Colorado nominate the individual along with a letter of support from Iowa Foundation For North American Wild Sheep. The individual that we selected was not someone that was combat wounded, but he has been on 3 combat tours to Iraq as a Combat Engineer. He has continued to give past his service in the military to his brothers and sisters to help

them get back out and make things happen. He volunteers his time in multiple organizations, he puts on hunts and literally carries his brothers on his back, gets them into a position to harvest the animal and then does taxidermy for them. We should all be proud that we have Americans here in our country that do things like this for one another. It is my absolute honor to recognize the Wounded Warrior Tribute recipient as Retired Air Force Staff Sergeant Nevada Grassie."

After a standing ovation, Zach continued: "Beyond all those amazing things that Nevada does, he also donates a carving every year to the national Wild Sheep Foundation for their annual Sheep Week Convention, with the proceeds benefitting the Wounded Warrior Outdoors non-profit organization. Nevada is unbelievable. When we found out that Nevada was going to be the recipient of the track chair, we spoke to him and he was humbled beyond words. Knowing that this track chair is going to help service members year in and year out, the chair has already been ordered and this

fall there are going to be veterans able to go hunt where they can get around without having to worry about being on a hard surface. God bless Nevada and we thank him so much."

Nevada took the stage and said, "Tonight, we are going to auction one of my carved skulls that's a hartebeest. When I was active duty, I had carved this piece and it was on display at a plantation in South Carolina where I was stationed. This is one of my first pieces. Along with the skull, the winner of the auction will get to go on an aoudad hunt, guided by me, and one of our veterans – that will be utilizing the track chair and they will take an aoudad too. We're going to have a blast!

Thank You! I am super humbled, it's an honor to give back. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the Wild Sheep Foundation and for Ron Raboud (Founder and President of Wounded Warrior Outdoors) reaching out to me. I was at a low point in my life where I was in a dark place and ready to check out. A promise to finish a skull was all that kept me on this earth. I prayed that God would give me a direction and, in that year, I carved the buffalo skull that went to the national Wild Sheep Foundation and it auctioned for almost \$120,000.

We have a truck that we're building that can handle everybody, a side by side and now we're blessed with this track chair. All of this equipment will be used with several organizations, assisting with hunting, Jiu jitsu and many other activities for veterans and police officers. So much goes out to help these veterans and help my fellow service members. We won't have to pack them around on our backs any

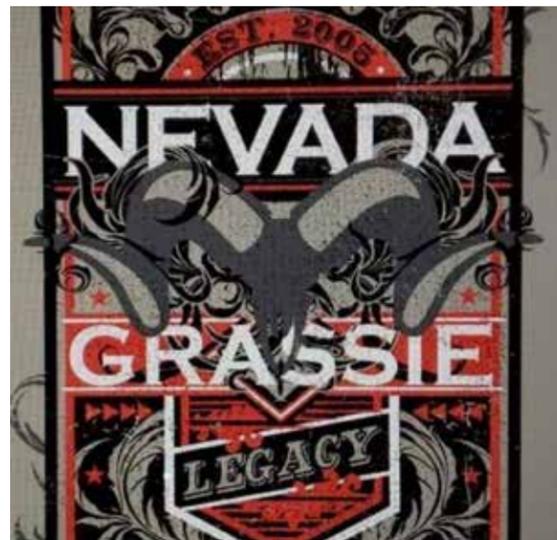


more, we'll be able to walk side by side with them. Thank you for all that you guys have done, thank you for the opportunity and have a great night."

Nevada Grassie carrying JD Williams on JD's aoudad hunt in Texas. With the generous donation of the track chair, wounded veterans will be able to hunt side by side with their guides.

Later that afternoon when the Nevada Grassie carved hartebeest skull and aoudad hunt came up for auction, the bidding was hot and fast. When all the bids were in, the winning bidder paid \$17,000 with 25% (\$4,250) going to Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation and 75% (\$12,750) going to Brothers In Arms.

- To watch the Wounded Warrior Tribute presentation, go to this link and start the video at 1:59:00: <https://www.facebook.com/idahowildsheep/videos/233480014918029>
- To see more of Nevada's artwork, check him out on facebook at: Legacy by Nevada Grassie
- Brothers In Arms Safaris: <https://www.facebook.com/Brothers-in-Arms-Safaris-268911573163768>
- Wounded Warrior Outdoors: <http://woundedwarrioroutdoors.com/>
- Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation: <https://www.idahowildsheep.org/>
- Iowa Foundation For North American Wild Sheep: <http://www.iowafnaws.org/>
- Wild Sheep Foundation: <https://www.wildsheepfoundation.org/>



## UPDATE:

Nevada Grassie, recipient of the ID WSF Warrior Tribute, is already putting his All-Terrain Track Chair to good use. He has guided several hunts for Veterans including several antelope hunts.

Thank you Nevada Grassie!



## NORTH OF TWO— WHITETAILED WISTFULLY

By Dick Nachbar

Our adventure calendars are pushing mid-November and saying it's deer season in our Minnesota Northland's whitetail woods. Now it's on at daughter and son-in-law's home near Bagley, just south of but hard against Highway Two, in northwestern Minnesota. Forty-seven years of mountain hunting ended in 2017 as this old adventurer and bride left half of their lifetimes in Idaho to downsize, simplify, and relocate to the fine Northland town of Grand Rapids. Age and ageing suggested the change. The family cabin on Big Bass Lake and long-term connections suggested that refocus to north of Highway Two.

This Veterans Day finds that old adventurer sitting in an elevated plywood box with staircase and handrail, propane-fired Mr. Heater, plexiglass covered shooting ports that command 10-yard-wide shooting lanes, ear-phone FM radio, and with a reliable cell phone connection to the outer world—all in the Northland's woods. It's a far cry from those 47 mountain years; farther still from that first deer hunt deer in the Minnesota River Valley 59 years ago.

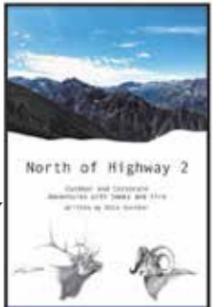
This year's November 9 deer opener included the play-by-

play radio account of the unbeaten Gophers' football upset of #4 ranked Penn State and cell phone congratulations from an Idaho hunter-friend. "Easy listening" FM radio helped with time management in that plywood box. The cell phone permitted voice-visits with the sweetheart bride. The handy "silver bullet" coffee thermos refreshed memories of mountain sunrises with the old hunting partner. Today's deer stand plywood box is ¼ mile from the 4 x 4 parking spot. It's all flat land with minimal deer dragging, no mountain pack frame work here, no motorcycles on horse trails, no mountain mid-night meat hauling. First zero degrees today with trees popping, but Mr. Heater keeps several hours of immobility almost comfortable. And it's really seat-of-the-pants hunting, not the boots-on-the-ground hunting of years past.

Lots of time for the old adventurer's wistful reflections during this Northland adventure. Days and adventures past, fund of family and friends, and a lifetime--all bounce back favorably. He's still outdoors but the game is now in a slower motion, appropriately so.

Dick Nachbar November 11, 2019

*This is an excerpt from 'North of Highway 2' written by Idaho WSF Life member, Dick Nachbar. Books are now available for purchase. Contact Dick at [dnr.nachbar@gmail.com](mailto:dnr.nachbar@gmail.com)*





# THE OLD WARRIOR

by Matthew Borg

I was heading to work one day when my boy called me and said, “You are so lucky, you drew your ram tag.” I thought he was pulling my leg, but after 29 years of putting in, I had finally drawn a coveted Idaho Bighorn Sheep tag. I was super excited and couldn’t wait to get started. After calling a few close friends and telling them the good news, I was still in shock! As I started to prepare for my hunt, my boys and a few close friends went out scouting for sheep. We started in June hiking up draws, and to guzzlers, glassing from ridge tops, talking to cowboys riding the range, and talking to guys that fly that range. We found a lot of sheep and the areas they really like to hang out in. We went out in all kinds of weather trying to see what those sheep would do in heavy wind,

thunderstorms, and even in snow. It was great times hiking through God’s country, high rugged mountain tops surrounded by cliffs and awesome clear mountain lakes. It was inspiring hiking your way to the top and being able to look around for miles.

In July, the smoke got so bad, we couldn’t see more than a few hundred yards. I was glad we had gotten out early, did our research, and put in our time. Preparation is a huge key. Upon finding the rams I would take pictures of all sides and angles of them to better judge how good they were. Later, the pictures and videos I took helped my friends and I determine how big the rams were.

I talked to a lot of guys who said, “Man don’t do what I did!” They

started getting tired and frustrated and shot the wrong ram or just rushed it. After hearing this several times, I chose to take my bow for the first two weeks in hopes of settling down so I could find an old warrior ram. I wanted one with a lot of mass and character. I got within range (12-52 yards) of six rams I could have harvested with my bow, but they were just not the right ones. The biggest ram was about a 160-inch ram, full curl but just too young. He needed a few more years to bulk up.

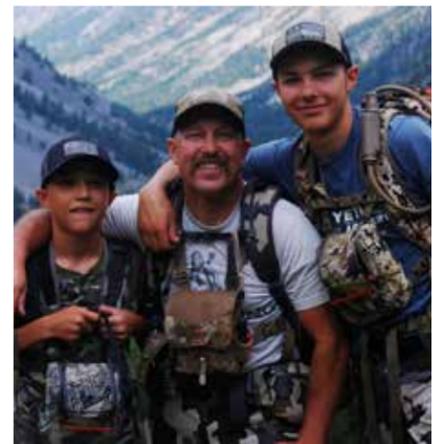
We were in the high country and lots of cliffs and shale rocks. I learned quick that when we got to our glassing spots in the shale rock, we had to create a flat spot to sit and glass from. If we came from above the sheep, they weren’t alarmed. If we came

from below them, they would start to move out of the area. Sometimes the rams would hear us and come up to us, one time within 14 yards. Sixteen days in we had seen a few solid rams and three old warriors. A few of them gave us the slip and were never seen again.

On day 17, my friends and I started by glassing No Tell’em Canyon. We found a Ram we had seen scouting earlier and headed to Magic Mountain to take a better look at him. We figured he was at least eight years old. He was dark coated with super heavy horns that were broomed on both sides. We watched him for a while trying to decide if he was big enough. We watched the other rams get out of his way when he headed towards them. As we were glassing this band of rams, they got up and headed into the big cliffs and avalanche chutes. I made the decision that this was the ram and started to climb closer for a better shot. My friend saw where the ram was headed and said, “Hell no!” He stayed where he was with the spotting scope while I got closer. I had to climb a cliff to get the shot and lost my range finder in the

process. I finally found a place where I could take the shot. I was about 580 yards from him when I dialed in and took the shot. The ram disappeared in the cliffs after my shot. Luckily, my friends had him in the spotting scope and guided me into him. It took about an hour to get to him because of the terrain. As I got to him, he fell off a big cliff. It seemed like a million miles as I made my way down to him to see how good he was. I was thankful he only broke off a tip of one horn. He was all I imaged for a once-in-a-lifetime sheep hunt. It was truly an inspiring moment with friends, one filled with many new memories. I wish my boys could have been there with me at that moment. It was truly a humbling experience. I told my boys they need to draw a big-horn sheep tag for the next big hunt.

I want to thank the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for all the work they’ve done in preserving our sheep by working on habitat, disease research, and installing a lot of guzzlers in remote spots.





# BIGHORN CAPTURE ON THE SALMON RIVER

In late November 2021\*, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game was continuing its capture-test-remove research to control Movi in bighorn sheep in the Lower Salmon River and in the North Fork area of the Salmon River near Shoup. The lower river captures are conducted by jet boat while the North Fork is from pickups along the road.

\*This was after the journal deadline, so this is a summary. A more in-depth article and video will follow.

IDFG needed another jet boat to capture and collar bighorn sheep on the Lower Salmon River. The study area is from upstream of Riggins and into the wilderness up to Mackay Bar. The operation requires jet boating the river to locate sheep, then either dart them from the boat or hike up the steep hillsides to dart them. That stretch of the Salmon River has numerous rapids that require an experienced jet boat pilot.



From left to right: Idaho WSF member's Lucia Bennett and Rob Bennett, Dennis Newman Regional Wildlife Manager, Salmon Region, and Jason Husseman Regional Wildlife Biologist, Salmon Region.

A phone call to long time Idaho WSF donor Rich Friend, owner of River Adventures in Riggins, Idaho and the Idaho WSF chartered Rich and his jet boat for four days of sheep trapping. Fish & Game had already chartered Brent Sawyer owner of Backcountry River Guides. This allowed two teams on the river each day. Each boat had a pilot, three IDFG biologist as the dart team and a few Idaho WSF volunteers. Boats were loaded, rapids run, sheep were located, some darted on the beach while others well up the cliffs. Collars were fitted, and blood and nasal swabs collected for disease testing.

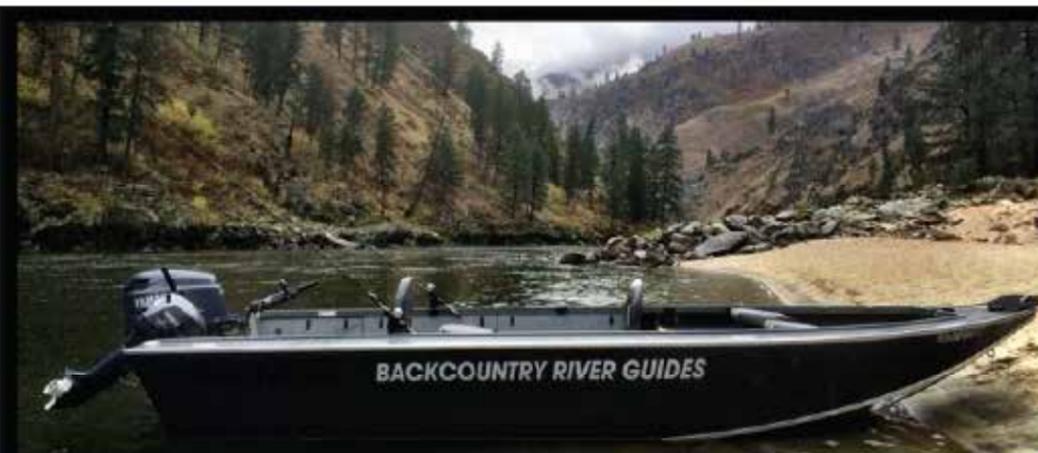
The North Fork crew consisted of two IDFG biologist in a pickup with three Idaho WSF volunteer following in another truck. They darted and collared a beautiful 7-year old ram! How many people can say that they have done catch-and-release bighorn sheep hunting?



Idaho WSF Life member Rich Carignan (l), Becky Gonzales with River Adventures (r)

In all, 15 Idaho WSF volunteers assisted the IDFG with this operation.

Idaho WSF thanks the IDFG for the opportunity to assist them with 'boots on the ground' bighorn conservation and look forward to helping out more.

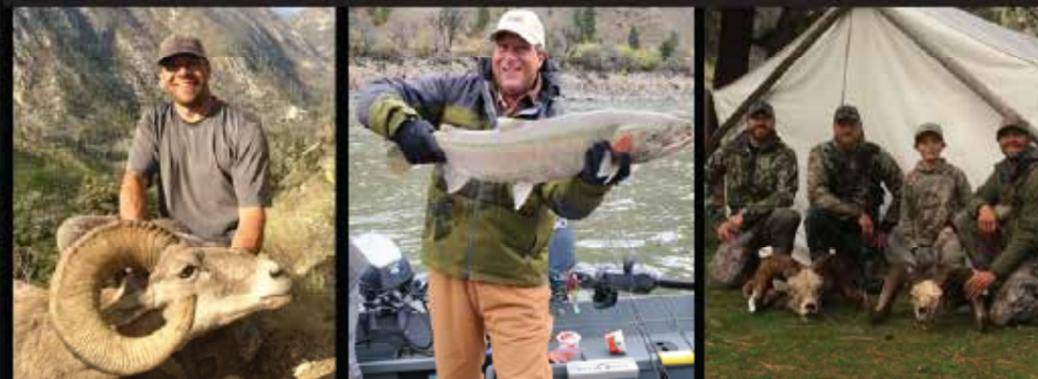


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## Wilderness

## Bighorn Sheep

## Tags are the

## *Best Tags*

## *in Idaho*

by Jeff Peterson

The lungs were burning from climbing the steep Idaho mountain at a rapid pace. The stalk was in process and the hunters were working against a timeline, it would be dark in about 90 minutes and there was still 1,500 vertical feet of rocky slope to climb. When James Peterson drew a 2021 wilderness sheep tag, he immediately knew he needed to intensify and increase his workout routine! At this point in the climb, he knew that every training mile he had run, and every extra workout was paying off. He was climbing with his brother, Weston, who had prepared for the hunt in Colorado by climbing 14,000-foot peaks and working a special hill near Colorado Springs called “The Incline.” (The Incline is a steep slope with 2,000 constructed steps.) Both of the hunters were in their 30’s and were making sure they were staying hydrated on the climb! The stalk came to a halt when Weston noticed a couple of sheep standing on top of a large rock further up the ridge. The binoculars came up and the hunters wondered if they had been busted? The sheep that had drawn our attention



had been spotted an hour and a half earlier from across the canyon by Bret Vaterlaus, a long-time friend of the family, who was helping on the hunt. I met Bret in the early 1990’s, and at that point Bret had been on three different wilderness sheep hunts totaling 22 days (these hunts included his tag and his father’s tag). In 22 hard days they had not seen a single bighorn sheep. Bret was determined to hunt bighorns! Since the early unsuccessful hunts, Bret has been on several wilderness bighorn hunts as he and his father, and several friends have successfully punched tags on their once-in-a-lifetime rams. Bret has two of the best “sheep eyes” that I have seen, and we were thrilled that he could join us on James’ hunt!

I joined the expedition into the Wilderness because I’m James’ and Weston’s dad, and had taken a ram in the same unit 17 years earlier (out of four tags the unit only produced one ram that year -Bret was a great help on that hunt.) For James’ 2021 hunt we liked our crew, young guys in their 30’s with good legs and seasoned guys in their 60’s, with good eyes and a lot of experience spotting sheep over the years. Bret mountain bikes a lot and has legs like the young guys. I know that I do not, but I biked hard to get into pack shape.

Bret and I had stayed on the opposite hill from the ram and had set up a spotting station. Our assignment was to keep eyes on the bedded ram and any future moves that it made. We knew that as early evening approached, the ram would likely stand up and either feed or go to water. With spotting scope and binoculars deployed, one of us had a constant eye on the ram. We had also spotted the bighorns on the top of the rock that had halted the stalk. After a few minutes the ewes on the rock jumped down and the stalk resumed.

James had picked a small dead tree on the ridge as the point to gain before sliding over the ridge to look for the sheep. James had also picked some other key rock piles and landmarks before starting the stalk, knowing that when he got over there many things would look different. There are a lot of different ways a stalk can go sideways, and it only takes one. Looking at the mountain and the location of the ram, we had judged this stalk’s odds of success at better than 50/50, definitely worth the effort this late in the day.

For the most part the hunters climbed on the backside of the ridge, out of our view. Bret figured the hunters

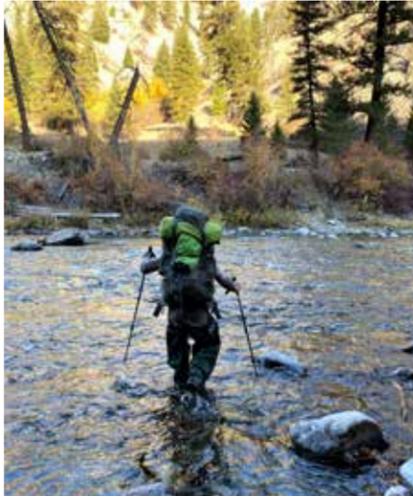
needed 30 more minutes to get into position. “Dang! The ram is standing up”, I whispered. I dialed the spotting scope way back to be able to see more terrain as the ram moved about. The ram browsed on brush and didn’t seem intent on leaving the area. Fifteen minutes later the ram stepped behind a rock pile on the steep slope, and we lost sight of him. Tension builds as the eyes strain for a glimpse!

When you draw a wilderness bighorn tag not only are you excited about hunting sheep, but you also anticipate a backcountry experience! Idaho is blessed with rugged wilderness! The wilderness is blessed to contain Rocky Mountain Bighorns on its steepest slopes. The wilderness requires a commitment of time and effort. Being able to give the required effort involves preparation, developing strong legs, and a strong mental attitude. A sheep hunter must be positive! Good sheep hunters can glass all day and see nothing and then be more excited about getting back after it the next day!

When you are in the wilderness it really feels like you are a long way from anywhere. The airplane dumps you out and as it lifts off the strip, the sound of the engine fades and the sounds of the



wilderness begin to envelop you as you realize that you are basically on your own. You realize you are now hunting bighorns where the Sheepeater Indians lived and hunted for hundreds of years. At that point you might leave a small bag of extra food and extra ammo in a runway tree before picking up your 50 plus pound pack and your rifle and stepping into your wilderness adventure.



I kept an eye trained on the area around the rock pile, while Bret worked the chute and ridge with the binoculars. After what seemed like a long tension filled time (likely 15 minutes), Bret declared he could see the hunters slipping over the ridge. "What are they doing?" I asked without lifting my eye from the scope. "Do you think they can see the Ram?" "Not sure," was Bret's response, "but they are pulling back and moving a little downhill." "The pack is coming off and James is laying down, but what is Weston doing? He is just standing there with his hands together above his head." I answered with a questioning, "WHAT?"



From our angle, a half mile away, it looked like the hunters had profiled on the ridge, which is a big no no! But they were dealing with the steep hill and could barely see the ram over the crest of the ridge. Weston had lifted the phone to video the event as it unfolded.



I told Bret that James had used the excuse of the sheep tag to get a new set of binoculars and upgrade his rifle scope. James had been spending time at the range and had zeroed the 7mm Remington Mag at 200 yards. He had been lucky enough to have found five boxes of ammo and had also been working with the gun and scope at 400 yards.

James ranged the ram at 225 yards and prepared for the shot across the rocky chute. Sheep have keen eyesight; the ram spotted a little movement and was staring at the ridge when the trigger was pulled. "Boom" – the spotters could see nothing, but still stared at the area around the rock pile. The hunters watched the ram go down and then give a last kick, which launched it into the chute. Very often sheep bed at the head of steep chutes and use them as an escape path running downhill at full speed. A running ram in a chute and a sliding ram in a chute make two different sounds. A half mile away the spotters heard the sound of a sliding ram (they had heard that sound before) and knew the stalk had ended in success! Before darkness fell, the hunters had just enough time to negotiate the steep rocky chute, punch a tag, take photographs, and field dress the Ram before descending the slope in the light of the full moon.

The crew would spend the next day climbing up the mountain to cape and bone out the Ram and anticipated an additional day getting the ram to the airstrip. When the Frank Church Wilderness was established in the 1970's it retained 17 remote landing strips which give reasonable access to the different bighorn units. The pilots who fly the backcountry are more than awesome! They have a unique job that requires a lot of quick decisions and flexibility. The flights into and out of the backcountry just embellish the wilderness experience!

The risks of wilderness hunting have remained constant over the years. However, the length of time to react to an event has been reduced by new technology. The satellite phone, the

SPOT device, and the inReach device allow some communication in case of emergency or early success. In our case we were able to send a text to the backcountry pilot to arrange a flight ahead of a 4-day storm. The pilot's response schedule required us to combine retrieving the ram and the haul back to the air strip into one very long, rewarding, and memorable wilderness day. It is an interesting emotion to hear the aircraft approaching the backcountry airstrip. When a seasoned pilot steps out you know you are flying with someone who has done it right for a long time. A clue that the wilderness hunting torch is being passed to the next generation occurs when the pilot looks at the crew, congratulates James, and in a little surprise exclaims, "whoa, you hunted with a couple of old guys!." We all laughed but I still wonder who he was talking about?

If you live in Idaho just knowing the wilderness is there can make you feel good, but until you access the wilderness to either hike, hunt, horse pack, float, or fish you can't appreciate the rich treasure that it is. Wilderness is awe-inspiring and humbling. Time spent in the wilderness enriches your life and combining that time with sheep hunting makes Wilderness Bighorn Sheep Tags the best in Idaho!



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## An Inspiring Tale of Generosity and Stewardship to Help Nevada's Bighorns

Hunters and conservation groups step up to support Nevada's wild sheep in a time of need

In parts of the arid West, water is often the limiting factor for populations of desert bighorn sheep and other wildlife. Over the years, groups like the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited, and the Wild Sheep Foundation have partnered with the Nevada Department of Wildlife to build structures known as guzzlers. These manmade water sources provide a reliable supply of drinking water for all types of local wildlife and help to distribute sheep throughout the range. Typically, these water catchments are filled by collecting rain on an apron, but without adequate precipitation they need to be filled by helicopter or else they'll run dry.

This year's heat and drought, which has been prolonged and severe in southern Nevada, drove Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn president Clint Bentley to ask his fellow hunters and sheep fanatics for help. And—as usual—sportsmen and sportswomen rose to the challenge, making a huge difference for wild sheep and offering another extraordinary example of hunters and conservationists opening their wallets to support wildlife.

Article reprinted with permission from the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. Read the full article 'An Inspiring Tale of Generosity and Stewardship to Help Nevada's Bighorns' at <https://www.trcp.org/2021/07/28/inspiring-tale-generosity-stewardship-help-nevadas-bighorn-sheep/>

The Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation is proud to be able to help a neighboring state in need by donating \$20,000 to the Fraternity of Desert Bighorn Emergency Fund for the Nevada Guzzler project.

Idaho WSF members take pride in knowing that you are helping to put and keep wild sheep on the mountains!

The Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation is accepting donations for the 2022 Banquet and Fundraiser.

Hunts, optics, apparel, art, vacation packages, hunting gear, gift certificates, etc.

The Idaho WSF is a 501c3 non-profit and donations are tax deductible.

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# CHALLIS RANCHERS TEAM UP WITH BIOLOGISTS TO KEEP BIGHORN SHEEP HEALTHY

By Vicky Osborn, Television/Radio specialist, IDFG

Approximately 8 small flock domestic sheep operations in and around Challis are working with IDFG to create Movi free flocks. Movi can also be detrimental to domestic sheep flocks. These domestic sheep ranchers are working with IDFG to vaccinate and test their herds. These ranchers are pioneers in this work and deserve credit for their efforts.

For over a century bighorn sheep in Idaho and across western North America have suffered periodic and deadly outbreaks of pneumonia. Once infected, the bacteria causing pneumonia can remain in the herds and cause disease for decades. An outbreak in the Salmon River bighorn sheep populations in the late 1980s still affects lamb survival today. It's long been known that contact with healthy domestic sheep that carry a disease can infect wild sheep. Bighorns that come in contact with domestic sheep or goat herds can be exposed to Movi and then return and expose their bighorn herd. The only recourse when bighorns encounter domestic sheep, is to remove them from the herd. The only way to prevent this from happening was to maintain separation between domestic and wild sheep, which, in many places, is easier said than done.

Recent scientific advances in understanding the underlying pathogen, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, is opening up opportunities for wildlife managers and ranchers to work together in new ways to protect bighorns and domestic flocks.

Domestic sheep and goats that are Movi positive often do not have any obvious symptoms. The only way to know if sheep and goats are infected is to submit a nasal swab for laboratory testing to detect Movi DNA. Currently, testing is free for domestic sheep and goat owners in or near areas with bighorn sheep. Idaho Fish and Game funds this project, along with support from the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation and national Wild Sheep Foundation.

To determine if Movi is present, typically, every animal is sampled in small flocks. For larger flocks, sampling up to 20 animals that are most likely to be Movi positive will generally provide an accurate indication of flock infection status. This includes testing young stock 6 – 12 months old and animals of all ages that have been brought in recently or have been to a fair or other location where they are likely to have been in contact with different flocks.

To find out if you are in an area near bighorn sheep where Movi testing is recommended, check out the map below showing the current distribution of bighorn sheep in Idaho. To learn more about testing for Movi, call Idaho Fish and Game at 208-334-3700 and ask for the statewide manager for bighorn sheep.

If you want to learn more about preventing new diseases from infecting your domestic sheep and goats, the American Sheep Industry Association website has valuable recommendations for biosecurity measures that can be used to prevent diseases from being introduced and/or from spreading within a flock or to other animals. They also show the financial benefits of a healthy flock.

This article is reprinted with permission from IDFG. The full video can be viewed at <https://idfg.idaho.gov/blog/2021/07/challis-ranchers-team-biologists-keep-bighorn-sheep-healthy> and on the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation website at <https://www.idahowildsheep.org/>.



## 2022 LIFE MEMBER RAFFLE



### 10 DAY ALASKA DALL SHEEP HUNT WITH ALASKA OUTFITTERS UNLIMITED



**ALL** Life and Centennial Members registered for the 2022 banquet will be entered to win this raffle valued at \$25,000. **No purchase necessary but you MUST BE REGISTERED for banquet to WIN.**

Winner will be drawn at the 37th Annual Idaho Wild Sheep Banquet and Fundraiser on April 9th at the Boise Centre in Boise, Idaho. Banquet registration is required.

Life Members registered will receive one entry and Centennial Members registered receive three entries. Life and Centennial Memberships can be purchased now through the banquet. Current Life Members can upgrade to a Centennial Membership.

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Not included: Tips. Travel round-trip to the hunt origin. Gear, firearms, and ammunition. Transportation and care of hides, horns, antlers, meat, and all other personal effects from the hunt origin. All applicable licenses and tags including those for trophy-fee species before the hunt. May be asked to provide animals to an official B&C scorer for inclusion in the WSF Ram Awards. \$ 150.00 to APHA Hunter Preservation Fund.

Must be eligible to hunt and fish in Alaska and have not had license privileges revoked in Alaska or, in any State that is a member of the Wildlife Violators Compact.

Additional species may be available if coordinated with outfitter in advance.



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## DAD'S RAM AND A SON'S RIFLE

by Russell Gunter

I guess it all started when I was a kid and saw dad's ram hanging on the wall. He shot the ram before I was born. After waiting until I had a job, and could get enough vacation, I started putting for a bighorn sheep tag. I put in for sheep for 14 years in a row, drawing in 2021. In November, 2020, we lost our son. I don't tell you this for sympathy, however, it's relevant to the story. In April, 2021, Dad's ram fell from the wall and the left horn broken off at the skull. We still don't know if someone was in the house and tried to take it down, or if it was a freak thing, and it fell. I called Joe, a friend and taxidermist, to see if he could fix it. Joe came right over and showed me how he could fix it. Of course, we talked about sheep hunting and where to apply. Joe said if I drew, he wanted to go.

About mid-May of 2021 I received an email indicating I drew on sheep. A friend at work told me someone up above must be watching out for me; so, I decided to take my son's rifle on the hunt. Another friend got with his weight lifting friends and wrote up a workout program for me. I worked out three to four times a week, but I didn't think it was enough.

I have three friends a little older than me that have hunted the unit I drew. They shared good advice. One even went into the unit bear hunting during the first part of June and spotted some rams. Another suggestion was to take horses in from another way, which I really considered; however, it would be forty miles on horseback. Also, I spent time getting myself in shape, plus had not used the horses much, thus they were not in shape. In addition, I was pretty sure the trails had not been cleared, so I decided to do a backpack hunt.

One of my brothers is a pilot, and offered to fly me around the unit. My dad and I, plus a friend, went with him on the flight. When we took off it was so smoky we could hardly see any stars. Unfortunately, by the time we got within about twenty miles of the unit, it was raining too hard to see, plus the canyons were fogged in, so we turned around.

I invited my brothers to go with me on the hunt. Two them said they would like to go with me. My other brother, who was once asked why we invited him along, said, "I'm here strictly for entertainment purposes." When asked about coming on the sheep hunt, he said, "Hell no. If I wanted to go sheep hunting, I would have been putting in for the last 30 years." I

think, deep down, he really wanted to go, and we did miss his entertainment. Some other friends wanted to go with me as well. I really couldn't figure out why, however hunting bighorn sheep is quite an experience.

In gathering up gear for the hunt I remember my brother told me, "Don't scrimp on your boots, toilet paper, or your bed." I would add backpack equipment to the list. When it is said 'every ounce counts', it's true! Although I bought quality backpack equipment, my pack was pretty heavy going into the hunt. I won't recommend any equipment brands to purchase, but do buy quality boots that fit you. I also bought a decent light weight sleeping bag, plus a satellite text device, just in case.

My two sons and I scouted the area toward the end of June, and saw some rams. A friend, one of my sons and I went back in toward the end of July. We did not see any sheep. When it came time for the sheep hunt, my two brothers, two sons, my nephew and I packed in; dad camped at the trailhead to be there when we got out. We did see some ewes and lambs, but no rams. It was hot and miserable, so we came out.

I decided we need to get further in to find rams, however I knew I couldn't get horses where I wanted to go. A friend recommended llamas, but I could not find any available. Also, my brother said that he will die trying before he would lead a llama, being the cowboy that he is. During our pack out, I received an email indicating llamas were available. I decided three would be needed. The problem is we have to get the llamas across a river. The llama owner wanted me to try the boat and llama hauling system before he rented them to me. I built a crate out of ply wood to put on a raft I had borrowed from a friend. I took the raft and my llama crate to a reservoir near the llama ranch. The owner sent a llama, a wrangler and guide with me to try the llama hauling crate. It took about 20 minutes to get the llama into the crate. After the short trial run (I think the llama wrangler was more scared than the llama), we went back to the dock. The llama wrangler and owner did not necessarily like the redneck llama crate and decided not to rent me the llamas. Now I'm back to packing everything on my back again.

I decided it was probably going to cool down, so I planned a four-day trip toward the end of September; knowing I'll have two more weeks to hunt in October. Joe said he really wants to go with me, and he will bring his brother-in-law to help. We left on a Thursday morning. When I was first introduced



to Joe's brother-in-law Ty, I thought it was crazy he would come hike around the mountains, just for the chance to go on a sheep hunt, not being able to shoot one.

We hike in, and on the 2nd day Joe spotted some rams far away, approximately two and a half miles as the crow flies, plus across several canyons. There was another way around, with a trail most of the way, but it was about 13 miles. I knew I couldn't make that hike, so we stayed put.

The next morning Joe finds a ram a little bit farther away. I still think we should be able to find one closer, so we did a lot of glassing. About 5 o'clock I spotted a band of rams. Two had very dark bodies, and were larger than the others. They are still far away from where we were. Joe said, "If we go to sleep right now, we can get up at 2 o'clock in the morning and hike to a pass by daylight." I asked if the pass was close enough for a shot at the rams. Joe said, no, it's still across the canyon to the rams. I told him I am too tired and I need to rest; we will try to find them in the morning.

After waking up before daylight, and a short hike, we spot the band of rams. They are still really far away. Joe wants to go after them, but I'm not sure I can make it. Joe asked who was coming with me the next trip. I replied Bill, to which Joe said, "I want to be with you when you kill a ram." We decide to try for the rams without staying the night. I strip my pack down to my rifle, jerky, two tortillas, peanut butter and jelly, a sweat shirt, and water before we take off. I also sent a text to my wife, wishing her happy anniversary.

As we got in the canyon about a mile and a half, we ran into a man hunting elk. He had shot a small five-point bull, and had the antlers and part of the meat packed to his camp. He asked what we were doing. We told him I had a ram tag. He said he had seen a band of rams in the canyon, and two were decent ones. We think he is crazy to be in there hunting elk, and he thinks we are crazy to go in after a ram and back out in one day.



By now it's about noon. We keep going up the canyon and find a short section of the creek before it disappears again. We each drink about a half a gallon of water before continuing our climb. We identified three potential places to get a shot at the rams; 300, 500, and 700 yards. I told them if we get to the 500-yard shot, I would feel more comfortable. At the 700-yard spot we can see the rams in the trees, so we drop out of sight on the other side of the ridge and keep moving.

As we approached the 500-yard spot, Ty, who was in the back says, "There's a ram!" I see a ram looking at me over some rocks at a little over 300 yards away. I start getting my rifle off my pack, giving Joe the phone to video the shot. I set my backpack on a rock to lay my rifle over for a good rest.

I can see a several rams, trying to decide which one to shoot. There was one on the left that had a dark body and looked like he had more mass than the other rams. As I'm getting ready to shoot Joe said, "No. Wait. The one that just stuck his head over the bushes is bigger." This ram walked out and was at least as big as the other one. Joe gave me the range at

330 yards. The shot felt good, and the ram went out of sight. The video instant-replay verified it was a good shot. He didn't make it very far and was piled up in the rocks. It was a good day.

We spent almost an hour taking photographs and videos after we got to the ram. While we were caping the ram out, Joe said, "Isn't this full circle? Remember, you caped my first buck I got with a bow when I was 15 and now, I'm caping your first ram." It was pretty cool.

I sent text messages that I got my ram. I sent a text to my wife, my dad, who I knew would be excited that I finally got a ram, and my boss, telling him that I wasn't going to make it to work on Monday. I realized those rams should not have come to us. I'm sure my heavenly son was brushing for me, so I could shoot a ram with his rifle. We made it back to the elk hunters camp about 8:30 pm. He said "no luck I guess". I just turned so he could see the ram's head

on my pack with the light of his head lamp. He couldn't believe we had gone that far to get the ram and were back in his camp.

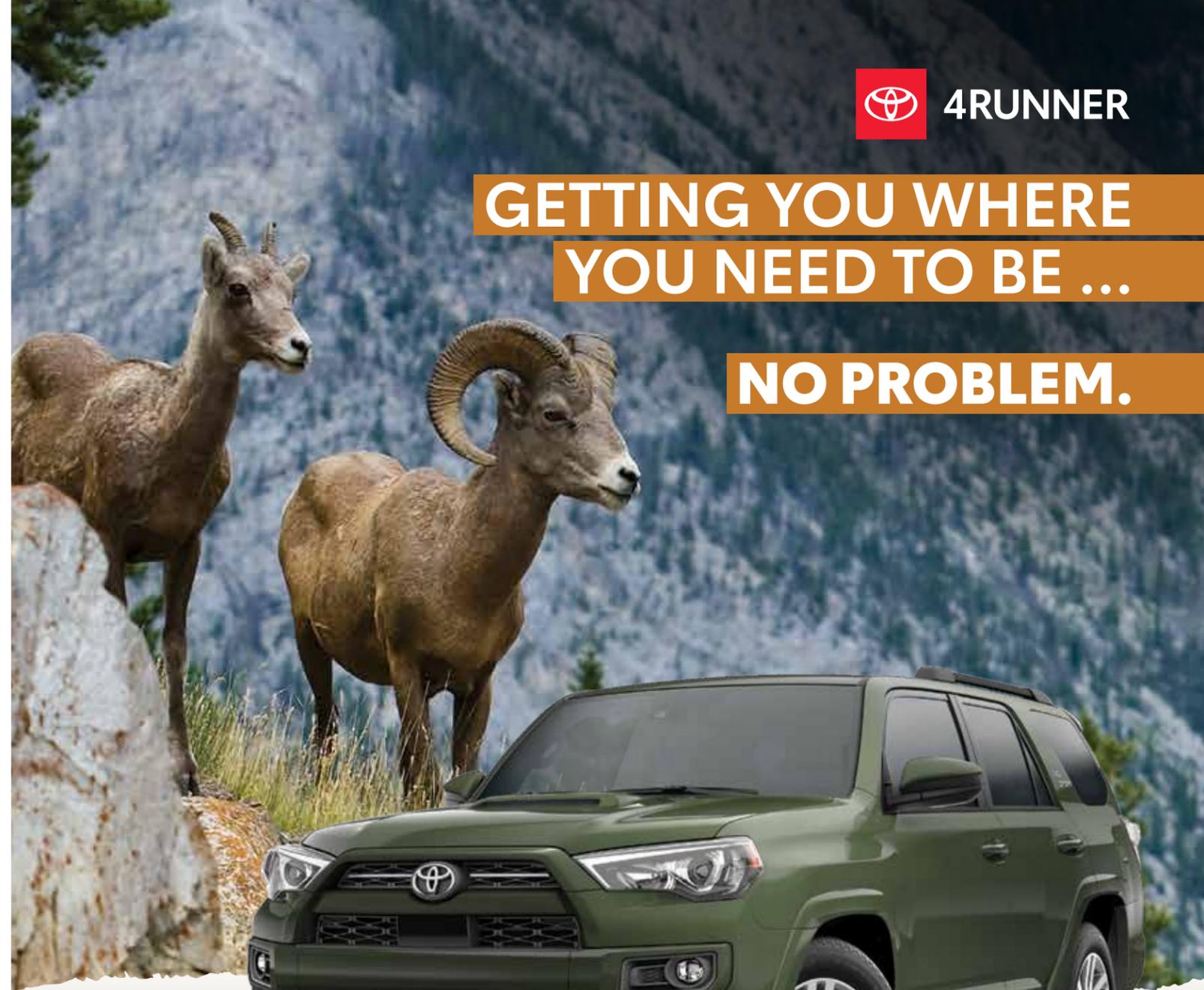
We got to the truck at 11:30 pm. As Ty and Joe were gathering up their tent, I went to help. I got so dizzy from being exhausted, I laid in the gravel parking lot, sipped on water, and ate a granola bar. It took about ten minutes before I could stand up. We arrived home at about 5:30 am.

I figured up the approximate miles and elevation gain during the scouting trips and the hunting trips. I walked about 90 miles and 20,900 feet in elevation. A month after shooting my ram some of the toes on my left foot were still numb. Some say its normal, and will eventually go away; I guess I'll see.

I could not have accomplished my DIY sheep hunt without the advice of friends who had sheep hunting experience, friends that loaned me equipment, friends and family that joined me on the mountain, plus my wife, who didn't complain about me hunting on our anniversary!

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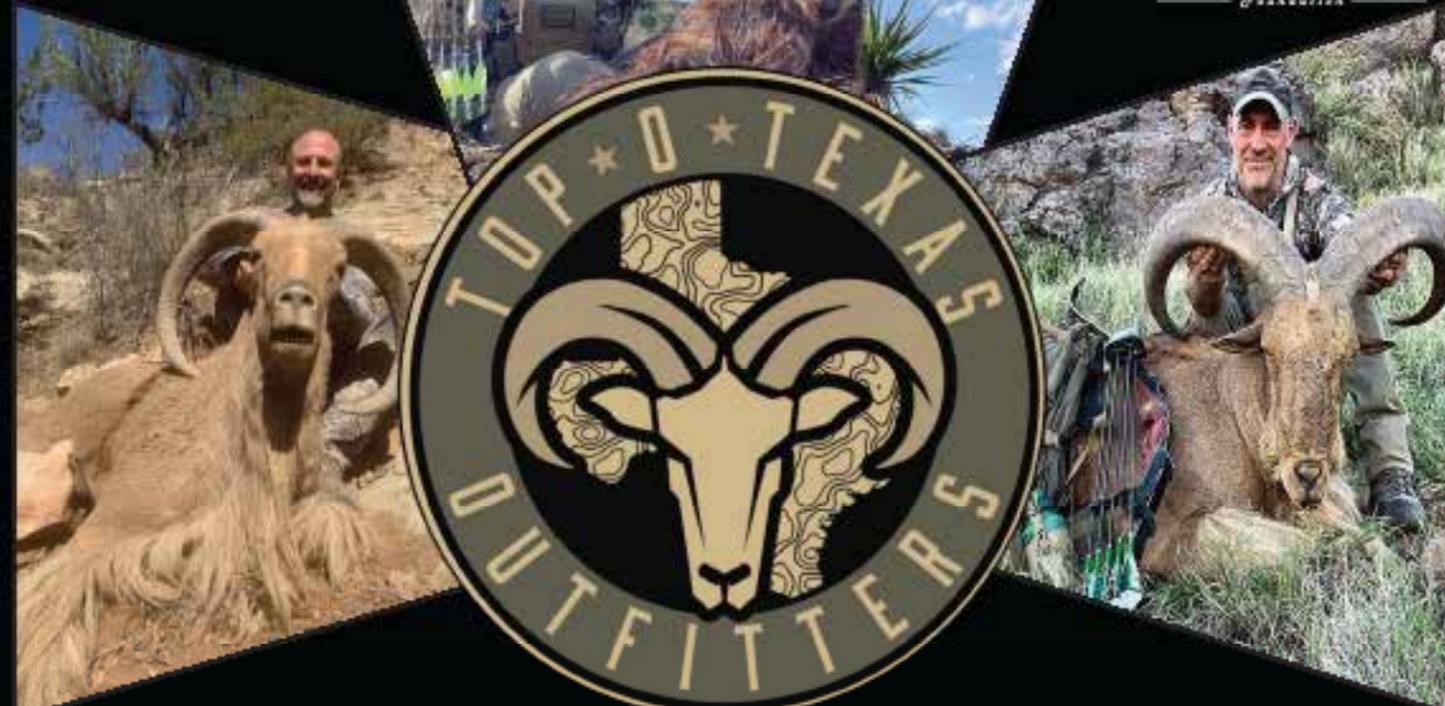
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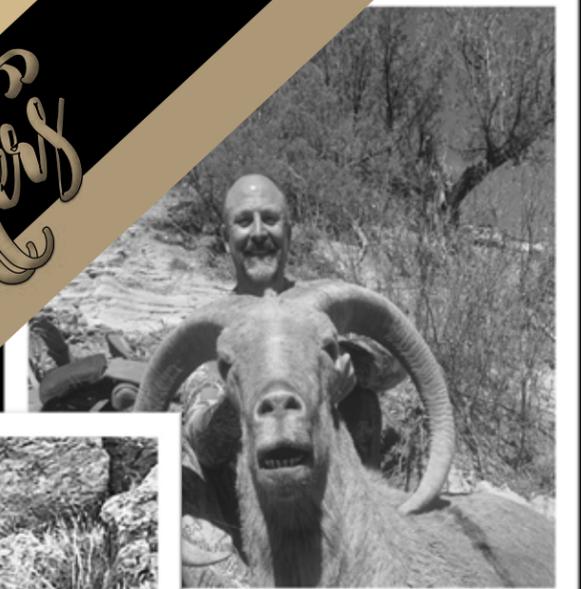
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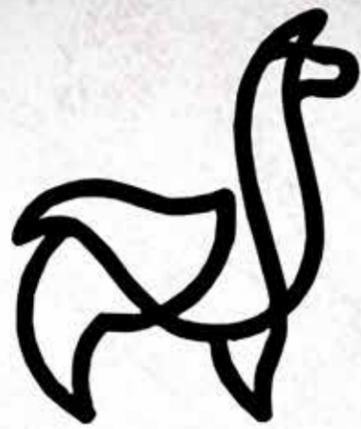
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# SHEEP HUNTING 101

## THE MIDDLE FORK OF THE SALMON RIVER

By Mitch McFarland

Sheep hunting is different than other big game hunting because a person is lucky if they get to do more than one in a lifetime. It's not like elk and deer hunting where you can hone your skills over a number of years. Due to the rougher and different terrain, sheep hunting requires a different hunting style. The tips I'm conveying in this article are focused on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River country and Rocky Mountain Big-horns and come from a culmination of over 25 years of guiding/outfitting and a lifetime of avid hunting.

In my mind your sheep hunt should start before you ever apply for a tag. Especially in the Frank Church Wilderness area. Much of the Middle Fork country is within the Frank Church Wilderness area. It is brutal country, and you need to weigh your physical condition and whether you will be doing a backpack hunt. Another option is packing in with horses or mules if you have access to them and are comfortable running stock in rough

country. One word of caution, don't take unconditioned horses and mules who don't have mountain experience. There's lots of horse bones in the Middle Fork country from people who have tried. The final option is to hire an outfitter for these hunts. I'd highly recommend it. These guys know where the sheep generally are. While it's no guarantee of success it certainly tips the scale in your favor. They also have mountain horses and additional help to make your trip more enjoyable.

You should choose the area you apply for based on what you think you are capable of. I think most people look at the draw odds and maybe Google Earth and apply for the units with the best odds. Unfortunately, that unit in the Middle Fork is usually the hardest to access and is the roughest. I recommend gathering intel on the unit before you apply. You should talk with people or get eyes on the country, either by flying it or boots on the ground. Your chances of success will be much higher the more

you know about the unit and by playing the long game on drawing a permit. Use the years you don't draw to scout and learn about the unit!

Once you have the coveted permit then it's time to get excited! Start talking to as many people as you can who have drawn a permit in the unit or who have sheep hunting experience. Look at as many ram mounts as you can so you can judge them better and if possible, score a few. Rams have certain areas they like to hang out in and will frequent them year after year unless a fire wipes it out. There's a good chance you'll find rams in areas where they have been harvested in the past. It at least gives you a place to start. Most of these units are big country and you could spend several seasons trying to look at all of it. The goal is too narrow it down some. Have at least a plan A to D so if it doesn't work out in one spot you know where you want to go for the next hunt.

Once you have figured out a few areas that might hold sheep, try to make as many scouting trips as possible checking them out. Don't be afraid to look at other country as you are moving. While rams like to hang in these little "ram pockets" they also seem to like to do walk-abouts. It wouldn't be surprising to see a ram in a spot you don't expect. The other thing you are looking for is good glassing spots where you can see lots of country and/or into the areas you have chosen. A good glassing spot for scouting is one that is close (less than a mile) away from a spot you are interested in and lets you see a good piece of country. If possible, it lets you take advantage of the morning and evening light. Always keep your eye peeled for ram tracks and sheep sign. Water, camp sites, and trail access are other important considerations. If you do find a ram while scouting, there is a good chance he will be in the same area come opening day. I spotted my ram weeks before the season and he wasn't 500 yards from where I'd first seen him when I harvested him.

Since sheep seasons are short in Idaho, I always hunt with a sense of urgency. This means getting on the mountain early and staying late. Backpacking helps make this more efficient. It means planning your hunt

so you maximize your time on the mountain in good country and minimize time traveling between locations. Once you have your research and scouting trips completed you can formulate a plan. Logistics will be primary, how are you getting into the unit? Can you drive in? Will you fly in, horseback in, float the river, backpack, or a combination of these? What about supplies and re-supplying? What will it take if you need to change to plan B, C, or D? How will weather, i.e. snow, impact your access in or getting out? If you have limited hunting time, what part of the season will you hunt and how flexible can you be? One of the biggest obstacles in recent years have been the forest fires. Nothing kills your glassing ability like smoke or worse, a fire in your unit! What is your contingency plan for that? Ideally you will have a hunting partner and other support that can be an immense help in the execution and success of your hunt.

Once you are on the mountain, then what? If you found your ram while scouting, it's easy, go back there! If not, then the hunt begins! When I'm glassing an area that I think should hold a ram I like to give it at least two days of hard glassing. I will adjust that depending on the terrain. If it's a timbered canyon or draw with limited visibility I might glass longer, if it's burned off and pretty open then maybe a little less. If I don't see any sheep, then I will start to probe the area by walking the main ridges around the area I'm looking at. If you are looking at the face of a big, long ridge, then I'd walk the top of that ridge looking for ram tracks and listening for rolling rocks, heads butting, or any noise to indicate a critter. I have found rams on numerous occasions doing this. Generally, there will be finger ridges running off the main ridge and I might carefully walk down those as well looking for sign. If you find fresh tracks or even better, beds, then back out immediately and get where you can see the area. You don't want to spook them and have to make a split decision on which ram is the best, better to back out and study them. I have a hard time looking at the same spot for longer than a couple days. I also know a successful sheep guide who will spend a week looking at the same drainage until he sees a ram! Pick what works for you, but do give it as much time as you can.

Remember “Old sheep hunters never die, they just glass away!”

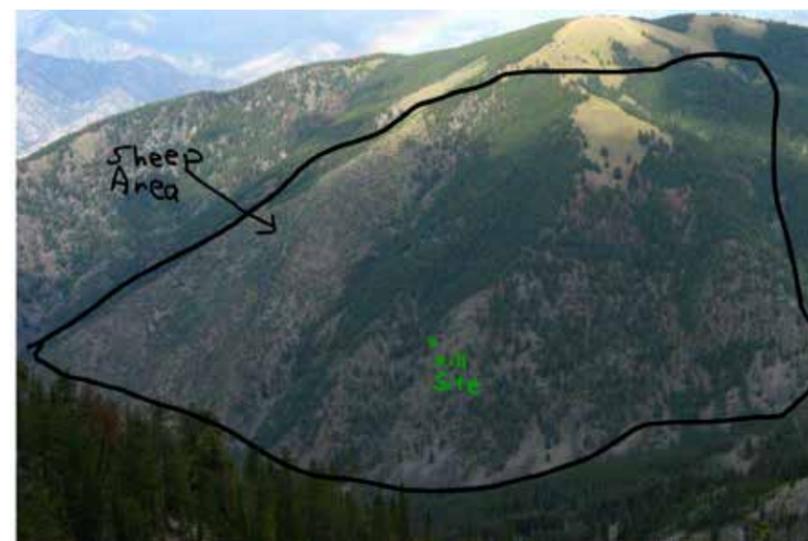
What if you don't have a location to start with and didn't find rams scouting, what kind of country is “sheepy”? Rams like rocks, especially to escape into when threatened, so small cliffs and rock outcroppings are good places to look. Ok, I know I just described 95% of the Middle Fork, so how do you narrow it down? Rams don't need water every day, but they do need water so if you know there is water nearby that helps. However, that is not always obvious. I've seen them drink out of a small seep that was a single little puddle and I didn't find it until we were packing the ram out. They also need to eat, so they will move into old burns, the bases of openings, or the timber to find food, generally out of the rocks. They also like to eat lichen (maybe ask a biologist) or something in the rocks. I've seen where they have pawed out spots in slide rock to find something to eat. You need to glass the heck out of everything, then move a little and glass some more! As you move you are looking for sheep sign. Sometimes you may want to move to another drainage and try again. Like all hunting, sheep are where you find them!

The majority of rams I've seen taken were in an elevation range of approximately 5,500' to 7,000'. However, that isn't a given. I harvested my ram over 8,500'. But in general, in the Middle Fork the rams seem to live in the breaks above the river but off the tops of the highest ridges, usually in an area 1/2 to 3/4's of the way up the mountain. The corollary to that is if it's a big tributary drainage of the Middle Fork they will live in the breaks off that drainage. But again, for everything I'm saying there are exceptions. I know of an area where they will also move up into a burn really far up the canyon and off the river, but it is a spot that has rocks, food, and water. Rams have been killed down by the river as well. Remember a ram can walk to the bottom of the drainage to drink in about 5-10 minutes so even though it would take us 3-4 hours it's a short hike for them. A lot of times you won't pick up sheep first thing in the morning, but I'm still glassing

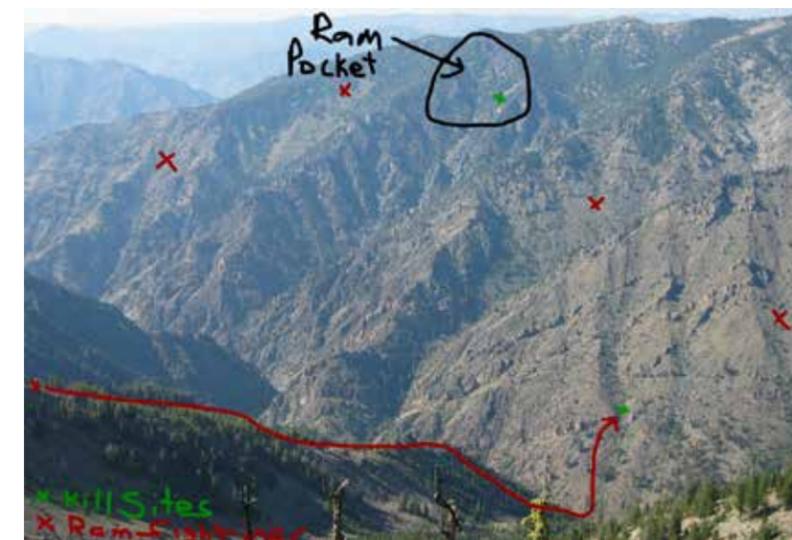
early. They seem to like feeding late in the morning, say 10-10:30, then they bed down. Around noonish they like to get up and stretch, maybe turn around in their beds, or eat a bit. This is a prime time to be on the glass. I'm definitely glassing from 4:30 till dark, it's prime time as well.

Another really important thing I'd like to touch on is the mental aspect of sheep hunting. It can be a discouraging and frustrating endeavor. The size and roughness of the country can be daunting, the weather can get nasty, there are a lot of variables out of your control. It can be tough going day after day busting your butt and not seeing a ram or even ewes! I once went 22 days straight and went through two sheep hunters before I found a ram. And on the first hunt I had three other guides looking as well. Keeping your enthusiasm up and staying positive is critical. Grinding it out when you are tired and discouraged is tough but necessary to be successful. It's no guarantee, but even if you don't get a ram you want to know you gave it your all. Keep in mind hunting is supposed to be fun! I know a fella from last fall that spent over a month backpacking almost his whole unit! He covered close to 200 miles and never got a sheep, but he had an epic hunt and most definitely gave it everything he had! Sheep hunting can change in an instant. You'll go from the lowest low to cloud nine the moment you spot a ram, maybe in a spot you've spent hours or even days glassing!

Finding sheep is primarily about glassing. They can be almost impossible to see one minute and shine like a light the next. I once spotted a ram that was bedded when he turned his head and the sun hit his horns. He was about 1,000 yards away and without that flash I wouldn't have seen him. I knew he was there somewhere and was using my spotting scope to try and locate him before we started the stalk. It's a question of having your optics on the mountain at the moment when the ram lights up. I generally glass the closer



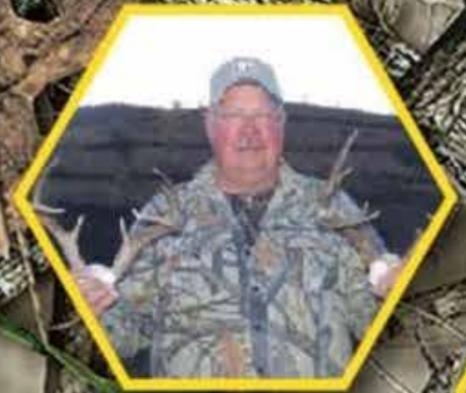
Typical sheep country, notice the rocks down low and the meadows on top. I've seen rams in the meadows and in the timber below on numerous occasions. We harvested a ram down low in the rocks that was bedded in the timber when we started our stalk.



A ram could be found anywhere in this picture. I've marked locations where I've seen rams and we took two rams off this mountain. The lower ram was spotted on the ridge across from us and dropped all the way to the bottom and up to where we killed him (that was a long day!). He joined two other rams we hadn't seen. There is a pocket towards the top of the ridge where they liked to hang out, it has a small spring nearby and good feed in the meadows and timber.

country with a pass on my binoculars and then use the spotting scope for the longer distances working into the closer stuff with it as well. Bedded rams can be really hard to pick up! I use a grid pattern to glass everything I can see. I'll vary it from top to bottom then side to side just to break things up. You want to make yourself as comfortable as possible, I've evolved to using a Crazy Creek chair these days for a glassing pad. You need to be steady and minimize strain on your back or neck. I will use my walking stick to stabilize my binoculars while glassing and some folks like putting their binos on a tripod. Suffice to say the best tool you have are your optics, buy the best you can afford, and spend a LOT of time behind them! I think a quality spotting scope is critical and will spend more time behind it than my binoculars. There are a lot of choices these days when it comes to optics and everyone seems to have a combination they like. I'd recommend binoculars in the 10x42 to 12x50 range. Buy the best spotter you can afford, preferably a 65-80 mm objective and up to a 60x zoom. A quality tripod is a must as well with a smooth solid moving head! Don't scrimp on it. Higher power zooming loses clarity in poor light or smoke and this is where high quality optics really shine!

Remember “Old sheep hunters never die, they just glass away!”



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## GUTS AND DETERMINATION

By Edd S. Woslum

Three frigid mornings in the back of the cruiser were followed each day by some of the most physically exhausting, high temperature, buffalo stalks, in which I have ever participated. Man I must really be getting old. Chasing these over sized, black bovines, is a hell of a lot harder this year than last. Of course trying to keep pace with my 30 year old, Rugby star, PH, Ryan Millwarde, was a very significant factor. Ryan's primary tactic of super long stealthy stalks, followed invariably by a head long, run like hell dash, was both exciting and productive, but thank god I got my dugga boy on the first morning. Memo to self: must do four miles a day of training next year, rather than three. .

Murara camp, Dande South, Zimbabwe, has been my favorite destination for dangerous game for the past nine years. This is Africa at its' best. There are lots of elephants, lions galore, big leopard, and of course plenty of my favorite ungulate on the planet, the Southern African buffalo. The PHs here, are to a man, highly professional, and super competent. The camp itself, thanks to the tender care of Sandy and Gary Schultz, is equal to the performance of the proverbial Swiss watch.

I am at this very moment sitting under Murara's magnificent jackal berry tree, watching the Mopani fire sparkle. With a cold Castle in hand, I was thinking, God, don't let me wake up now. We had earlier presented the professional staff with a bit of an interesting problem, but like the troopers they are, no one even faltered a step, or raised an eyebrow.. "Hey we'll make a plan."

Bob Warren Codrington, a very senior PH, and lifetime gentleman, was to be the buffalo guide for my two buddies, Tim Chestnut and Mike Kody. For the next few days the general plan was to be out of camp before daylight and back to camp around 8 pm. The buffalo were definitely around, but by 11:00 am the temperature was climbing into the high 80s.

By 9:30 each morning every four legged creature in the valley was looking for the thickest, darkest jesse in which to lay up. What was even worse, was that these bedded critters, didn't even move a whisker until about 4 PM. This made for some pretty tough buffalo hunting.

On our first day afield my personal posse consisted of Ryan and Me leading the pack, followed closely by photographer Adam Macintosh, and he was trailed by about 30 meters by my wife Leanne and our grand daughter Ashlei. 30 minutes after daylight we were slowly idling through the Kamasoro area, when we made visual contact with a small band of buff. For the next four and a half hours we played cat and mouse with these guys as they strolled in and out of the scrub thorn.

For this entire time they were never completely out of sight for more than four or five minutes. On Five or six different occasions we had fleeting peeks at an old bull and we were determined to stay on this bunch clear to Mozambique if necessary.

On three heart thumping drills, Ryan actually planted the sticks for a shot. During one of these exciting moments he whispered, "can you see him there quartering away from us?" "Yes." "Do you have a decent shot?" "No." "OK, they're moving again, let's go". By 9.00 AM it was 80 degrees plus and by 10:00 we were following the meandering herd in a dry creek bed, where the reflecting sun off the rocks kicked the heat factor even higher. On about the sixth of these close encounters with the now sprawled out herd, our old boy was standing broadside behind two young bulls. "Wait until he steps clear," hissed my PH. "Are you OK with an off hand shot from here?" Asks he. "NO. Well, maybe but don't really want to." Down go the sticks and up goes the .400. Three times the bull moved and three times Ryan repositioned the long shooting cheaters. "OK, there going to move out again.

He's the one with the ox pecker on his back. The .450/.400 jumped back from the sticks and it was over. What a fantastic ending to a most memorable stalk.

As we had a total of three hunters and two PHs in camp, there was absolutely no pause whatsoever in the pursuit of game. Load up the bull, grab a quick lunch and get back in the bush. I really like the way these guys operate. By 3:00 PM our other group had had multiple contacts with buff. These were also hot and dusty marches but unlike my lucky venture, no shots were fired.

The next day again found us in the Kamasoro area. Late in the afternoon we had a visual on a dust cloud that left no doubt as to what was creating it. With the speed of heat Kody, Ryan and Mcintosh were out of the rig and on a dead run. Being of a bit sounder judgment, I elected to lounge leisurely in the cruiser and savor my previous days hunt. Right at dark they returned to report that they had been within spitting distance of the herd several times but just couldn't get a clean shot. As we were standing around the truck rehashing the day's events and contemplating the beckoning castles in the cooler, we heard the unmistakable thump of a big gun way off in the distance.

For all the jumping and shouting, you would have thought that Zimbabwe had just won the world cup. This was all for very good reason. In the manic state of the moment I couldn't help but flash back over the past three years and the dramatic events that had transpired en route to the present. In 2005 my friend and practicing pulmonary specialist, Dr. Timothy Chestnut, had previously ordered a couple of very special custom rifles from our company in Idaho. We had just completed his long range rifle in .300 Remington Ultra Mag., and Tim had come to our place to test it out.

Tim, in addition to being a bona fide gun nut, is also an exuberant, over hill and dale type pursuer of four legged critters. That evening over a rather dark and cold amber liquid the discussion rapidly came around to dangerous game and the myriad of calibers now available for such pursuit. Tim had just read Kevin Robertson's, perfect shot and he was intrigued by our new .400 Tembo caliber, as described in the book.



Dr. Tim Chestnut showing off his new leg

Before the evening was over we had plotted out the details of his proposed new dangerous game rifle, and had made

tentative plans for an African buffalo hunt in 2008. Tim's only reservation about the proposed trip, was regarding an injury he had received to his ankle in 2005. He had however, recently completed two rather extensive elk and sheep hunts, and he had been able to tough it out without too much misery. I was sure he would be just fine for a Zimbabwe buffalo hunt two years hence.

Buffalo hunting in the Zambezi Valley is not exactly on the physical level of a mountain sheep hunt but can nonetheless include some four to six hour pretty strenuous jaunts over creek beds, rocks, and jesse bush. It was obvious to me that he was committed to continuing his energetic style of hunting and nothing as mundane as a little physical pain was going to slow him down.



PH Ryan, Dr. Tim, Dr. Mike  
2008, Dande South, Zimbabwe

I didn't see Tim again until the SCI show in 2007. After a brief exchange of pleasantries, the conversation got around to his bad leg and his preparations for our upcoming buffalo hunt. He confessed that the pain had become intense and it was controlling a good part of his life. He then hit me with a statement that was like a physical blow to the chest. "If things continue on this course, I will be forced to quit all the physical activity that I hold so dear; however, I am not going to allow that to happen, I'm going to cut it off." "My God Tim, what are you saying? That's insane." "No", he assured me. "I have discussed it thoroughly with my wife (also a practicing physician) and my buddy Mike Kody (an orthopedic surgeon) I have decided to have it done as soon as I can. During the ensuing months Tim and I had our usual exchanges of hunting and gun data via telephone but no other mention was ever made of his bad leg.

SCI 2008 was again a jam packed affair, with every outfitter, PH and custom gun maker on the planet, in attendance. I was just finishing up with a couple of potential clients, when I looked up and saw Tim and Janet coming down the aisle. Tim and I immediately dived into an exchange of recent hunting anecdotes and I mentioned how much better his leg seemed to be. "Yeah it's a lot better sense I had it cut off." I

looked at him as if he had just told me that Bill Clinton, had been elected governor of Idaho. My expression, no doubt, reflected my shock, as he then raised his right leg and did a quick side kick to the metal stanchion at the corner of the booth. The clang of the metal was quite dramatic.

It seemed like only a blink of an eye and we were actually living the long planned buffalo soiree. As I said previously, on day three Ryan and Kody, along with Mcintosh, had gone on the buff chase, and I, being older and wiser, had stayed behind to work on my Shona lessons with Tichaona ( his name translates to "we shall see). The good Dr. Kody is about 6 ½ feet tall, stays very fit and his "mad dog" type of hunting perfectly fits Ryans exuberance in the bush. Adam had not previously been on one of these "wild man" type bush runs and I somewhat maliciously failed to forewarn him. What the heck he's young and needs a little misery in his life.

Ryan and Kody had been gone about two hours in this Zim style running of the bulls, and as darkness was rapidly approaching, I decided to pull the cruiser forward about a kilometer, in order to save the guys a little distance on the walk back. Big Mistake. No sooner had we relocated the rig, when Tich whispered, ramba wakamira. Without moving

any thing but his chin, Tich indicated that those very large black objects straight ahead may require my immediate attention.

Mira Pano, my Shona friend admonished me. Not to worry, if I had driven another 50 feet forward, I would have been running over buffalo. For the next 20 minutes 150 of the big, black critters meandered by us as if oblivious to the 3,000 pound shiny white thing, with two wide eyed observers sitting in it. Several rather nice old dugga boys, came within 30 meters of our Japanese built, diesel powered, portable hunting blind, without even acknowledging our presence. About five minutes before the hot and thirsty hunting crew returned, the entire bovine mob disappeared into the jesse. We didn't have to say a word to the arriving hunting crew the lingering, musky, dust cloud and pounded down turf spoke volumes. It was at this moment that we heard the memorable thump of Tim's .400 off in the distance.

Back at Murara it was time for a party. The entire staff came out to give hearty makoro koto and maita basa to Tim and Bob, for their job well done. Tim after several buffalo rushes, that would have been a struggle even for a hunter with two good legs, had pulled off a perfect shot with his .400 and was grins on all sides of his face.

Mike had as yet not fired a shot but after two more days of running the bulls, we were again in the Kamasoro and had been on buffalo continuously sense daylight. After a day of being Mr. Lazy I was again in the bush and following close behind my two turbo charged buddies. We had without results, made several attempts on the allusive critters.

After the fourth or fifth stealthy approach on a most weary bull, we did a short end around and came up on him quartering away, at about 65 yards. Ryan gave the nod and the good doctor did his job with his new .375.

As best I can recollect, I have been on 40 some odd, buffalo stalks. Not an amazing amount by PH standards, but quite a few for a stumble around septuagenarian yank. Some of these ventures afield were short and fruitless and some were long drawn out spooring marathons, that made you delirious thinking about that dripping cold castle lager back at camp.

I am very grateful for having a reasonably fit 70 year old body, but some nights after one of these previously mentioned long marches I have on occasion wimped out a bit and stated to my bride (and self) that I hoped it was an easier go on the morrow. This hunt in the Kamasoro was no different. "My goodness I'm tired. My feet are killing me. Maybe I'll just rest up tomorrow." This time however, Leanne set me quite straight, in a hurry; "Hey old man, there is a fellow in the next bungalow that only has one leg and I don't think he is resting up tomorrow. Pull up your big boy pants and get ready to move out.!!" I hate it when she does that, especially when she's right.

This story is dedicated to all those brave and dedicated brothers and sisters of the gun that have overcome their hardships and gone right back into the bush. This dedication is particularly directed to Dr. Timothy Chestnut and Dr. Richard Allan. I wish I had their intestinal fortitude.





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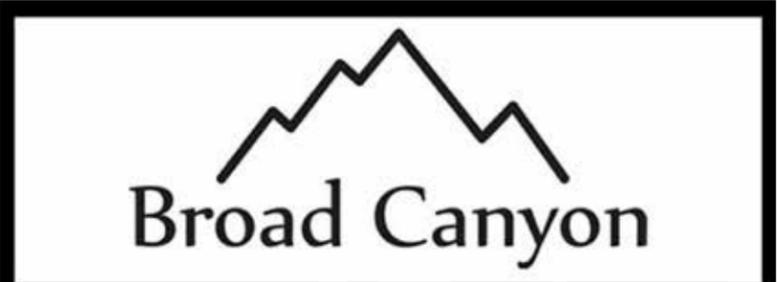
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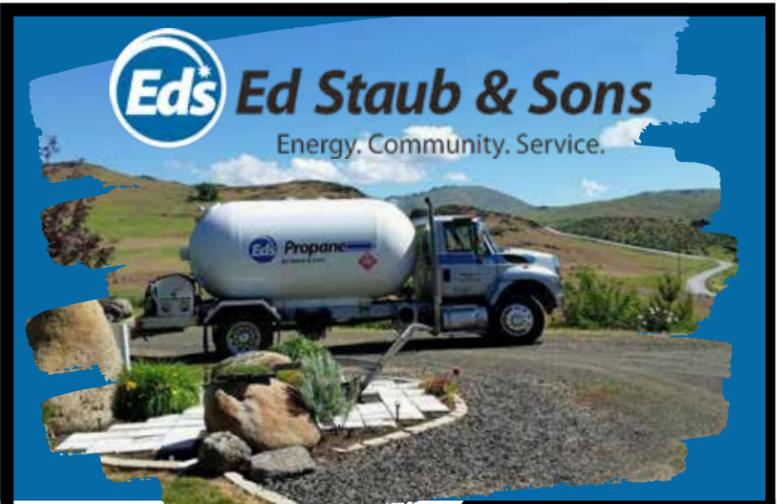


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## The Missouri River Breaks: A Place 'Ewe' Must Experience

by Josh Miller

Montana's Missouri River Breaks are known far and wide amongst sheep hunters and enthusiasts for the big rams they produce. The odds of drawing a ram tag are amongst the worst in the country, with over 5,000 non-residents applying for up to five tags in the various units that make up The Breaks. If you factor in bonus points that MT squares, there are over 600,000 applications for those five tags. A non-resident with no points has about a .0008% chance of drawing, even with 20 points the odds are still only approximately 32%. After a few years of applying, I had the realization that if I wanted to hunt sheep in The Breaks, I'd either need to be REALLY lucky, or get creative. I started researching the ewe hunts and decided to apply for a ewe tag. It actually took me a few years to finally draw a ewe tag. One year I believe the odds were 90% and I still didn't draw, hence why I didn't love the option of hoping to get lucky! But finally, after five years, I drew. I had recently bought a raft and decided that a float trip through The Breaks would fulfill my long-awaited dreams of experiencing that area, as well as help me get away from other hunters for a more enjoyable hunt. Two of

my buddies, Sean and Nate, both decided this trip sounded fun, and wanted to go with me. Let me tell you, it was most definitely a trip we won't soon forget.

I started planning the trip by talking to the biologist for my area about the sheep populations, areas to start with, and type of ewe he would like me to harvest. He was more concerned about the area and said he preferred I harvest one from an area that needed some extra sheep culled. I told him I'd do my best. I talked to several people that have had the tag in the past and got wildly contrasting stories on the difficulty of the hunt, from not filling their tag to shooting a ewe from the river. I hoped for an experience somewhere in between and decided I'd give it a shot with my bow, but take a rifle for back up. We would be taking my raft, my buddy Nate's raft, and borrowed a cataraft for Sean to row. The logistics of hauling all our hunting gear, food, LOTS of beer, and extra cooler/ice for the meat/cafe was something that took a lot more thought and planning than I originally assumed. Between group texts, emails, and an impressive excel spreadsheet, the three of us were ready to go.

Nate and I loaded up all the rafts, dry boxes, coolers, our gear, and headed for Montana to pick up Sean. We spent an hour or so to finish loading all his gear, food, and beer onto my truck and trailer. My ½ ton EcoDiesel was squatting pretty good at this point, but the rig looked pretty professional and not something the Clampetts would have rigged up. We had arranged with one of Sean's buddies to shuttle my truck so we dropped off keys late Friday night then headed for put-in on the river. We got to the put-in around 1 am, pitched camp, and slept for a few hours. We woke up fairly early and laid eyes on the famed Missouri Breaks for the first time. They did not disappoint! We loaded up the rafts, parked the truck, mixed up some Bloody Mary's in my Idaho WSF cups, and shoved off. The river was below average for this time of year due to the severe drought, but we were making better time than I had been planning on. After a few hours, we stopped to eat lunch and glass. We started finding sheep immediately. One group was in a very good spot for stalking with a bow so we made camp for the night and watched them, formulating a plan for the following day.

We got up early and Nate shuttle us across the river so we could put a stalk on the sheep. Nate would go down river to glass and scout ahead. Sean and I crept into what I thought would be the perfect spot, with good cover from some boulders, that would have been a simple 30-yard chip shot to where they had bedded down the previous day. We sat and waited for hours when suddenly I looked down below me in the sage brush flat; there were two ewes and a ram staring at me 80 yards away. After a staring match for a few minutes, they bolted and went for the tops of the hills. Being the first day and just a few miles into the 50-mile float, we decided they wouldn't be coming back down any time soon, so we packed up camp and went down river.

While making our way to the next planned camp spot, I spotted a large group of ewes above the river feeding over a saddle. The area had lots of trees and topography to make for some good bow hunting. We quickly found a good camp spot on an island, set up camp, and glassed the rest of the afternoon. I knew we were in a good spot when I found sheep tracks on the island and sheep trails all over the hills above camp. Just as we were about to go to bed the wind started picking up. Suddenly, we got hit with a little microburst that flattened Nates tent and started pulling stakes out of the ground on mine and Sean's tents. We secured our tents with dry boxes on top of the guy line stakes. Nate crawled into his flattened tent, aka





the jumbo bevy, and we went to sleep.... kind of. The rain, wind, and sand blowing into all our tents did not make for a very good night's sleep.

We got up early the next morning, and after breakfast I went towards where we last saw the sheep to set up and glassed, while Sean and Nate worked to fix Nate's tent. Afterwards they went down river to glass. I sat in an awesome spot all morning, but never saw anything. I decided to check out the backside of where we'd seen the sheep the day before, but struck out there too. I decided to move back to my original glassing spot early in the afternoon in hopes of seeing the sheep coming back to the river to drink, but again, no luck. On my way back to camp, as it was getting dark, I looked across the sage flat and saw some sheep backs in the sage brush! I ducked down and used a little draw and some tall brush for cover to work my way closer. I got to 40 yards from them and found that they were all rams. I continued watching them for a while and took a few pictures before they wended me and climbed up out of the bottom into some rock faces. All in all, another good day but no shot at a ewe.

The next day Nate decided to go with me while Sean scouted a different area. We found a group of ewes on top of a hill and sat and watched them awhile. They started trickling down some cuts towards the bottom. When the last one was out of sight, we made our way across the flat and up to my glassing nob to check the face above the river. There were no sheep to be found, so we made our way around the hill

towards the group of sheep we watched earlier that morning. We made our way into the bottom and slowly started creeping up the bottom of the wash. As I crept behind a juniper tree I looked up and saw a lamb staring at me 100 yards away. I ducked down slowly, but it was too late. The group of ewes knew something was up and moved up the hill, and further up the draw. I knew the adults never saw us and didn't want to bump them, so we backed out of the draw to set up for the day, overlooking a lot of country. Later that afternoon a different group of ewes began feeding over the top of the saddle and coming our way. I left Nate and made my way back down into the draw and up the drainage. I crept even slower and more cautiously. The wind was perfect, blowing in my face. I saw the group of ewes coming towards me, so I hunkered down in the limbs of a juniper tree, nocked an arrow and waited. I waited for what seemed like hours, but nothing came down where I expected them to come. I got up and crept my way a little further up the hill, the group of sheep had vanished. Dejected, I went back and talked to Nate. He had lost track of them too, when they fed into a small cut. Assuming they had crossed the drainage to climb up to their evening bedding spots, we decided to back out of the area to avoid being spotted. Back at camp we talked about the plan for the next day. We were almost half way through our trip, with only 13 miles of the 37 to go. As much as I wanted to kill a ewe with my bow, I decided it was more prudent to get down river so Sean could hunt a day or two for elk. I decided that we would go back the next morning where we found the group of ewes, with my rifle in hand.

Morning came; we woke early, made coffee, ate some oatmeal, and crossed the river to the sage flat. Just before we got to where we were going to set up and glass, Sean looked up and saw sheep on top of the hills above us. I threw down my pack and picked up my binoculars. There were several ewes staring down at us. I could see one had longer horns than the others, checked for nuts, seeing none, I stood my pack up, put my rifle across the top and laid down for a very steep uphill shot. I squeezed the trigger and heard the sound every hunter knows to be a positive hit! She took off running down the hill and around the corner. Sean took off running to put eyes on her. I got up, grabbed my pack and rifle, and I was right on his heels. There was a ewe standing broadside up on the hill. I asked Sean if that was her, he replied it was and could see blood. I laid my pack on top of his pack and settled in for another shot. I squeezed off another shot but nothing happened. Sean said I hit her, but she was still standing. I chambered another round and put the crosshairs behind her shoulder and squeezed one last time. This time she went tumbling down the hill. Thankfully, she finally stopped just above a cliff. We made our way up to her; she was in a little bit of a tough spot so we tied some rope to her and lowered her off the cliff to a wider spot below. She had a beautiful coat and appeared to be one of the larger ewes we'd seen, with 11" horns. Not only was she a large mature ewe without a lamb, we were also in the area the biologist hoped we'd harvest in. I felt like the objective of the tag was met for Montana game managers; keep the herd population in check to avoid disease issues, without compromising the breeding stock of the herd. We took pictures and got to work, which was very quick and easy with three guys. It wasn't a very long or hard pack out back to our camp. Once at camp we cooked up a big pancake brunch, and I busted out the bottle of Willie's Bighorn Bourbon to celebrate our accomplishment.

I got exactly what I had hoped for in the hunt. It wasn't easy like some have had; it wasn't tag soup like others had. I had several good stalks and close encounters with my bow. While I didn't kill my ewe with a bow, I am still ecstatic with the hunt. We spent the next three days floating out in some of the most incredible sheep country. We even found a few great rams along the way. The trip was an amazing adventure with great friends, great food, lots of beer, capped off with a notched tag, and freezer full of meat. It was a great reminder for me on what hunting is really about; experiencing new and wild places with friends, the challenge of planning and hunting in a new area, and to cap it all off with the delicious meat provided by a successful hunt. I would definitely recommend this hunt if you want to experience

the Missouri River Breaks with a sheep tag in your pocket. Ewe won't regret it!





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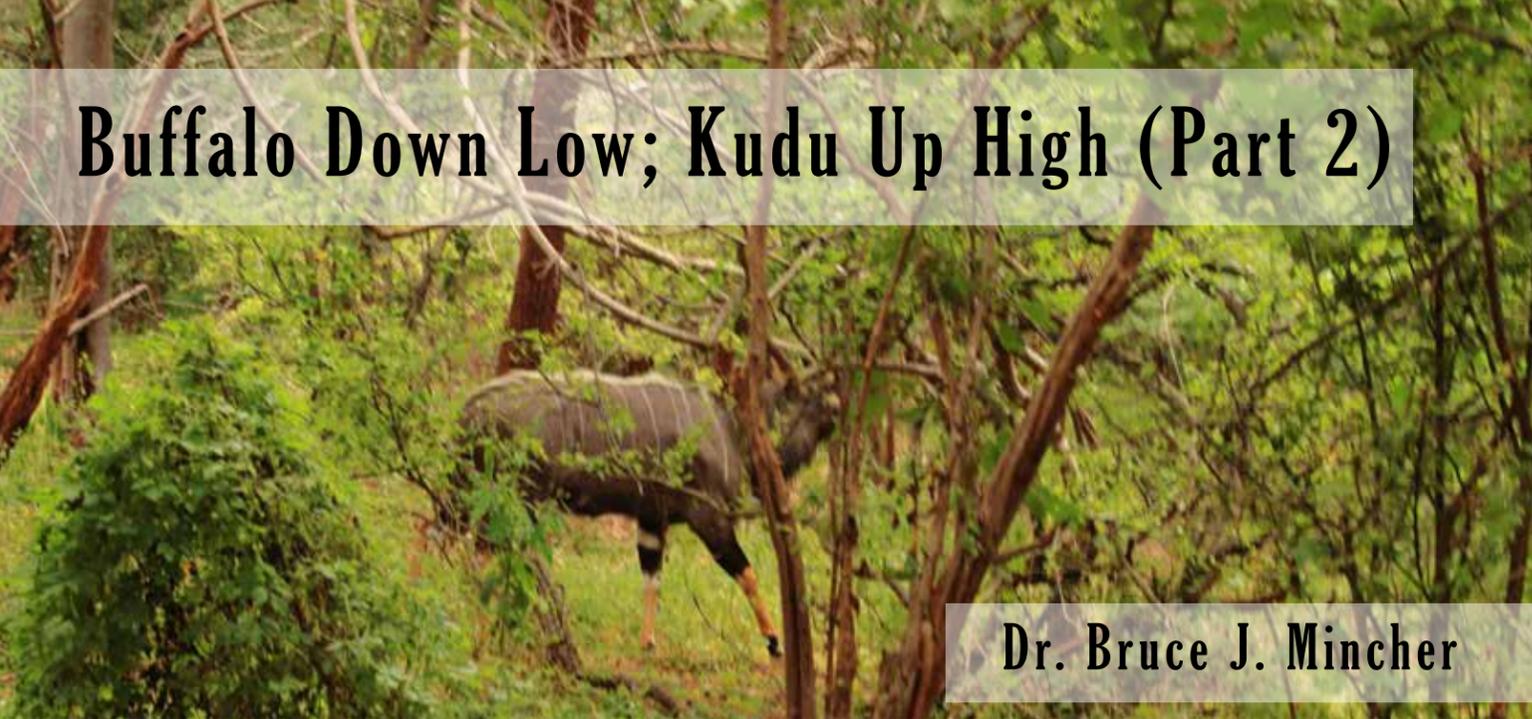
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# Buffalo Down Low; Kudu Up High (Part 2)



Dr. Bruce J. Mincher

## PART 2

Editor Note: This exciting story of Bruce and his son Erik hunting with Trompetersfontein Safaris is in two parts. In the last issue was the “Buffalo Down Low”, this issue features the “Kudu Up High” portion.

We had pursued buffalo with Trompetersfontein safaris in the Lowveld; that hot, tangled environment full of thorns and ticks and big, black grumpy cows and bulls. Next Trompetersfontein’s Highveld property for kudu and nyala; two of that family of regal-looking, spiral horned antelopes.

Before heading across the Drakensberg to hunt the Highveld, Elgim and Steven gave us a day tour of Kruger. The park is huge, as big as a country. One day doesn’t even put a dent in it. And if Steven and Elgim are sick of taking tourists there it didn’t show. They seemed to enjoy it too and they imparted their knowledge of South Africa’s natural history to two visitors from Idaho’s equally wild but totally different ecosystem. We were fortunate to see lions, kudu, hippos, genuine hundred-pound elephant bulls; those grand old patriarchs of Kruger, and of course many more buffalo. We also saw my favorite birds, the huge, colorful and prehistoric-looking ground hornbills. With red faces and big heavy bills I never get enough of them.

But then it was again time to put down the camera and take up the rifle and, leaving Steven behind at Hoedspruit, we were off to Trompetersfontein’s bushveld property. Formerly a cattle ranch, they now ranch for wildlife, an example of the ben-

efits of sport hunting to wildlife conservation. The property ranges from semi-open grassy parks in the uplands, to thick, tangled bush in the lowlands. I hunted with Elgim, seeking the elusive nyala in the lowlands, while Erik hoped for a big kudu in the highlands with PH Marius Moolman. Searching the relatively open bushveld can be problematic, anything the hunter can see, can see him back! Again, I didn’t have the fortune to be with Erik when he scored. Marius spotted an excellent bull at about 200 yards that had not seen them first, and the stalk was on. The stalk is what makes the hunt. Long shots require their own skill, but in Africa, the game is always about stalking in close for a sure thing. Every effort is expended to avoid wounding losses. Besides, it’s the stalk that makes the hunt exciting and memorable. The phantoms of the bush, kudu aren’t easy to sneak up on at the best of times. Erik and Marius crept as quietly as possible from bush to bush while the kudu was feeding, with Marius frequently checking the wind direction.



When the bull stepped behind some bushes at about 120 yards they went in even closer, minding each step and moving very slowly as they approached their quarry. Marius set up the sticks at about 70 yards and now they waited for a clean shot. Finally the kudu took a few steps into the open and Erik made another great shot right on the shoulder. The bull bounded off and piled up within 30 yards. He has tall and deep curls, and now graces Erik’s den. It is a beautiful trophy and the souvenir of a hunt well hunted. Meanwhile, I had a nyala to deal with. These are the graceful and shy lesser cousins of the robust kudu, and the first time I spied a female in the bush I thought I had spotted a striped, orange kudu cow. With females around we had high hopes of finding a bull. Elgim and I walked every day, early and late, because nyala are not found at mid-day. Instead, they lie up in the thickest bush possible, remaining hidden within their strongholds until the twilight hours. Like apparitions they appear only at dusk and dawn and if the hunter is just lucky enough they are sometimes vulnerable during those short hours.

After three, exhausting days on our feet in the heat, one evening we sat watching a waterhole. The trail camera had revealed that a nyala bull had been visiting this water at dusk the last several evenings. We waited patiently hidden, breathing the smell of a smoldering zebra turd that Elgim was burning to hide our scent. A few gemsbok come to the water while the sun was still high, but the light was fading and nothing was happening. The hunt seemed over, until Elgim stiffened slightly, peering into the shadows with his binoculars. “Here he is,” he warned quietly. I could see nothing until the slightly darker shape in the dark shadows was described to me. I could see an animal-shaped dark spot, but that’s all I could say that it was. “That’s him,” said Elgim. “Take him.”

I hit the bull a little too far behind the shoulder. He hunched up but took only a few steps and did not run. But those few steps hid him in the dark and I simply could not see well enough to shoot again. This delay allowed him to melt away into the black bush. Into the darkness we followed, now looking for a wounded bull. I really didn’t want it to end like this, but fortunately Elgim would work his African PH magic, and he found that nyala in the thickness of the night. I did recover him, with the stars now shining brightly, and he’s a simply beautiful bull. All’s well as ends well.

Here in Idaho we are fortunate to live in some of North America’s great game country. But there are other great game countries that shouldn’t be ignored by those who love the hunt. Depending on where you are in southern Africa there are up to thirty species of game, each with its own beauty, habits, habitats and challenges. It’s good to see the national parks too, but as hunters we get to see those truly special and remote places, less traveled and trampled, the places that the camera-toting eco-tourists don’t get to see. And our hunting keeps these places just as wild as the Parks. Long may the international hunter continue to benefit the great continent of Africa and its amazing and diverse fauna.

Contact Trompetersfontein Safaris at;  
Trompetersfontein@gmail.com  
www.trompetersfontein.com



# IDAHO WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT FUND

By Don Colter, Idaho WSF Treasurer

**T**he Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation has a simple, yet complex purpose: To Put and Keep Wild Sheep on the Mountain.

Idaho WSF has grown over the years to become one of premier sportsmen led wildlife conservation organization in Idaho and one of the most successful chapters of the national Wild Sheep Foundation. Our efforts have allowed the chapter to participate in critical conservation efforts that include protection of key habitat and sheep research programs. Partial list of those accomplishments is at the end of this article.

To enhance the ongoing conservation efforts of Idaho WSF, the chapter is in the process of establishing an endowment fund. (Not yet named) The goal of the endowment is to create the ability to contribute to sheep conservation for the long-term, for future generations.

The principal contributions to the endowment are not spent but are invested with the profit/interest income each year available to be utilized for conservation efforts. The endowment will be administered by a board of trustees separate from the officers of the chapter; however, some trustees may be chapter officers.

An endowment is a financial bedrock that will live in perpetuity. The endowment fund is separate from the Idaho WSF general operations, however the purpose is in concert with the chapter, To Put and Keep Wild Sheep on the Mountain.

Gifts to an endowment can take many forms:

- Cash
- Stocks and bonds
- IRAs and 401Ks
- Life insurance
- Real estate
- Trusts

Gifts may be done in several ways:

- Direct gift
- Insurance beneficiary
- Bequests

Giving to an endowment can have significant tax advantages.

More details will be coming soon. We wanted to let the membership know what is happening and ask for input on the process. If you have any questions, please contact us at [info@idahowildsheep.org](mailto:info@idahowildsheep.org).

The Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation has grown and been an integral part of sheep conservation. Please consider furthering the purpose of the chapter: To Put and Keep Wild Sheep on the Mountain.

Preserve Bighorn Sheep Habitat

- Ten Mile Creek Ranch: \$10,000 Matching grant for a Conservation Easement. Vital lambing area for the Hells Canyon bighorn sheep population.
  - Redbird Land Purchase: Hells Canyon bighorn habitat transferred to IDFG. 2008-2013 \$39,500
- Reducing Risk of Contact Between Domestic and Wild Sheep Domestic Sheep Domestic by Converting to Cattle or Buying Sheep Grazing Allotments
- Ball Brothers Ranch: Committed \$75,000 to convert their ranch and the allotments from sheep to cattle.
  - Lost River Range: In 2002 Idaho WSF financially assisted Sulphur Creek Ranch convert six allotments and Mays Land and Livestock convert three allotments. As a result, Bighorn sheep populations have increased and expanded in distribution, allowing an increase in

hunting opportunity. In 2000 there was one hunt unit and three permits; in 2019, there are five hunt units and 13 permits.

Advocate for Bighorn Sheep with Federal Agencies

- Mountain Home AFB Airspace Optimization Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS): Idaho WSF, Oregon FNAWS and several Nevada affiliates submitted co-signed input.

- Washington DC Fly-In: Idaho WSF Board members Zach Higgins and Bruce Mincher met with congressional delegates on bighorn issues.

- Wildlife Roadway Project: Idaho WSF and the Idaho Wildlife Federation submitted a co-signed letter of support for the Wildlife Roadway project.

Improving Bighorn Habitat

- Idaho Guzzler Project: 2007 and 2014: \$24,802.09
- Donation to Fraternity of Desert bighorn (FDB) Emergency Fund \$20,000 to transport water to Nevada wildlife guzzlers during the 2021 drought.

Bighorn Survey Assistance

- 2021 Lower Salmon River and North Fork/Panther Cr area Sheep collaring: Volunteers from Idaho WSF assisted IDFG with a bighorn sheep capture-test-collar operations. Idaho WSF chartered a jet boat for four days.

- Big Creek Bighorn Sheep Survey: Volunteers from Idaho WSF assisted IDFG with a bighorn sheep ground survey in the Big Creek drainage.

- Lamb survival study in the Owyhee's. 2007, 2009 and 2015: \$4,360.35 with IDFG

These are only a small sample of the conservation efforts taken on by Idaho WSF.



Photo credit: Victor Clark



Photo credit: Morgan Westby



# WAYS TO GIVE



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[www.fishandwildlife.org](http://www.fishandwildlife.org)





## NOMINATIONS FOR THE IDAHO WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS ARE BEING ACCEPTED

The deadline for nominations is January 31st, 2022.  
Nominations may be mailed to P.O. Box 8224, Boise, 83707  
or emailed to [info@idahowildsheep.org](mailto:info@idahowildsheep.org)

Idaho WSF Bylaws state:  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

### Section II Election and Term of the Board of Directors

Each Director shall be elected for a term of two (2) years, with half of the board being elected each year for staggered terms.

Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM MST. Board members may attend meetings in person or by Zoom video call.

Participation in one or more of the following committee's: Banquet, Fundraising, Conservation, Marketing/ Membership, Social Media/Website, Lottery, Journal, and Outreach.

Board members must abide by the Idaho WSF board member code of ethics.

For copies of the bylaws and code of ethics, please contact the Idaho WSF office at 345-6171.

I would like to nominate \_\_\_\_\_  
for the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation Board of Directors.

(Please feel free to copy this form and nominate as many people as you would like. Self-nominations are also encouraged)

PLEASE ENCLOSE A BIO OF THE NOMINEE FOR THE BALLOT!

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Kyle Lamb with his 178 6/10-inch Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep from the Frank Church Wilderness in Idaho. Credit Kyle Lamb



## Sheep of a Lifetime: Kyle Lamb Tags Idaho Bighorn

By Matt Smythe

This story first appeared in Free Range American, September 24, 2021.

**K**yle Lamb won the lottery this year, in a manner of speaking. For more seasons than he can remember, he's played the game and come up empty-handed. This year, though, Lamb drew a coveted non-resident Idaho bighorn sheep tag and was headed to the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness to fill it.

A die-hard archery elk hunter and decorated Special Forces veteran who fought in the Battle of Mogadishu, Lamb is no stranger to hard work under extreme conditions in unforgiving locations. He welcomed the fact that he was in for soul-grinding climbs, brutal descents, and impossibly long stalks, possibly with no full-curl payoff.

### LUCK OF THE DRAW



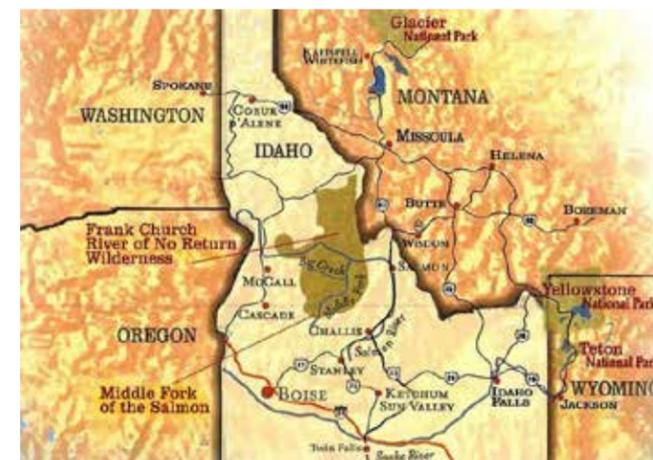
The landscape of the Frank Church Wilderness is breathtaking in its rugged beauty and its ability to kick your ass. Kyle Lamb

Big game states like Idaho, Wyoming, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, and even Nebraska hold lotteries for a finite number of tags. Idaho's lottery system for bighorn sheep is different from other states because there are no preference points or bonus points. There is a distinction, however, between resident and non-resident hunters. A smaller percentage of tags are available for non-resident hunters, which means tougher odds of drawing a tag. You pay your money and take your chances.

There were only 76 tags available for Rocky Mountain bighorn in Idaho this year and 16 tags for Sierra Nevada sheep (formerly known as California sheep). Both are sub-species of bighorn sheep.

In Idaho, you're only allowed to kill one of each in your lifetime.

### WAITING GAME



"The Frank" is located in "God's country" near Challis National Forest in north-central Idaho. Idaho Wilderness Company

Base camp for the hunt was a 6-mile downhill hike from the trailhead. They spent the first few days on ridgelines and rocky outcroppings glassing for movement; only one mule deer was spotted. Early on the morning of their fourth day, Lamb and his guide, Kyle Allen, climbed back up to a ridgeline about 1,000 yards above camp where they had set up a spike camp and split up to glass the valley for movement in the morning sun.

"I sat down with my walking stick and my binos on top of them for some support. I started glassing, and oh man, there's another mule deer. I watched him for a while, and I thought, that animal just doesn't move like a mule deer. Now I'm no sheep expert. I'm not. I'm not a sheep hunter. I'm an elk hunter. But I kept staring and really wanted to make him a sheep. All of a sudden, he walks up onto a little knoll and steps into the sun. Even from as far away as I was, there was no doubt that it was a bighorn ram."

Lamb found Allen and got him looking at the spot where he last saw the sheep. Of course, he wasn't there. But then Allen found the animal, and then another.

"Right in the shadows by one of these rockslides, one of the big-horns that had laid down in the shade, he was able to glass him up in the spotter. Allen said, 'Oh yeah, there's another one over there.' By the end of it, we had five of them in the glass."



A simple lean-to, ground mat, sleeping bag, some chow, and the right outerwear make a simple and effective backcountry overnight camp. Kyle Lamb

Now that they had sheep, it was time to make a move. Lamb and his guide packed up all their gear and humped back to base-camp, where they were able to get eyes on the sheep once again and put them to bed that night. They had a good base camp meal and racked out.

After a short dawn hike to a glassing spot, they located the group and culled their gear to the bare essentials for the brutal climb they had ahead. The main guide in camp stated the obvious: Gonna have to get above them.

"I'm looking at this mountain, saying, 'I'm sick of climbing these hills,'" he laughs. "I'm a flatlander from South Dakota."

#### LAMB CLOSES THE DISTANCE ON SHEEP



Back at camp after a full day – or days – of hiking, sometimes the boots need some extra attention. Kyle Lamb

An almost 3,000-foot climb put the two at the same altitude as the sheep, and they set up camp. They didn't get eyes on the sheep but felt confident that their position was good. The next day was spent watching for any sort of movement and hoping the sheep would feed their way through. Nothing.

The next morning, they broke camp and moved farther above where they had last seen the sheep from the valley. There's no rushing a stalk like this with so much to lose. Bighorns are not easy-to-find animals in the first place, and they're damn near impossible to get back on if they bust you and bolt. The two set up shelter and spent one more night, planning on making a move down into them first thing in the morning.

"We knew where we'd seen them," he said. "We had to get back in that vicinity. It's really steep, and we're thinking that we're still probably a little bit high, so we start working our way down until we finally get eyes on them. We're within about 400 yards of these rams — and they're above us."

Lamb knew his max range limit was 750 yards, so he was very confident at this distance. He snuck into a position to set up.

Lamb on dawn patrol glassing for bighorn across the valley. Sheep hunting takes a lot of looking through optics, and a lot of coffee to keep you awake. Kyle Lamb



"Every single rock there is sharp. So, I'm trying to get my little piece of Thermarest in place to sit on. I see them kind of playing around on this hillside and then the wind shifted from behind us and blew right up in this little canyon. I didn't know how spooky they were going to be, but they just disappeared."

The terrain on these rocky mountainsides plays hell with visibility because there is so much ragged stone. Moves as small as a few feet in any direction can drastically change the entire field of view. Lamb backed out of his spot and retreated 30 yards up their side of a small ridge to where he and Allen had dropped their gear.

They figured that the rams slid into the canyon just opposite them, so they moved as carefully as possible to get a look.

"All of a sudden, we saw them. There were three shooters and two banana horns, you know, just young rams. Again, I'm not a sheep hunter, but two of them were very good, and one of them was really, really good. He looked old. He was broomed off and had a bad leg. We couldn't figure out what was wrong with him, but he had a little bit of a limp."



In terrain like this, spotting animals takes some serious focus. Can you see the ram in this image? It was one of the smaller of the group. Kyle Lamb

"There was a distinct difference between number one, number two, and number three. So number one kept his mass all the way down and around in his curl. He actually looked thicker down the horn than he was at the base, which is crazy."

Lamb pulled out his SIG Sauer CROSS in 6.5 Creedmoor topped with Leupold VX-6 2x12 glass, chambered a Hornady 143-grain ELD-X, and settled into his rest. Allen ranged the ram at 220 yards.

"At 220 yards, there's no dial-in. I needed to hold about one minute high. 6.5 Creedmoor is still pretty flat at 200 yards. I didn't want to be cocky because whenever you get cocky, that's when you screw stuff up. I checked everything, tried to look to see if there was any bad wind, but it was 200 yards so even a pretty significant wind isn't going to do much.

"So, I cracked off a round and had a very good wallop sound come back. I saw the sheep jump forward and then he disappeared, but I heard all these rocks falling, and it was just total mayhem. We heard the rocks and the shale falling below us and I thought, 'Well, that's a dead sheep.' I mean, all that racket, that's got to be a dead sheep."

They packed their gear, and Lamb kept his rifle out for the slow scramble to the bottom of the shale slide.

#### ZERO TO HERO ON THE BIGHORN OF A LIFETIME

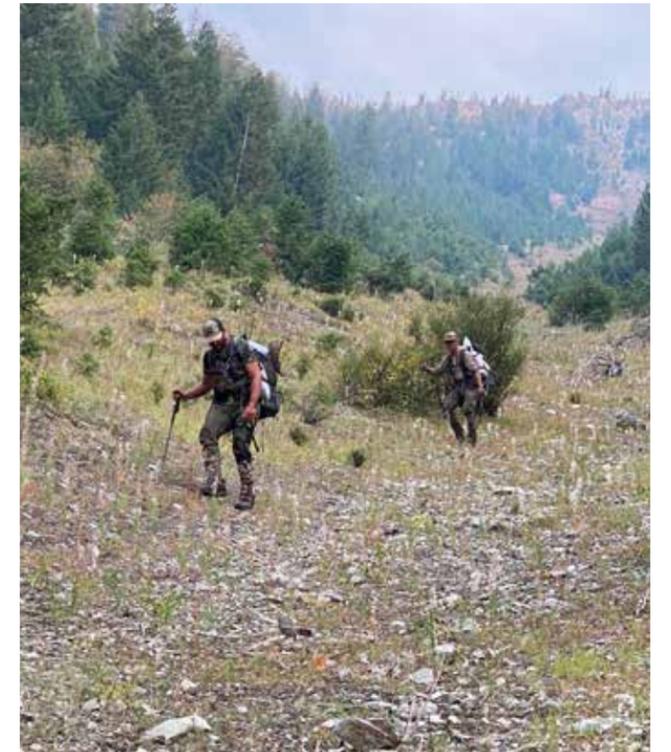


Just look at the mass on that old warrior. There's no doubt that he was king of the mountain in his prime. Kyle Lamb

Almost every hunter has had that moment where they walk up to the spot that their arrow, slug, or bullet was supposed to have hit its target and put the animal down, only to find nothing, or worse, evidence of a gutshot. Lamb and his guide were in the thick of that moment.

"I'm looking around and seeing a little bit of disturbed shale but there's not a drop of blood. The guide started climbing up to where I shot the ram and I was working my way up a different line just looking for anything. I get up to him, and he says there are guts up there. I'm thinking you got to be kidding me. I felt great about my shot, but man, anything can happen. I mean, we've been up here a long time. Even if you think it's perfect, you just never know what can go cattywampus on you.

"So I thought at that point that I gutshot this thing. So we started walking down this drainage because if this joker's hurt, he's gonna keep going downhill. Sure enough, those tracks just kept going down and down, and then they cut across the hill. So I cut with the tracks. Kyle kept going farther down. We slowly worked our way down to a spring and, man, I was just heartbroken. I thought I'd find this joker just balled up down there and that'd be it."



If the ascents don't crush you, the descents will finish the job. Packing the ram off the mountain. Kyle Lamb

After a satellite message with the head guide told them to just leave him be and go back in the morning with more men, Lamb and Allen decided to take one more run up to where they last had blood. A 2-hour climb brought them back to just below the outcropping that the ram was standing on.

“I was looking up at this cliff and thinking, how the heck am I even going to get up there to where he was standing? I’m gonna have to drop my pack to crawl up there or something. I was about to do that and I heard [Allen] say, Hey, man, I found something up here.”

His guide had gone all the way around this knoll and was well above Lamb. There was a rock slide on the other side of where the ram was shot, but when the men first passed through, they hadn’t tried crawling up higher.

“When I shot he made two jumps and dropped at the top of that rock slide, 15 yards from where I shot him to where he laid. I got up to [Allen] and saw this thing laying up in the rocks and it looked like a dinosaur. This joker was just such a huge, huge ram. I went from zero to hero really quick.”

KYLE LAMB’S SHEEP



Lamb proudly displays the unbelievable horns from his 10-year-old Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. Kyle Lamb

The old warrior’s horns were broomed at the ends, and all of his teeth were gone. As for his limp, one of his hooves was still busted up from an old injury. He taped out at 178 6/8 inches and was estimated to be about 10 years old. Another guide had made his way from camp up to them and helped cape, quarter, and pack the old ram out.

“At one point there we were huffing and puffing and standing there and my guide — he’s like a 25-year-old kid — said, ‘You know stuff like this, these make great memories when you’re suffering like this.’ I said, ‘Hey, bro, check it out. I’ve had enough of these great memories,’” Lamb said. “I’m at the point where I don’t need any more suffering for great memories.”

As far as his favorite hunts go — and he’s been on more trips than he can count — Lamb said this is definitely in his top five.

“I don’t like the word ‘epic.’ But this was truly epic.”

For more epic hunting stories like this, visit [freerangeamerican.us](http://freerangeamerican.us).



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# 2021 OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

## MIKE & LINDA FOSTER



Idaho WSF Board member Mike Schlegel (r) presenting the 1st Annual Outstanding Achievement Award to Mike & Linda Foster

Mike and Linda Foster, wildlife biologists on the Lost River Ranger District, Salmon/Challis National Forest.

The Lost River Ranger District was picked to run the “Risk of Contact Analysis” model for the U. S. Forest Service’s Region 4. Linda and Mike worked tirelessly to ensure that grazing allotment data, was accurate and in a usable format.

They also worked with State Fish and Game departments in Wyoming, Idaho, Utah and Nevada to collect and organize the wild sheep observation records that would be needed in the analysis. Once the observation was finalized for each state, Linda used the Risk of Contact model to generate “Core Herd” ranges.

With this data, Linda and Mike delineated Core Herd ranges for all of the wild sheep herds in all four states. The Core Herd ranges were then used to compare proximity to domestic sheep allotments and the risk each posed to adjacent wild sheep populations. Once finalized, the Risk of Contact values were used to identify domestic sheep allotments that posed a risk to wild sheep.

Of the 61 domestic sheep allotments identified as potential causes of disease transmission between domestic sheep and wild sheep, 60 of them have been successfully mitigated.

This has allowed bighorn herds to recover from recurring disease exposure, to gain long term herd health, resulting in more wild sheep on the mountains and more hunting opportunities for your members.

The increase in bighorns and tags in Game Management Unit 37 is a result of their work!

None of this would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of Linda and Mike Foster.



IDAHO  
WILD SHEEP



OUTSTANDING  
ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD

In recognition of significant contribution to the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation in its efforts to foster and enhance bighorn sheep populations throughout Idaho.

This award to be presented to an individual and/or group to whom the Board of Directors of the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation deems such recipients are deserving. Said award shall be presented during the appropriate annual banquet. Also, this award is not an annual award, rather, an award presented only when significant contribution recognized and approved by the Board of Directors.

Nominations are welcome from Idaho WSF members and the public. Nomination forms can be found on the website and are due by February 15th. Completed nomination forms can be mailed to the Idaho WSF office: PO Box 8224, Boise, ID 83707; or emailed to [info@idahowildsheep.org](mailto:info@idahowildsheep.org)



## Story by Logan's Grandfather, Idaho WSF Life Member Scot Jenkins

Logan Stewart of Boise Idaho hit the equivalent of a Grandparent Super Lottery Jackpot during 2021. Thanks to the luck and generosity of Grampa Joe and Gram's Jean and Paula, grandson Logan Stewart is now an accomplished hunter at the ripe old age of 10.

Idaho regulations allow "The holder of a controlled hunt tag for big game, excluding moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat, may designate that tag to his or her child or grandchild under the age of 18. Furthermore, "The child or grandchild may be designated only one controlled hunt tag per species per calendar year." "The designation must be made before the opening date of the hunt." A form is filled out and submitted to the Idaho Fish and Game for each designated tag.

Thanks to other worldly good luck in the 2021 Idaho Controlled Hunt drawings, and the unselfish kindness of his grandparents, Logan received designated tags to hunt mule deer in August, antelope in September, and elk in October.

He was thrilled at all of these unbelievable opportunities but especially hoped to bring home some "Velvet Antlers".

A bit of context helps understand how Logan at such a young age was prepared to optimize his amazing 2021 opportunities. Logan was born into a family with a rich western outdoor heritage. He is a 5th generation Idaho hunter, and his Great Great grandparents were homesteaders. His great grandfather was born in a farmhouse bedroom on the family's Eastern Idaho dairy farm during the Great Depression. His ancestors spent the majority of their lives outdoors farming, ranching, fishing and hunting. As a toddler Logan was fascinated with wheels and quickly mastered his Strider bike before he was even out of diapers. Riding bicycles, four wheelers and dirt bikes at a very young age on family camping trips was total enjoyment and his riding skills excelled while his love of the outdoors grew strong.

Fortunately, his parents and grandparents were experienced

at raising puppies & kids and knew how to properly introduce firearms. Gun safety was paramount and Logan aced his Hunter's Education program easily. He became proficient with BB guns and .22s rifles before advancing to the use of an AR-15. Although wiry and tough, Logan still physically weighed far south of a hundred pounds. Dad Tim knew well that a hunting rifle with mild recoil and a youth stock would be best suited for Logan. The family splurged and bought a new Weatherby Camilla Backcountry rifle chambered in the sensationally hyped and possibly overrated 6.5 Creedmoor caliber. Although two generations of family members had learned to hunt quite nicely using the quaint .243, Logan was to hunt with none other than the "Latest and Greatest". A muzzle brake made recoil a non-issue. His rifle was topped with a Vortex Viper 4-14x44 scope and he proved quickly adept at rapidly finding his targets through his scope. To keep interest high and avoid boredom shooting paper targets, Tim placed gallon and half-gallon jugs filled with colored water at 100 yard distances out to 400 yards. Logan and younger brother Austin thrived on the competition and loved to see blue, green, or purple sprays when their ELD-X bullets connected. Some pricey high-tech clothing and good boots were purchased to make sure he had properly fitting gear. To kick off 2021, Logan, Austin, Tim and Grampa Scot ventured out one frigid snowy February morning. Positioned at first light with bipod down, Logan was ready when a curious coyote approached and the 205 yard shot was placed perfectly.

August could not arrive soon enough and the first deer hunting trip was unsuccessful but much was learned. Working hard during the 2nd hunt, the buck of Logan's dreams was found and, "YES" it had a beautiful coating of thick velvet on its rack. A single shot at 340 yards was no problem for Logan and his Creedmoor and Grampa Joe's designated tag was attached to a fine 4pt mule deer buck.

September found Logan, Tim, and Scot looking at a nice, bedded Antelope buck with his collection of does. A big loop followed by sneaking up over a sagebrush covered knoll might put us within range. As we carefully snuck through the sage brush and topped the knoll we were surprised to see that the buck had spotted us at over 700 yards. While deciding our next move we watched a distant red pickup truck stop to look at our herd and then proceed to drive uncomfortably close to the bedded group. With the antelope looking alternately at the red truck and then back at us, they eventually became nervous and departed. Dejected, we sat and watched that group for over an hour as they looped





a huge basin. We then glassed up another group of distant antelope and wondered if our group might eventually join them. On a hunch we returned to the truck and drove a dirt road approach that put us over a mile beyond the 2nd group. Hiking back through low terrain for over a mile we finally peaked through a juniper tree on a ridge to confirm that we had arrived at 200 yards from the 2nd group without being seen. The 2nd group was all females and young which seemed strange with the antelope rut underway. As Logan carefully got set up on his bipod, the nice buck from the 1st group finally spotted our group of does and proceeded to run directly towards them. Logan barely got positioned as the buck arrived and he touched off a precision heart shot on the love-struck buck. Planning, luck, the rut and practice all came together for a clean, quick, one-shot kill. Gram Jean was proud of the fine antelope buck that wore her designated tag.

October arrived and the tail end of the elk rut had some bulls still bugling. Logan was thrilled to hear those sounds in person rather than just from DVDs and YouTube videos endlessly watched at home on TV and smart phones. On the elk hunt, Tim and friend Adam were amazed at the vertical miles Logan hiked and hardships he endured without the complaining common from newbies. They were concerned that the hunt was becoming too much work and they wanted Logan to enjoy the experience. Plenty of jerky and candy treats helped keep spirits high. All hoped for a branch antlered bull but when the opportunity came to take a nice spike bull, Logan was allowed to make the choice. The 220 yard shot was good, but elk are tough and this young bull was still moving. Logan's 2nd shot finalized it and Gram Paula's designated tag was attached to a young bull that still wore velvet covered spike antlers on October 1st.

Logan had hoped for velvet antlers but nobody expected that both his first mule deer and elk would wear velvet! After taking three big game animals during a single calendar year at age 10, Logan is likely stuck with the same lifelong obsession that afflicts many of his family members past and present. It is easy to believe that his passion for hunting might be permanent, after his Dad smiled hearing him mumble in his sleep one night: "Dad, where are my antlers and horns? I want to show them to my friends!"

Logan offers his Thanks to Idaho Department of Fish & Game, Grandparents, Parents, family, and friends who have helped him gain the skills and have the opportunities needed to experience and appreciate these epic outdoor adventures.



\*Contact IDFG local office or, visit online or, Idaho Department of Fish & Game, Idaho Big Game 2021 Seasons & Rules, page 111.

Tag Designation to Youth The holder of a controlled hunt tag for big game, excluding moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat, may designate that tag to his or her child or grandchild under the age of 18 who is otherwise qualified to participate in the hunt. The child or grandchild may be designated only one controlled hunt tag per species per calendar year. The designation must be made before the opening date of the hunt. Also, resident adults can only designate tags to resident youth; Nonresident adults can only designate tags to non-resident youth. Individuals who draw a tag in the first drawing where waiting period rules apply and designate the tag to a youth, are still subject to the appropriate waiting period rules. For more information, please contact the local Fish and Game office or visit us online at [idfg.idaho.gov/license/applications](http://idfg.idaho.gov/license/applications).

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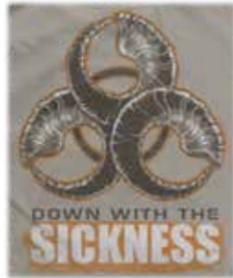


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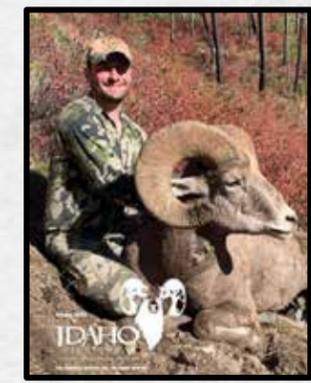
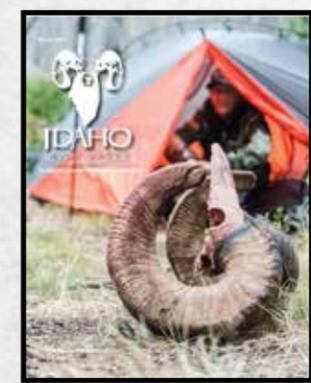
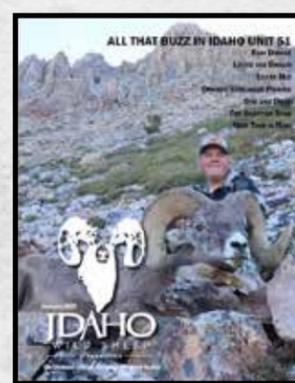
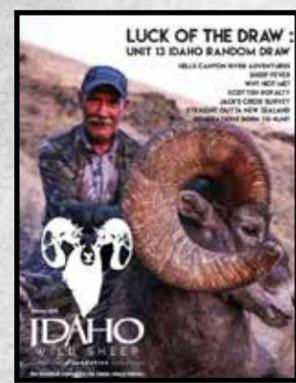


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### TIPS:

- \*Set your phone/camera to HIGH QUALITY (photo's must be 300 dpi)
- \*Cover photo pictures must be portrait orientation (vertical)
- \*Be creative! Cover photo's do not have to be trophy shots.
- \*Include pictures of your experience, friends, scenery, camp, etc.

### DEADLINES:

- WINTER ISSUE: November 1st
- SUMMER ISSUE: May 1st

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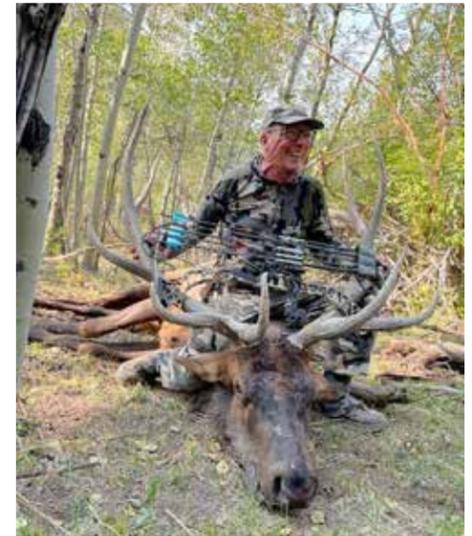


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