
CALIFORNIA WILD SHEEP SUMMIT XXXIII (33) – DEC 1, 2023

“ALL VIRTUAL”

By Mike J. Borel, Distinguished Life Member

CA WSF hosted Sheep Summit XXXIII as an “all virtual” event. The purpose of these summits is “to accomplish more collectively for Bighorn sheep in CA through sharing and collaboration, than the sum of what each organization can accomplish individually. Following is a summary of Summit XXXIII (yes 33 - WOW!).

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: CDFW, USFS, USBLM, USNPS, CA WSF, SCBS, Twentynine Palms Marine Base, China Lake Naval Base, Fort Irwin base, WSF, CA mining interests, BHC, key independents, and others). 47 persons participated.

Information reviewed:

1. CDFW Statewide Update, including Personnel additions and changes, Budget and budget outlook, BGMA Grant Plans, Helicopter contracts, etc. CDFW — Chad Dibble and Scott Gardner
2. US BLM - Update on the Big Picture, and the Programmatic EA BLM — Jeremiah Karuzas
3. CDFW Status of the Comprehensive Sheep Plan & Unit Plans CDFW — Jeff Villepique
4. Update, drought-funded contract work; SCBS-CDFW reimbursable and CDFW helicopter guzzler/survey contract CDFW — Jeff Villepique
5. Tracking Metapopulation Dynamics with a 23+ Year Genetic Database, and OSU DBH Work Update Oregon State University — Clint Epps
6. CDFW Desert Bighorn Sheep Update from Region 6, including surveys and captures CDFW — Danielle Glass
7. “Puttin’ on the RITs: Survival mechanisms and consequences of heterothermy in desert bighorn sheep.” Oregon State University — Paige Prentice
8. Sierra Nevada Bighorn Update CDFW — Lacey Greene
9. Observations on Bighorn Sheep and Minerals Independent — Carlos Gallinger
10. “Report on Recent Activities that are of value and interest for CA wild sheep — e.g. WAFWA, Wild Sheep & Goat Council, Desert Bighorn Council, Boone & Crockett Club, WHBAB, etc. Independent — Vern Bleich
11. Update on Brightline and Overpasses for Mitigation with Cal Trans, Chuckwalla NM and Castles NM CA WSF — Don Priest and CDFW — Jeff Villepique
12. State Lands Leases Progress, SCBS Guzzler (BGG) Repairs and New Drinkers (RWWS) Update SCBS — Steve Marschke
13. GALAD (Give a Lamb a Drink) progress, funding CA WSF — Mike Borel
14. I-8 Peninsular Bighorn Sheep Crossing Project BHA — Devin O’Dea
15. Open Q & A Session CA WSF — Mike Borel
16. Suggestions for Next Summit (April 26, 2024 in Sacramento)

Particularly notable sharing:

1. Comprehensive Sheep Plan expected out to the public in first half of 2024, and will include one area plan (that has strong potential for adding two hunt units).
2. CDFW planning two new hunt zones for 2025-26!
3. Hunting opportunity is a priority for CDFW Region 6 (from Danielle Glass).
4. Significantly more personnel in CDFW and some reorganization should result in more work being accomplished.
5. CDFW has noted that hunting tag revenue is down; working to revitalize the population (R3 program)

Our previously committed COLLECTIVE VISION FOR WILD SHEEP IN CALIFORNIA:

- * Ensure the persistence and restoration of healthy and sustainable metapopulations of bighorn sheep throughout their historical distribution in California.
- * Develop and use science as the basis for conservation and management.
- * Provide for recreational uses of bighorn sheep wherever appropriate.

Summit XXXIV is scheduled for April 26, 2024. It will be an “In-Person Only” format at the DoubleTree in Sacramento.