



# California Wild Sheep

Winter 2014



**Gary Rotta**  
Desert Bighorn Ram  
South Bristol Mountains  
Dry Creek Outfitters  
2013

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Kyle M. Meintzer, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ Practitioner shares this commitment and heritage. As the Founder of the California Wild Sheep Foundation and a long-time Life Member of the organization, he sees the importance of aligning personal passion with financial independence. For over thirty-seven years he has helped guide conservation-minded families and business owners through the varied challenges of wealth accumulation, business succession, retirement, estate and legacy planning. He has utilized his extensive experience to uncover untapped financial opportunities on his clients' behalf, while still tackling the challenges that could lie ahead.

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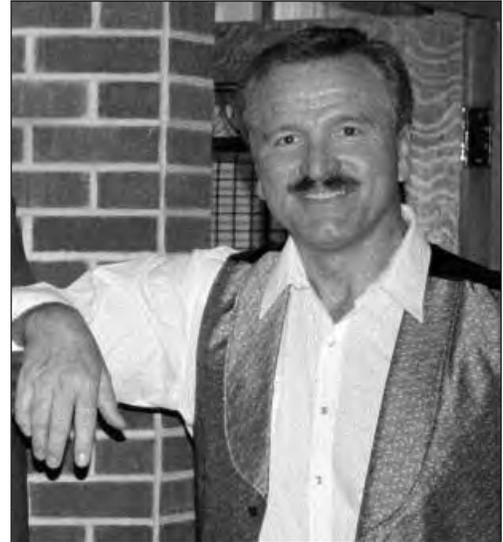
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# From the Editor's Desk

I hope you enjoy this issue. It is full of good stuff – but notably devoid of sheep hunting stories. The CA Season has started and we'll have multiples for the next couple issues. What we do have is info on our upcoming sheep raffle, the April fundraiser, considerable science info (Sri, Bleich), activities in the desert, inspiring words, various photos from the field, super interesting “the way of things” from Carlos Gallinger (one of the most knowledgeable persons on the Mojave), humor from Tammy (I've had more laughs than I've shared here! I tried to be semi-proper), and much more. Please enjoy and be thinking about how you can contribute something of interest for the next issue!

Mike J. Borel  
CA WSF Newsletter Editor



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## INSPIRING WORDS OF WISDOM

*Collected (and Cherished) by Mike J. Borel*

- In the end, we conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught. Senegalese scholar and statesman Bab Dioum
- Take no more than what nature's bounty can restore. Shane Mahoney
- Every individual's contribution is small, but collectively our contributions are (or can be) huge! Shane Mahoney
- LIFE is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, totally worn out and proclaiming "WOW What a RIDE!" Anonymous!
- We don't inherit land from ancestors, we borrow it from future generations!
- Character is doing what's right when nobody's looking. J. C. Watts jr.
- 87% of Wildlife Conservation is funded by Hunters and Fishermen. NSSF
- Absence of Evidence is NOT Evidence of Absence. Vern Bleich
- "There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction." Anonymous
- "If you properly respect what you are after, and shoot it cleanly and on the animal's terrain, if you imprison in your mind all the wonder of the day from sky to smell to breeze to flowers – then you have not merely killed an animal, you have lent immortality to a beast you have killed because you loved him and wanted him forever so that you could always capture the day." Robert Ruark
- "Mr. Speaker ... In one word I'm a screamer, and have got the roughest racking horse, the prettiest sister, the surest rifle and the ugliest dog in the district. I'm a leetle the savagest crittur you ever did see. My father can whip any man in Kentucky, and I can lick my father. I can out-speak any man on this floor, and give him two hours start. I can run faster, dive deeper, stay longer under, and come out drier, than any chap this side the big Swamp. I can outlook a panther and outstare a flash of lightning, tote a steamboat on my back and play at rough and tumble with a lion, and an occasional kick from a zebra. I can take the rag off – frighten the old folks – astonish the natives. I can walk like an ox, run like a fox, swim like an eel, yell like an Indian, fight like a devil, spout like an earthquake, and make love like a mad bull." Davy Crockett
- "I am only one, but I am still one. I cannot do everything, but I can still do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do." Edward Everett Hale
- "Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway." John Wayne

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**California Wild Sheep** is published quarterly.

Please email all articles and photos to  
mike.borel@contextnet.com

Photos should be high resolution and in color.  
It is recommended that digital photos be sent by email.  
Please include photo credits and captions.

# Events

2015

January 7-10	The Sheep Show, Peppermill, Reno
January 11	ISE Show, Sacramento
January 13	CA WSF BOD Conference Call
January 20-23	SHOT Show, Las Vegas
January 28-31	GSC/Ovis, Grand Sierra, Reno
February 4-7	SCI Convention, Las Vegas
February 19-22	WHCE, Salt Lake City
February 20	Due Date for Articles for 1Q2015 Newsletter
April 24	Sheep Summit XVII, Rancho Cordova
April 25	CA WSF Fundraiser, Rancho Cordova

## HUMOR (PG13)

*Courtesy of Tammy Scott*

### The New Harlequin Romance Novel

He grasped me firmly, but gently, just above my elbow and guided me into a room, his room. Then he quietly shut the door and we were alone. He approached me soundlessly, from behind, and spoke in a low, reassuring voice close to my ear. "Just relax."

Without warning, he reached down and I felt his strong, practiced hands start at my ankles, gently probing and moving upward along my calves, slowly but steadily. My breath caught in my throat.

I knew I should be afraid, but somehow I didn't care. His touch was so experienced, so sure. When his hands moved up onto my thighs, I gave a slight shudder, and partly closed my eyes. My pulse was pounding. I felt his knowing fingers caress my abdomen, my ribcage. And then, as he cupped my breasts in his hands, I inhaled sharply.

Probing, searching, knowing what he wanted, he brought his hands to my shoulders, slid them down my tingling spine. Although I knew nothing about this man, I felt oddly trusting and expectant. This is a man, I thought; a man used to taking charge. A man not used to taking 'No' for an answer. A man who would tell me what he wanted. A man who would look into my soul and say . . .

"Okay ma'am, you can board your flight now."

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# President's Letter

Dear CA WSF Members and Friends:

The Directors of CA WSF and I wish you and your family a blessed and joyful holiday season. Of course, the holidays mean that the new year is just around the corner. For most of us, the hunting season is over and we look forward not to just a new year but also dream of what the next hunting season will bring.

The end of the year and the first few months of the new year is a time of planning upcoming hunts, applying for tags, going through gear that needs to be cleaned or repaired and even making some off-season purchases of new equipment that will make us better hunters — or maybe just because we decided we want it and can finally afford it.

At CA WSF, we are also spending this time planning for next year's annual event on the evening of Saturday, April 25, 2015 at the Marriott in Rancho Cordova. One of our biggest goals has already been fulfilled. Board member Don Martin and our long-time outfitter supporter Ultima Thule of Alaska are once again combining on a 2016 Dall's Sheep hunt to be raffled in 2015, with the winner to be drawn at the banquet. Although you need not be present to win this always-popular hunt, we hope you place the event on your calendar early so you can enjoy the full festivities. Raffle ticket information is on pages 16 and 17 of this issue.

Other pieces of this exciting evening are falling into place. We hope to feature in our live auction a desert bighorn hunt in Mexico, a tule elk hunt with landowner tag here in California and maybe a quality blacktail deer hunt in Northern California, in addition to a number of other unique and desirable items. Of course, we will feature a silent auction, general raffle and—most importantly—a great night of fellowship with other hunters and sheep enthusiasts in conjunction with the live auction. Watch our website and future newsletters for updated details and additional auction items as they are confirmed.

Despite disease and drought problems that hit California wild sheep herds in 2014 and logistic problems of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife that adversely affected the completion of sorely-needed updated sheep population surveys, CA WSF made some key contributions this year to help California's wild sheep weather these difficult times. We look forward to a better year for wild sheep in California in 2015. We also look forward to your participation at our event next April and your assistance in making a difference for California wildlife next year and for years to come.

Happy Holidays!

Paul Brisso  
President CA WSF



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# THE MOJAVE YUCCA (YUCCA SCHIDIGERA)

*by Carlos Gallinger, [www.thewayofthings.org](http://www.thewayofthings.org)*



When you walk the desert quietly and alone long enough you quit observing it in a conscious manner, and you learn things in the silence of the desert.

There are all kinds of things you can contemplate and learn if you accept the silence of the desert and walk alone. You will find joy in such things as contemplating the ways of the various plants like the yucca. Like all plants it is fascinating, and to understand it is to understand many things about it's environment.

We can start here by taking an imaginary hike across the desert.

In the distance we see a small patch of yuccas, perhaps 50 or 100 plants on 10 or 20 acres. Just from being aware of their presence, we know certain things. There is almost certainly an increase in the variety of desert plants among the yuccas, and of course there is the constant companion of the yucca, the pack rat. The yucca that has a pack rat's nest at its base usually grows bigger and has a better chance of survival than those that do not.

Here is a sample of how the basic systems and relationships of the yucca work. The yucca's root system draws in all the moisture and nutrients it can from the ground around it. Then on the next level up the pack rats run around on the surface doing their part, such as collecting small bones, leaves, branches, and other things within a radius of about 20 yards. This is far beyond the reach of the yucca's root system. The pack rats do this to build their home in the shelter of the yucca. They will also deposit bits of leftover food and their own urine and droppings.

When it rains, the nutrients from all these decaying items are washed down into the soil so that the yucca's root system can absorb them, making this particular yucca bigger and healthier than the others near it. This in turn attracts all sorts of birds that prioritize this particular yucca to perch on. Then their droppings and various leftover parts of their prey fall to the ground and help this yucca grow even more.

So a yucca like this can be visualized as a point in the desert environment that is growing upward by attracting and utilizing resources on three levels. Also this yucca's presence is radiating outward into the desert environment through its root system, the pack rat's system, and the bird's system. Not all yuccas have this middle way to radiate out into the desert environment. While the pack rat system makes a significant difference in the life cycle of the yucca, the pack rat also makes a significant difference in the desert environment as well. One of the many reasons for this is that the pack rat is a mammal and not a reptile. As a mammal it is active throughout the year and in a wider variety of weather conditions than any reptile. Thus the yucca, through the pack rat, provides food for such animals as a kit fox and owl, when there would be little or perhaps no other food source available to them. While the yucca provides some food for the pack rat directly, its indirect effect on the desert environment is more important.

This is because these effects are amplified by other plants. To get a basic understanding of this we must start with the shape of the yucca itself, which has two basic shapes.

There is the yucca plant that has many stalks, perhaps five or ten. Then there's the yucca plant that has a single stalk. The more stalks the yucca plant has, the more likely it will have some that are very tall and will have a rat nest in the middle of it. These large yuccas cast a very dense and important shadow on the desert soil beneath them. This conserves the soil's moisture so much that you can often trace the intensity of this shadow by the increased size and health of the annual and perennial plants that grow there. The yuccas that have a single stalk have a smaller shadow, but it is still a very important one. You can often find a large perennial plant such as the cholla or barrel cactus growing in its shadow. Oftentimes this happens right where the head or green part of the yucca casts its shadow. If we have a cholla cactus growing in this shadow, it too has a

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shadow that in turn preserves the moisture in the ground allowing yet another plant to grow there. Thus the life-giving shadows of the yucca echo across the desert landscape for centuries. Sometimes these reverberations will split off from one another and start a separate chain of events.

Here is an example of the barrel cactus growing in the shadow of the yucca.



While this can happen in many ways, here is but one example.

Let's say a cholla cactus grows up in the shadow of the yucca. Then the shadow of this cholla cactus allows a creosote bush to get started. Then the cholla, being a plant that lives a relatively short time compared to the yucca and creosote bush, dies and decays. So when you see this yucca and creosote bush, they do not seem to be associated with one another, but they once were. You can see this if you read any clues that might be there and use your imagination to see far enough back in time.

Then going forward in time the shadow of this creosote bush will eventually make things right for another perennial plant to start, perhaps even another yucca. So next time you walk in the desert and you see in the distance a group of yuccas, you can use this knowledge and the power of your imagination to see deeper into the desert's environment. However, we should remember that the reality of the yucca and the desert environment are infinite in their complexity. Knowing and experiencing these kind of things allows us to become part of this infinite and complex environment, and this is THE WAY OF THINGS.

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## PALEN SOLAR PROJECT DROPPED BY DEVELOPERS

Excerpted from *Palm Springs Desert Sun* Article by Sammy Roth, September 26, 2014

BrightSource Energy and Abengoa Solar withdrew their application for the Palen solar project Friday afternoon, a shocking turn of events following the project's preliminary approval by state regulators just two weeks ago.

The developers could eventually propose another solar project at the same site, which is about 60 miles east of Indio. But their decision to withdraw the controversial Palen proposal — which drew fire from environmental and Native American groups — ends any chance of development in the foreseeable future.

BrightSource senior vice president Joe Desmond said the developers chose to withdraw their application in part because the project was unlikely to be completed by December 2016, meaning it wouldn't qualify for a 30 percent investment tax credit that expires at the end of that year. Construction was slated to last 28 months — well into 2017, even if the California Energy Commission had granted final approval next month.

Environmental and Native American groups had staunchly opposed the Palen proposal, saying it would kill enormous numbers of migratory birds, irreparably damage historic trails and ruin scenic landscapes. The 500-megawatt project would have been located on a major migratory bird route, and its 750-foot solar towers would have been visible from wilderness and back-country areas in the southeastern part of Joshua Tree National Park.

BrightSource and Abengoa could theoretically build a solar trough project without receiving additional approval from the California Energy Commission. Solar Millennium originally planned to build Palen with solar trough technology — a proposal the energy commission greenlighted before Solar Millennium went bankrupt. The project was picked up by BrightSource and Abengoa, which asked the commission to approve a solar tower facility instead.

But Desmond indicated that if the companies eventually decide to develop at the Palen site, they will probably still want to build solar towers.

"We believe concentrating solar power, and specifically tower technology with thermal energy storage, can play a key role in helping California achieve its clean energy goals by providing the necessary flexibility needed to help maintain grid reliability," he said in a statement.

Whether BrightSource and Abengoa eventually propose another project could depend on whether Congress extends or modifies the 30 percent investment tax credit for renewable energy projects, which is slated to drop to 10 percent starting in 2017. The solar industry has been pushing Congress to modify the language of the tax credit, so that solar projects with some electricity online by the end of 2016 qualify — rather than just projects that are fully online.

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# BIGHORN SHEEP DISEASE WORK - PROGRESS REPORT 2013-2014

*by Dr. Sri, WSU*

1. Prevent transmission of leukotoxin-positive *M. haemolytica* from domestic sheep to bighorn sheep.

Animal studies in domestic sheep during 2012-13 gave encouraging results. Inoculation of *B. trehalosi* into the nasopharynx of domestic sheep reduced the number of *M. haemolytica* in them. However, reduction in the numbers of *M. haemolytica* was not uniformly high in all the domestic sheep. Therefore, during the past year (2013-14), we first inoculated the domestic sheep with an antibiotic to eliminate/reduce the *M. haemolytica* from the nasopharynx, and then inoculated *B. trehalosi*. This protocol enabled all four bighorn sheep to survive commingling with domestic sheep for 42 days. Unfortunately, two bighorn sheep died of unrelated causes (enteritis and trauma) on days 42 and 84, respectively. But the remaining two bighorn sheep survived commingling with domestic sheep for 100 days, which ended the first phase of the study. In the second phase of the study, the remaining two bighorn sheep were commingled with two domestic sheep that were not treated with antibiotic or *B. trehalosi*. Both these bighorn sheep survived commingling with the untreated domestic sheep for 100 days, which ended the second phase of the study. As the third phase of the study, we have commingled the two bighorn sheep with two domestic sheep that were positive for *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, but not treated with antibiotic or *B. trehalosi*. This phase of the project is ongoing, and will continue.

2. Vaccinate bighorn sheep to make them resistant to leukotoxin-positive *M. haemolytica* transmitted by domestic sheep.

During the past year, we have been successful in developing two BHV-1 mutants which are attenuated (weak, and hence will not cause disease in bighorn sheep at all). We have also demonstrated shedding, latency establishment and reactivation following BHV-1 inoculation in bighorn sheep. The virus shed for 9 days following inoculation, with peak shedding at the second day post-inoculation. Also the animals remained healthy throughout the duration of the experiment. This suggests that BHV-1 is a good vector, in that it is able to replicate efficiently, while being safe. The latent virus in bighorn sheep underwent reactivation following dexamethasone treatment. This observation is especially important in our studies, since we are proposing that our vaccine will not require booster administration, but instead be capable of boosting by

means of establishing latency and reactivating. In the coming year, we will develop the recombinant BHV-1 carrying the protective antigens of *M. haemolytica* (a segment of leukotoxin and an outer membrane protein). In the following year, this mutant will be tested for its ability to induce neutralizing antibodies against the leukotoxin, and its potential to serve as a vaccine candidate.

Additional studies that were conducted during the past year, that were not listed in the proposal last year: Understanding the reasons for poor lamb recruitment in the herds that suffered pneumonia die-off.

When a pneumonia die-off occurs, initially, bighorn sheep of all ages die. In subsequent years, the adult bighorn sheep rarely die, but the lambs continue to die year after year, and hence the herds do not grow in numbers. We are working on understanding the reasons underlying this phenomenon.

In 2012-13, we obtained four bighorn rams that survived the 2010 outbreak in Nevada, and commingled them with naïve (uninfected) bighorn ewes from our captive herd. These ewes got infected. The lambs born to these ewes also got infected, developed pneumonia and died. We are continuing our work on 'finger-printing' the organisms isolated from the Nevada survivors, and the commingled ewes from our herd, and the lambs born to them. This information will clearly tell us whether the survivors carry the harmful organisms and transmit to their lambs.

The survivor ewes may have immunity to the harmful organisms, but it may not be adequate to pass on to their lambs. We are also working on determining the levels of immunity carried by the survivor ewes and the lambs before they died. For the information to be meaningful, we should study survivor ewes from different geographical locations. Therefore, in 2013-14, we worked with another group of survivor ewes from Colorado, housed in Sybille, WY. Our objective was to treat the carrier ewes with an antibiotic to determine whether this treatment will protect the lambs born to these carrier ewes. But unfortunately, due to various reasons, this objective could not be pursued. This year, we have obtained six carrier bighorn ewes from Montana, and housed here at WSU. We will inoculate some of the lambs born to these carrier ewes with antibodies obtained from the serum of domestic sheep to determine the protective effects of the antibodies. This study should provide information useful in designing management strategies.

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# COMMENTS ON MANAGEMENT HISTORY, VOLUNTEERS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP, AND SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

## Part 2

*by Vernon C. Bleich*



With the retirement of the Wildlife Habitat Supervisor I, staffing for Project W-26-D was reduced to one full-time position and one part-time position. In addition, the replacement "project leader" was assigned custodial and oversight responsibilities for the Camp Cady Wildlife Area and, as a result, time spent on bighorn sheep activities and leadership for the volunteer program was further reduced. Moreover, passage of the California Desert Protection Act in 1994, which created more than 70 wilderness areas in southeastern California, made it difficult to continue to maintain or develop habitat for bighorn sheep as a result of the bureaucratic nightmares and interagency competition resulting from that legislation; in the absence of strong leadership, coordination with non-governmental organizations declined further.

Bighorn sheep activities that had been supervised or sponsored by the Department of Fish and Game continued to be curtailed, and coordination of the volunteer program declined substantially. By this time, volunteers were providing virtually 100% of any effort being put forth on behalf of the maintenance of previously established water developments, providing the majority of personnel for conducting survey flights, and maintaining all records.

Wildlife water developments come in many forms, and are used by a variety of species of large mammals. In some cases, these developments have led to other management actions, among which have been captures and translocations to restore large mammals to ranges from which they have been extirpated and restoring linkages among populations. Bighorn sheep have

benefitted more than any other species from wildlife water developments. Nevertheless, there have been occasional problems associated with wildlife water developments, including the loss of approximately 50 bighorn sheep at Old Dad Peak in the mid-1990s shortly after passage of the California Desert Protection Act. Bureaucratic bungling and interagency competition were the causative factors behind that loss, not the mere presence of the wildlife water development. The absence of regular inspections, combined with the cancellation of a survey flight (both of which were the result of a change in management status of BLM lands in the central Mojave Desert), contributed substantially to that catastrophe.

We know through research that bighorn sheep make use of the wildlife water developments that are provided for them. The potential for wildlife water developments to play an increasingly important role in the conservation of bighorn sheep is enormous, given the results of several recent research projects that have emphasized not only the importance of water to individual populations, but to the maintenance of the metapopulation structure that is characteristic of these large mammals. The bottom line is that in the absence of specific efforts to conserve bighorn sheep, some existing populations are likely to not persist, and metapopulation function could be substantially altered. The actions of the Volunteer Desert Water and Wildlife Survey are one example of activities that have been carried out on behalf of bighorn sheep and, despite the lack of on-the-ground agency personnel, have continued. Indeed, volunteers have carried out the bulk of management activities for desert bighorn sheep, including surveys, maintenance, construction, and record keeping, over the past 15 years.

Obviously, one of the functions of the water for wildlife program has been the construction of water sources in areas that were identified as deficient in water by Dick Weaver and his co-workers. What may not be obvious, however, is that we have looked very hard at how well these devices function and at their dependability. What follows is a description of some work that Andy Pauli and I completed when there was a fully staffed habitat program in the Mojave and Sonoran deserts and three area biologist positions, which have since been "redirected" still existed. During the period

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1978 through 1988, Andy and I monitored the status of 21 wildlife water developments distributed across the Mojave and Sonoran deserts of southeastern California. These 21 developments were selected for evaluation because they were those in existence when I was assigned to lead Project W-26-D in March 1978.

During 1978–1988, Andy and I determined that a total of 98 failures occurred, resulting in a down time of 267 months. Freeze breaks and float valves were the primary causes of failure (the winter of 1978 was unusually frigid), but there were some design flaws that resulted in unforeseen problems. Among other causes of failure were heavy rains that resulted in erosion or the washing away of storage tanks or pipelines; there were no instances of vandalism. Underground tanks, utilizing a "rain-catcher" system designed by Glenn Sudmeier of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, will resolve the vast majority of the problems Andy and I described.

Andy and I determined that the 21 water developments were functional for an average of nearly 90% of the 2,790 "guzzler-months" included in the evaluation. Ninety percent functionality isn't bad, and it attests to the important contributions of the VDWWS and Area Captains Program, and to the dedication and resourcefulness of volunteers that care greatly about the future of bighorn sheep in California. Current staffing levels are not adequate to even allow an estimate of the functionality of the existing water developments. There is a compelling need to do better than 90% functionality, but doing better is not going to happen in the absence of leadership from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the re-staffing of long-gone positions that, for so many years, worked side-by-side with dedicated individuals whose first concern is the conservation of bighorn sheep.

Andy and I relied heavily on the regular inspections made by Department of Fish and Game employees, which primarily were area biologists and personnel from Project W-26-D during 1978 through 1986, and with a marked increase in the inspections by volunteers beginning in 1985. No so coincidentally, the Area Captains Program of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep was launched in 1985. The Area Captains Program remains in place, and became increasingly important with the elimination of area biologists and personnel working on habitat projects. Since 1996, however, the Area Captains Program has not had a regular liaison with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and none currently exists. The ongoing elimination or reassignment of positions to "more pressing" projects has severely impacted the efficiency and effectiveness of well-meaning and experienced volunteers.

In spite of all of the good work done by the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep and the funds provided by other concerned organizations, such as the

Wild Sheep Foundation and the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation, wildlife habitat enhancement activities in the desert are faced with some very serious issues. Conservation of bighorn sheep in California has become more complicated as a result of changes in land status and politically expedient decisions. Additional proposed changes in land status will further complicate conservation efforts.

Despite these past, current, and future challenges, the number of personnel dedicated to the conservation of large mammals and wildlife habitat management activities in southeastern California has declined steadily. From 1972 to 1986, there were 3 full time positions and one seasonal position assigned to the project in southern California (Table 1). Currently, there are no positions assigned to work on wildlife habitat enhancement issues in the desert and, more importantly, there is no leadership for the massive amounts of volunteer labor that, since 1999, has carried out virtually all of the habitat work for bighorn sheep. Further, the positions of three area biologists that previously worked on bighorn sheep issues in the Mojave or Sonoran deserts have been eliminated or redirected. Additionally, many other dedicated individuals that have worked on behalf of mountain sheep are no longer with us; thus, the ranks are becoming thinner, and that trend will continue in the absence of leadership and direction from the trustee agency for wildlife in California.

Despite an absence of habitat personnel and area biologists, there is a pressing need to address a number of issues. First, there is a need to establish a formal policy with respect to the manipulation of valves on existing wildlife water developments. There also is a need to establish a formal policy regarding the purpose of wildlife water developments, to include the rationale for their construction, and the benefits or problems that could be associated with each. That rationale must go beyond simply "growing more sheep" — it must also address the re-filling of wildlife water developments when rainfall is inadequate to maintain water availability. Further, there is a compelling need to re-establish a list of priorities in terms of inspections and maintenance. There are more than 60 wildlife water developments that currently are overseen by volunteers, and neither a field liaison nor a habitat program within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for them to interact with. As a result, there is no way that each of the developments can all be inspected twice each year, let alone all be fully maintained and kept functional.

There is a further need to seek resolution to difficulties that resulted from passage of the California Desert Protection Act. Wildlife conservation must be elevated to a level of importance in wilderness areas that is, at the least, equivalent to the emphasis placed on recreational experiences and the perception of "naturalness."

Recently, I learned that Death Valley National Park has begun to remove three water developments (two of which were developed cooperatively with Death Valley National Monument) because those developments are viewed as not compatible with wilderness values. Given those removals, I was especially troubled to learn that DVNP is enthusiastically supporting the use of helicopters in those same wilderness areas, but for the purposes of "research".

The most pressing need, however, is that of applying the enhanced technology developed by the Society or the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep to replace the aging

and increasingly vulnerable water sources that were created following Dick Weaver's recommendations. In the absence of leadership and personnel dedicated to working with those citizens that have been "carrying the ball" for desert bighorn sheep for the past 15 years, upgrades of the existing systems will not occur in a timely manner. Further, in the absence of the restoration of biologists to those geographic areas occupied by bighorn sheep, data acquisition, inspections, and maintenance needs will continue to be complicated and inefficient, and the future of bighorn sheep will become even more uncertain.

Table 1. Staffing levels associated directly with bighorn sheep inventory or habitat management in California from 1969 to the present. Since 1969, a total of 3 area biologist positions — also referred to as wildlife unit managers and that worked extensively with bighorn sheep and bighorn sheep habitat issues have been eliminated or redirected.

Year	Full-time Positions	Part-time Positions	Primary Functions
1968-1972	2	1.0	Inventory
1972-1977	3	0.75	Habitat Development
1978-1985	3	0.75	Maintenance, Development, and Inventory
1986-1999	2	0.75	Maintenance and Development
1999-2004	1	0.50	Maintenance
2005-2009 <sup>1</sup>	<0.25	0	Maintenance and Compliance Issues
2009-2010	0	0	N/A
2011-2014 <sup>2</sup>	1	0	Policy and Administration (Staff Position)
The Future	?	?	?

<sup>1</sup>During this period, one individual worked occasionally on bighorn sheep habitat issues as a result of personal interest in the program and the obvious need for effort in that direction; the individual transferred in 2009.

<sup>2</sup>The position of statewide bighorn sheep coordinator was restored in the Wildlife Branch in 2011; there are no field personnel in Region 6, however, providing leadership or assistance with day-to-day habitat management activities being carried out by volunteers.

Dr. Vern Bleich is a wildlife biologist that worked 34 years for the California Department of Fish and Game throughout the desert regions of southeastern California. He is well known for his work with desert bighorn sheep and, in retirement, remains active in wildlife conservation. Dr. Bleich currently serves as an advisor to the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep and the Texas Bighorn Society, is co-chair of the Conservation Grants Subcommittee of the Boone and Crockett Club, chairs the Grants Committee for the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation, and is the Chair of the Professional Resource Advisory Board of the Wild Sheep Foundation. The opinions presented herein are those of Dr. Bleich; the facts presented are, well, just the facts.

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## MIGRATING MURAL COMPLETE!

*by Jane Kim*

After three years of planning, development, and painting the Migrating Mural: Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep is finally complete! In total, we painted six murals along a 120-mile stretch of California Highway 395. We couldn't have done it without your support, thank you so much for helping us launch and fund the first two murals!

The final mural, at the Mono Basin Visitor's Center, depicts the Mt. Gibbs herd unit, which is represented by topo lines of the mountain itself and which faces significant mountain lion predation.

At Lone Pine Regional Airport, we focused on the history of bighorns, which have been roaming the Sierras for 300,000 years. The glaciers represent the three glacial cycles they have survived. Images of sheep petroglyphs, painted by local members of the Lone Pine Shoshone-Paiute tribe, pay homage to those who first painted bighorns on Sierra rock walls.

Thanks again for helping this dream become a reality!

For our next project, The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has commissioned us to paint a 70' x 40' mural depicting the 375 million year evolution of birds over more than 260 species. You can follow the 14-month project in real time on our Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter feeds. We just completed the saddleback, it's the first bird on the wall!





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# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



**Rick Gorzoli**  
**Bighorn Ram - Wyoming**  
**October 2014**

**Taken with Meade Dominick 7D Ranch Outfitting**



**Kyle Meintzer**  
**Desert Bighorn - Nevada**  
**November 2014**



**Roger McCosker**  
**Mouflon Sheep - Austria**  
**October 2014**



**Mike J Borel**  
**Himalayan Blue Sheep - Nepal**  
**October 2014**



**Mike Davis**  
**SE Ibex - Spain**  
**November 2014**



**Mike Davis**  
**Gredos Ibex - Spain**  
**November 2014**

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## 2015 CA WSF FUNDRAISER

### Opportunities for 2015 and 2016 Hunts and Trips Abound!

As 2014 comes to a close, the hunts and adventures that we encountered over the last 11 months slowly become memories as we share them with friends and family over the holidays. This is the time of year when many hunters start to feel that void in their calendar with nothing planned for the next year. Many will be attending the upcoming conventions and a lucky few have a desert sheep hunt planned.

This is a great time to start planning and filling the calendar for 2015. The application periods have already started and will continue until next summer. However, even with all the different state drawings there is no guarantee of getting a hunt on the books. This is where the California Chapter of The Wild Sheep Foundation can help in the planning process.

CA WSF will be holding its annual Fundraiser on April 25, 2015. There will be raffles along with both silent and live auctions that will include a wide array of exciting hunts, adventures and other items that you will have the chance to bid on. A once-in-a-lifetime hunt, a trip to fill that empty space on your calendar or that rifle you have always wanted. Below you will find a list of just a few of the hunts and trips that will be available.

Desert Bighorn Tag and Hunt in Mexico  
Elk hunts  
Bird hunts in Argentina  
Capra hunts in Turkey, Spain, . . .

And for those not looking for a hunt, but just an adventure.

Beach vacations  
2016 WSF Reno Convention Package

A raffle for a Dall's sheep hunt will be one of the highlights of the Annual FUNd-raising Banquet. The hunt will be for a Dall's ram in Alaska with Ultima Thule Outfitters and noted guide Don Martin. Your chances of taking a great ram are wonderful. This hunt is for 2016.

This is just a few of the hunts, adventures and items that will be featured at the CA WSF Fundraiser. Please check our website ([www.cawsf.org](http://www.cawsf.org)) in the near future for details and updates on the growing list of auction items and raffles.

Mark your calendars to meet with other sheep hunters and enthusiasts in California, and start thinking of who you can bring with you.



### 2015 LADIES LUNCHEON

The 2015 WSF Ladies Luncheon will be held Friday, January 9, in the Naples Ballroom of the Peppermill Resort Spa & Casino in Reno during Sheep Week.

The Ladies Luncheon theme this year is South Pacific Ladies Luau, complete with tropical cocktails provided on arrival! The luncheon will have an amazing silent auction collection as well as live auction items, games to play (with prizes for all who participate!), door prizes and raffles, live music entertainment and more await you as you are whisked away to the Hawaiian Islands with ocean breezes, sandy beaches and tropical fun!

Tickets are \$50 per person, or you may reserve a table of 8 for \$350. Register today by calling 307.527.6261



# California Chapter Wild Sheep Foundation

## 2015 Drawing

Special hunt drawing held April 25, 2015

### ULTIMA THULE OUTFITTERS DALL SHEEP HUNT

Exclusive Wrangell-St Elias National Preserve  
10 day 1x1 Guided Hunt with Donald C. Martin  
Value \$18,000

Opening week of 2016 SEASON only



## Get Your Tickets Today!

\$20 for 1 chance  
\$100 for 6 chances!

On the web: [www.cawsf.org](http://www.cawsf.org)  
Via email: [cawsf@cawsf.org](mailto:cawsf@cawsf.org)  
Via fax/phone: 650-472-3889



**CALIFORNIA CHAPTER WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION**  
**2015 Random Drawing Order Form**

**HUNT ALASKA**

with **ULTIMA THULE OUTFITTERS**

Wrangell-St Elias National Preserve Dall Sheep Hunt

10 day 1x1 Guided Hunt

Value \$18,000

Opening week in 2016 SEASON only

**Winning ticket for this random drawing will be drawn April 25, 2015**  
 Do not need to be present to win  
 Winners notified via email and/or phone

**\$20: One (1) ticket**

**\$100: Six (6) tickets**

Place your order via mail, phone, fax, email, website  
 Or at our annual fundraiser on April 25, 2015 at the Rancho Cordova Marriott Hotel

(See more details at [www.cawsf.org](http://www.cawsf.org).)

**Ticket Orders using this form must be received by April 15, 2015.**

(Random drawing will be held April 25, 2015 – Need not be present to win.)

CA FNAWS is a 501©3 nonprofit organization.

Funds from this random drawing will be used for the benefit and enhancement of bighorn sheep in California.

**CA Wild Sheep Foundation 2015 RANDOM DRAWING ORDER FORM**

1 ticket (\$20) x no. \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 6 tickets (\$100) x no. \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Annual Membership (\$40) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Life Membership (\$500) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total Amount: = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check  Visa  MasterCard  Discover  AmEx  CCV

# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Send or Fax form to:

CA WSF

423 Broadway #617, Millbrae, CA 94030-1905

Fax: (650) 472-3889

Email: [cawsf@cawsf.org](mailto:cawsf@cawsf.org)

No tickets sent to purchaser; we make out and submit tickets for you.  
 A receipt and ticket numbers will be sent provided an email address or  
 Self Addressed Stamped Envelope is enclosed with your order.

**Ticket orders must be received by APRIL 15, 2015**

See more details at [www.cawsf.org](http://www.cawsf.org)

**PUTTING AND KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN**

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# CALIFORNIA'S ENVIRONMENTALISTS ARE THREATENING TO PUT AN END TO HUNTING

*Posted by Joshua Krause on September 23, 2014, in Conspiracy Fact and Theory, Editor's Choice*

In August of 2013, Governor Jerry Brown was handed a stack of gun control laws, compliments of the state legislature. While many were vetoed, the governor did sign AB-711 into law. This piece of legislation would outlaw the use of lead ammunition for hunting anywhere in the state, effective January of 2019. The law is essentially an update from a previous lead ammunition ban designed to help save the California Condor.

However, many fear that this could effectively ban hunting across the state. The National Shooting Sports Foundation recently conducted a poll amongst avid hunters to see how this legislation might hurt their favorite pastime.

The survey-based report by Southwick Associates quantifies the problems that this ban will cause. Non-lead ammunition is not available for about half of hunting calibers, and the report found the California ban will cause severe shortages nationwide.

Due to technical and market-based constraints on manufacturers, the implementation of AB711 will at least triple the price of ammunition, driving more than one-third of the state's hunters to hunt less or stop hunting completely. With the loss of more than 50,000 hunters in the state, California's economy will see a loss of millions of dollars in salaries and in tax revenue.

In addition, as hunters are the primary source of conservation funding in the state, a dramatic decline in hunters means fewer dollars for wildlife conservation.

Isn't that insane? The environmentalists are marginalizing the main source of income towards the state's conservation efforts. Not that many of them would notice, since they're too busy sipping latte's in the city. For them, the "environment" is some far away wonderland they might see once a year in Tahoe, or perhaps a Prius commercial. As far as they know, the environment is a manicured lawn behind the local skate park.

The real environmentalists are the hunters, backpackers, and fishermen who love spending their time in the wilderness. They have the greatest interest in saving the environment, and they pay for it every year when they renew their licenses. I have to mention fisherman too of course, since the state is now proposing a ban on lead sinkers as well.

It would be tragic if the cause weren't so ridiculous. The state's belief that lead ammunition is

poisoning wildlife like the California Condor, is completely baseless.

In fact, the lead found in bullets isn't nearly as toxic as commonly believed. It's not in the molecular form that is bioavailable to most animals. A recent study conducted in Germany found that when the lead from ammo is ingested, only a small percentage actually ends up in the body. Most of it passes through harmlessly. In fact, numerous studies have come to the same conclusion. According to [huntfortruth.org](http://huntfortruth.org), a site dedicated to exposing the lies behind the lead ban, the CDC conducted a study in the Midwest to determine the toxicity of game meat consumed by hunters:

This finding is consistent with a study in 2008 conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The study compared blood-lead levels of North Dakotans that consumed game meat harvest with lead ammunition and blood-lead levels of North Dakotans that did not eat game meat. After taking blood samples from over 700 hunters and non-hunters, the CDC evaluated the effect of consuming varying amounts of game meat and its correlation to blood-lead levels.

The 2008 CDC report claimed that hunters who consumed game meat as a significant portion of their diet exhibited, on the average, nearly imperceptibly elevated blood-lead levels (0.30ug/dl) compared to the non-game consuming control group. This slight difference between the hunters' blood-lead levels and those of the non-hunters' is statistically insignificant. Most importantly, the CDC report also revealed that the hunters' blood-lead levels were significantly less than the levels found in the average American.

Despite the robust debate concerning human exposure to lead toxicity from lead ammunition, there has been no clear evidence that the consumption of game meat has ever caused lead poisoning in humans. All doctors are required to report cases of lead poisoning to their state health agencies and to the Center for Disease Control, yet no cases have ever been traced to wild game meat. In fact, numerous state agencies have concluded after reviewing the research that there is not sufficient evidence to support claims of lead toxicity in humans and have published statements notifying hunters that game meat is safe to eat.

So is it somehow different for Condors? Because that's the accusation. For years we've been told that

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# SODA MOUNTAIN SOLAR PROJECT

## *Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report, State Clearinghouse Number# 2012101075*

The Project, proposed by Soda Mountain Solar, LLC, is for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of approximately 2,455.57-acres, 358-megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generation plant, interconnection (gen-tie) transmission line, operations and maintenance of facilities, and site access roads. The Project is located in central San Bernardino County, California, entirely on BLM-administered lands, approximately six miles southwest of the town of Baker, California. This is the project of "most concern" for DBH.

Following are excerpts of arguments for moving this project somewhere away from known DBH corridors!

### **Nelson's Bighorn Sheep**

CDFW emphasizes the importance of re-establishing and maintaining connectivity between the South Soda Mountains and North Soda Mountains in terms of demographic and genetic benefits, and the importance of both to maintaining metapopulation function. The Department also noted the early recognition of the importance of preventing additional restrictions to movement in the vicinity of these ranges. More than 40 years ago, and in comments specific to the Soda Mountains, it was recognized that consideration should be given to allowing for sheep movements and that construction of any facilities that would further restrict opportunities for movement would be detrimental to the persistence of bighorn sheep.

Epps and coauthors used a sophisticated modeling exercise to evaluate the importance of the area in question relative to connectivity between areas north (west) and south (east) of Interstate Highway 15. The network analysis reported by those authors indicated that, "... the North-South Soda Mountains connection is the most important restorable corridor for long-term demographic potential ... across the entire southeastern Mojave Desert of California...". The authors then concluded that the proposed Soda Mountains Solar Project, "... has the potential to interfere with, if not preclude, future corridor restoration efforts in this location, including the building of one or more bridges for sheep..." and that, "Given the intensity of proposed development

in these areas and associated fencing, it is very unlikely that bighorn sheep would be able to move across any developed area."

The potential value of establishing water sources in the North Soda Mountains in an effort to support a population of bighorn sheep in that range was first emphasized in the early 1970s, and the value of doing so to help restore connectivity between the South Soda Mountains and ranges to the north have been emphasized in the draft desert bighorn sheep management plan. With that in mind, the potential value of existing underpasses along I-15 must not be diminished, despite speculation that the probability of their use by bighorn sheep is low because most of the existing culverts are <26.3 feet in width.

The Departments review of available information, combined with the successes of extending the range of bighorn sheep through the development of additional water sources, leads to conclusion that development of a single water source, one on each side of I-15, is inadequate. Department concludes that multiple water sources are necessary in an effort to encourage use by bighorn sheep on a year-round basis in the south end of the North Soda Mountains and to encourage use in the vicinity of the Department recommended wildlife bridges and existing culverts, which could increase the probability of movement by bighorn sheep.

The Department concludes and recommends the construction and maintenance of six water developments in the vicinity of the project site has far greater potential to enhance the probability of movement by bighorn sheep than will two water developments designed to, "Encourage bighorn sheep to cross I-15 in a safe area." The Department suggests these water developments be placed as follows, with the actual locations yet to be determined: (1) one in the north end of the North Soda Mountains, to provide this resource to any bighorn sheep that move southward to the North Soda Mountains from the Avawatz Mountains; (2) one further south, also in the North Soda Mountains, to provide water as animals expand their range in a southerly direction in the North Soda Mountains, in an effort to "stairstep" the population southward, as was done in the Sheephole Mountains; (3) two water sources near, or at, selected culverts or wildlife bridges on the north side of I-15, to encourage animals to

the consumption of carcasses left by hunters is the main source of lead poisoning in the bird. But as you'll see, there are far more likely causes for the traces of lead found in this species. In fact, since California's previous lead ban, it was found that the levels of lead found in the California Condor has increased despite a 98.89 percent compliance rate among hunters.

Rather than pointing their fingers at hunters, the state should be looking at the countless other sources of lead. In fact, the lead found in industrial sources is often water soluble, making it very accessible to the bodies of humans and animals. These sources include:

• Solder, pewter, stained glass, jewelry, pottery, communication cable, radiation protection and PVC plastics contain some form of lead. The lead compounds found in today's products combined with legacy compounded lead from residual paints, pesticides, gasoline, mining tailings, contaminated landfills, microtrash and fallout from industries such as foundries and smelters is now ubiquitous in our environment.

The source of lead found in the California Condor could be from many of these; lead paint in particular.

remain in the vicinity of those potential passageways (i.e., they would "bait" sheep to those sites and encourage use in those areas by providing a resource of value to the sheep); and two additional water developments at the south end of each of the wildlife bridges or culverts described in (3), above, again in an effort to "bait" sheep from the north end of the South Soda Mountains to the opening of the chosen culvert(s) or underpass(es).

It is extremely important that opportunities for bighorn sheep to move through the existing underpasses not be hindered. "The development of a solar power generation project between the North and South Soda Mountains would likely preclude such use of some of these underpasses."

The Department has identified a wildlife bridge location (Attachment 1) that the project would preclude the sheep access to. The project as proposed also reduces sheep access to foraging habitat and escape terrain. To reduce impacts to bighorn sheep

If the Condor was found to be eating lead paint, it certainly wouldn't be the only case. On the Midway Atoll, the Laysan Albatross was nearly driven to extinction, after it was found that the bird was consuming the paint chips that were peeling from many of the decaying military buildings in the region.

After looking over this lead ban, I suspect there is something going on behind the scenes that we're not privy to. This anti-gun legislation was among many other bills that were given to Jerry Brown last year, most of which were completely outrageous. These included the banning of any semi-automatic weapon with a detachable magazine capable of hold more than ten rounds, or making it illegal for people convicted of drunk driving to own a firearm. Most of these were shot down by the governor, except for the lead ban. If you ask me, he was well aware of the outcry and overwhelming noncompliance that would ensue, had he not vetoed these bills. I suspect he let this one pass, just so he could maintain his liberal "street cred" as it were.

Either that, or it's just another signpost along the slippery slope that gun owners have become so accustomed to.

Delivered by The Daily Sheeple

the Department recommends placing the project perimeter fence 0.25 miles from the 10% slope and leaving Razor Road in its existing location.

The DEIS/DEIR states that the Alternative A (Proposed Action) would have a significant and unavoidable impact on BHS and Alternatives B, C, and D may retain portions of the BHS movement corridor. As stated previously BHS are a fully protected species and the Department cannot authorize their take. The Department recommends the Lead Agency require the applicant implement the above mitigation measures. The installation of the wildlife bridges in conjunction with the installation of permanent water sources, placing the project perimeter fence .25 miles from the 10% slope and leaving Razor Road in its existing location would eliminate direct, indirect, cumulative impacts of the project and provide connectivity thus minimizing the loss of genetic diversity and conserve metapopulation function through greater stability, population size and increased gene flow.

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# CALIFORNIA WILD SHEEP SUMMIT XVI

## November 17, 2014, Rancho Cucamonga

*by Mike J. Borel*

CA WSF and SCBS hosted Sheep Summit XVI on November 17. This has proven to be a valuable interactive seminar and a Summit XVII is scheduled for April 24, 2015 – the day before our annual fundraiser in Rancho Cordova. Following is a brief summary of Session XVI.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: CDFW, MNP, CAWSF, SCBS

New information reviewed:

1. Desert Bighorn Sheep Activities, Staffing and Plans in the Regions Update – David Elms, Tom Stephenson
2. Capture Results (just completed) – Regina Abella
3. "Comprehensive Bighorn Sheep Plan - Status of Public Review" – Regina Abella
4. DBH Disease Update and Actions – Regina Abella
5. Survey Plans and Any Results To Date – Regina Abella
6. Getting Helicopters Back in Service for Survey Work – Kyle Meintzer
7. Progress on State Lands Commission Leases, Including CEQA Work – Steve Marschke, Vern Bleich
8. Report on Recent Activities in WAFWA, Wild Sheep & Goat Council, Desert Bighorn Council, Boone & Crockett Club, etc. that are of Value and Interest for California Wild Sheep – Vern Bleich
9. Status of Both New and Refurbishments of Water Developments – Steve Marschke
10. Status of Endowment for Management of the Cushenbury Sheep Population in the San Bernardinos, as well as to Survey and Possibly Capture in the San Gabriels – Jeff Villepique
11. Big Game Advisory Committee: Project Grants Funded, Status, Learnings – Kyle Meintzer
12. Peninsular have the numbers to be able to downlist! Issues preventing: 1) Personnel, 2) San Jacinto needs some development, 3) need for fence near Palm Desert/Palm Springs
13. DFW trying to figure out better coordination between regions and HQ. Disease issue did bring more priority and people to the DBH. Paul Frame, Paul Blakey, Daniella (grad student OSU), Austin are additions to program since 18 mo.
14. DFW is applying for PR grant for added personnel.
15. Sacramento committed for funding of a permanent intermittent employee (July 2015). David Elm acknowledged that CA WSF and SCBS has had a significant impact on this happening.
16. December 31 – expected date for start of public review of Comprehensive Plan. Regina will send it to us at that point.
17. Ground surveys to be conducted in January.
18. Burros – Need to be controlled. Dick Weaver suggests approaching University soil scientist or forage scientist to study impact of burros.

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.

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# CALIFORNIA STATE ELECTION BRIEF 2014

## What Does It Mean for Hunters and Shooters?

*Special Report – Gaines & Associates*

November 10, 2014

*This Gaines & Associates “Special Report – California State Election Brief 2014” will provide you with a recap of the November 2014 California State Election. This Gaines & Associates “Special Report” is provided as a service to clients of Gaines & Associates.*

At Gaines & Associates, we have been approached countless times by people with questions about California’s complicated political arena, how it works and how it impacts our hunting heritage. We are always pleased to take the time. A greater understanding of, and involvement in California’s political process by the hunting community is critical to the future of our heritage. This Gaines & Associates “Special Report” will provide a brief overview of how our State Legislature is built, how it works, and how last Tuesday’s election may impact hunting, shooting and wildlife conservation in our State.

### **CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE – HOW IT’S BUILT**

The California State Legislature is a bicameral body consisting of the California State Assembly with 80 members, and the California State Senate with 40 members. Members of the State Assembly serve two-year terms, while members of the State Senate serve four-year terms. In short, every State Assembly seat is up for election every two years, while twenty State Senate seats are up for election at each two-year election cycle.

Making things even more interesting, as well as more confusing, is the fact that the California’s State Legislature has “term limits” – initially established in 1990 following the passage of Proposition 140. Proposition 140 limited Legislators to three terms in the State Assembly and two terms in the State Senate. In June 2012, voters approved Proposition 28 which allows Legislators to serve a maximum of 12 years without regard to whether the years are served in the State Assembly or the State Senate. Legislators first elected on or before June 2012 are restricted by the previous term limits called out by Proposition 140. With term limits eliminating long-serving incumbents from the ballot, each California State election

proves to be interesting, with many seats up for grabs and much at stake. The November 2014 State election was no different.

For many, the November 2014 election will be remembered as a night of sweeping victories for Republicans on Capitol Hill and throughout much of the nation. But, as we have said so many times, California is different. Although Republicans did well in California, last Tuesday night was far from historic for the conservative party.

Does it matter? When it comes to issues of importance to California’s hunting, shooting and wildlife conservation community at California’s State Capitol, it does. History has proven that, although there certainly are many exceptions, the Democratic Party has historically been the party least supportive of hunting and our Second Amendment rights. Why? Because, in many cases, it is the Democratic Party that represents California’s urban legislative districts – constituencies that largely have little understanding of our time-honored hunting heritage and its role in wildlife conservation and management. Residents of these urban areas elect representatives that reflect their values and often share their misunderstandings of our proud hunting and shooting traditions. Today, with California becoming an increasingly urban state and the Legislature made up of increasingly urban districts, the future of hunting and shooting in our state is facing an uphill battle.

Two years ago, in the November 2012 election, Democrats captured two-thirds of the seats of the Senate and the Assembly – giving them a legislative “supermajority” and the power to raise taxes or place constitutional amendments on the ballot without a single Republican vote. Over time, that “supermajority” power eroded, however, after two Democratic state senators were charged with political corruption, and a third was convicted of voter fraud. Going into Election Day 2014, with not enough seats at play in either house – in competitive districts – for Republicans to possibly regain any measure of control, only two real questions remained: Would the Democrats regain a supermajority in both houses, or would the Republicans net enough seats to regain relevance at the Capitol. At the close of the last session, the Democratic Party held 55 seats in the Assembly, the

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Republicans held 24, and one was vacant. Last Tuesday, all 80 Assembly seats up were up for grabs, with 23 incumbents – fourteen Democrats and nine Republicans – not seeking re-election due to term limits or other reasons. At the end of the evening, with all the votes cast, Republicans had grabbed a net three seats – giving the Democratic Party 52 seats and the Republicans 28 for the upcoming 2015/2016 Legislative Session. Although the Democrats may not have regained the 2/3rds “supermajority” they had in the previous session, they have maintained a stronghold on the Assembly. Assembly races of note include: District 36 (Palmdale) where incumbent Democrat Steve Fox was defeated by Republican Tom Lackey; District 65 (Fullerton), where incumbent Democrat Sharon Quirk-Silva was defeated by Republican Young Kim; and District 66 (Gardena), where incumbent Democrat Al Muratsuchi was defeated by Republican David Hadley.

Gaines & Associates “Special Report – California State Election Brief 2014” – November 10, 2014

In the State Senate, going into the election, Democrats held 27 seats, the Republicans 12, with one being vacant – meaning the GOP needed to pick up at least two seats to erase the supermajority and many more to be a factor. Twenty Senate seats total were at play, with ten incumbents – nine Democrats and one Republican – not seeking re-election. When the Election Day 2014 dust finally settled, Republicans had picked up two seats – leaving the Democrats with 25 seats, Republicans with 14, with one remaining vacant going into the 2015/2016 Session. Like in the Assembly, the Republican Party had managed to erase the Democrat supermajority, but fell far short of stealing the seats necessary to have any measure of power.

The new 2015/2016 State Legislature will convene, only to organize, in the Assembly and Senate Chambers, respectively, at noon on Monday, December 1st. Following their organizational meeting, both houses will go back into recess until Monday, January 5, 2015.

## SUMMARY – WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

Although, nationwide, we saw major changes in the political makeup of Capitol Hill and in many State Houses. California, as usual, marched to a different drummer – with only minor changes in the balance of power of our State Legislature. What does that mean for those who care about hunting, shooting and science-based wildlife management in California? The continued urban tilt of the Legislature, combined with an increasingly powerful animal-rights and gun control lobby, means two more tough years of battling to defeat policy proposals which threaten hunting, wildlife management and our Second Amendment rights.

What can we do? With your help, Gaines & Associates will continue to work with our clients, our partners and the California Legislature Outdoor Sporting Caucus to educate both new and experienced urban Legislators of the importance of science-based wildlife management, the critical lead role of hunting in wildlife conservation and the importance of our Second Amendment. Gaines & Associates will continue to canvas every corner of every political forum of importance in our state and provide our clients with real-time updates on pending policy decisions of concern – along with the information they need to have their voices heard to help make a difference. Finally, Gaines & Associates staff will continue to provide our clients with the utmost professional representation and advocacy on their behalf at every political level on every important issue.

For full detail on every district and statewide race of the California State Election 2014, click Election 2014. For more information on any district race of California State Election 2014, please contact Gaines & Associates at [info@gainesandassociates.net](mailto:info@gainesandassociates.net). For those interested in the services of Gaines & Associates, please contact us at [info@gainesandassociates.net](mailto:info@gainesandassociates.net).

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## INFORMATIVE AND USEFUL NEWS CLIPS FROM CDFW

*Thanks to Clark Blanchard*

**The Turkey Invasion:** Spurred on by animal lovers and curious passersby, wild turkeys are expanding into urban neighborhoods and taking over areas of the East Bay hills. And there's nothing we can do about it.

East Bay Express, 11-5-14

### **Killing of 11 Coyotes in California Infuriates**

**Conservationists:** The killing of 11 coyotes in Bakersfield during a weekend hunting contest has infuriated conservationists who are trying to ban animal killing competitions that they say are needlessly harming important predator populations in California, including, potentially, migrating gray wolves.

San Francisco Chronicle, 11-3-14

**Girls Killing Birds:** Women drive ascending popularity of waterfowl hunting: State wildlife agencies are diversifying interest in the lucrative sport of hunting by turning their sights to a once-overlooked audience: women and children.

Sacramento News & Review, 11-6-14

### **Youth Essay Contest Promotes Heritage and**

**Hunting Ethics:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and California Wildlife Officer Foundation are again co-sponsoring the annual "Passing on the Tradition" essay contest for young hunters.

CDFW News Release, 10-29-14

**11-Year-Old Hunter Bags Rare Albino Deer:** It's rare that an 11-year-old hunter bags a 12-point buck with a crossbow. It's even more rare when that buck is an albino deer.

USA TODAY, 10-21-14

**Boy Who Shot Albino Deer With Crossbow Receives Death Threats, Family Says:** It's all fun and games until somebody gets famous for shooting a mutant beast. Gavin Dingman is 11 years old. Earlier this week, the Michigan boy went hunting with his dad. During the trip, he took down a 12-point albino buck with a crossbow.

The Huffington Post, 10-23-14

**VIDEO: Who We Are:** "Don't confuse me with being anything else other than proud. Proud to be a

hunter. It's time we stop apologizing for how we get our protein. This is who we are. Unless you're a small time rancher, small time farmer, a hunter or fishermen... you really have no idea where your food comes from. Most people don't even think about it. Well, we think about it."

Grandview Outdoors, 10-16-14

### **Checkpoint Planned to Help Stop Spread of Chronic Wasting Disease and Quagga and Zebra**

**Mussels:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) wardens will check vehicles and boats in San Bernardino County to prevent the introduction and spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and quagga and zebra mussels. The checkpoint will be conducted at Yermo Border Station on Monday, Oct. 20 and Tuesday, Oct. 21.

CDFW News Release, 10-17-14

### **Now that the 2014-15 Hunting Season is in Full Swing, It's a Great Time to Encourage and Mentor a Less-Experienced Hunter:**

Check out CDFW's Apprentice Hunt opportunities for pheasant, dove, quail, chukar and wild turkey. These educational opportunities are designed especially for new hunters, youth hunters, women hunters, mobility-impaired hunters and other individuals who have limited experience or opportunity to hunt on their own. There are opportunities scheduled around the state, from north in Tehama County to as far south as San Diego County. Click here to see what hunts are coming up in your area:

<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/DFGSpecialHunts/Default.aspx>

CDFW Facebook Post, 10-21-14

### **2014/2015 Waterfowl Hunting Opportunities**

**Available in Alameda County:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is offering fall waterfowl hunting opportunities at Eden Landing Ecological Reserve (ELER) in Hayward. The reserve includes former salt ponds now managed by CDFW as low-salinity waterfowl habitat as well as areas that have been restored to full tidal action. Access to ELER for waterfowl hunting will be open for 100 hunters on a first-come, first-served basis for each hunt only on the dates listed below. There is no fee for these hunts.

CDFW News Release, 10-22-14

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**Ammunition Manufacturers Set to Abandon California Hunters, Make Total Hunting Ban Easier:** The ammunition manufacturing industry in the United States effectively said it is going to abandon California hunters, help reduce hunter opportunity and sound wildlife management, and assist in driving more hunters from the sport. This will make it much easier for the anti-hunters in this state to accomplish their goal and simply ban hunting entirely.

Jim Mathews, Outdoor News Service, 9-20-14

**Brown Administration's Angling to Ban Lead Fishing Weights:** Californians who enjoy fishing, heads up: Gov. Jerry Brown has his eye on your tackle box. He's especially interested in your lead sinkers, starting with the tiny split shot.

George Skelton, Los Angeles Times, 9-21-14

**Woman, 65, is Attacked by 300-pound Bear, Fights Back and Survives:** One minute, Emily Miles was walking her dogs in a Santa Barbara County avocado grove, the next, a hulking 300-pound black bear was sinking its teeth into her left thigh after tackling her to the ground.

Los Angeles Times, 9-25-14

**Desert Plan Seeks to Balance Environment, Renewable Energy:** With towering white wind turbines turning slowly in the background, U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell on Tuesday unveiled a plan to manage both conservation and renewable energy production on more than 22 million acres in California — nearly one-quarter of the state — as part of a federal and state effort to promote clean energy production.

Los Angeles Times, 9-23-14

**SHARE Program to Offer Fall Hunts for Wild Pig, Waterfowl, Dove and Pheasant:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) program is offering wild pig, waterfowl, dove and pheasant hunting opportunities on three different properties.

Imperial Valley News, 9-18-14

**Junior Hunting Licenses:** Governor Brown recently signed AB 1709 (Frazier), which increases eligibility for lower cost junior hunting licenses from age 16 to age 18. This will help keep costs down for families and give young hunters increased access to mentoring programs, guided hunts and other activities aimed at teaching hunter safety, wildlife conservation, hunting techniques and increasing hunter recruitment and retention. Starting July 1, 2015, anyone under 18 will be eligible to purchase a junior hunting license and take advantage of additional hunting opportunities and programs offered by CDFW and its partners.

CDFW Facebook Post, 9-26-14

**CDFW Reminds Hunters to Help Keep Chronic Wasting Disease Out of California:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is asking hunters to help prevent the introduction of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) into California. CWD is a neurologic disease that is fatal to deer, elk and moose.

CDFW News Release, 9-18-14

**Nonprofit Groups Can Raise Funds With California Hunting Tags:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) invites nonprofit organizations to help wildlife by auctioning big game hunting license tags for the 2015-16 season.

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## <1 CLUB MEMBERS FROM CALIFORNIA

Aaron Bleess - nonmember  
Vince Bloom - nonmember  
Dan McAweeney - expired member 2010  
Jim Olivarez - nonmember  
Dwight Ortmann - expired member 2012  
Randy Potter - nonmember  
Craig Van Arsdale - active member  
Tad Bowers - nonmember  
Joshua Gaffen - nonmember  
Scott Roland - nonmember  
David Welch - active member

The <1 Club is for aspiring sheep hunters who have not yet taken a ram of any North American species. Members have a special drawing for a sheep hunt at the Sheep Show! Join if you are eligible.

If you know any of the nonmembers above, please reach out to them. They are WSF members and should also be members of CA WSF!



**We would love to meet you -  
here's our convention schedule for 2015:**

Wild Sheep Foundation "The Sheep Show" Reno, NV Jan 7-10, 2015  
 Dallas Safari Club "Traditions" Dallas, TX Jan 15-18, 2015  
 Grand Slam Club/OVIS, Reno, NV Jan 28-31, 2015  
 Safari Club International, Las Vegas, NV Feb 3-6, 2015



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# SOME THOUGHTS ON DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP AND THE RELATIONSHIP TO WATER AND NATURAL MINERAL LICKS

*by Carlos Gallinger, [www.thewayofthings.org](http://www.thewayofthings.org)*

The thoughts and ideas here took me a long time to formulate and have been influenced by spending a lot of time watching desert bighorn sheep and talking to people who do the same. I also worked closely with The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep photo survey.

We can start this discussion as a tale of two springs in the North Bristol Mountains near Ludlow. One is called Hyten Springs and the other is called Hyten Tank. The Society has covered these two water sources with the photo survey for some time. Though they are only a mile apart and both have good escape terrain, the sheep do not use them the same. Hyten Springs is rarely used, perhaps only two or three times a month, mostly by mature rams. Hyten Tank is used almost constantly, especially during the summer months. Since anywhere from 20 to 30 sheep depend on this water source, Hyten Tank is by far the most important.

For a long time this was a mystery to me. Then one day I was walking around the area of Hyten Tank and noticed a small area that had a lot of sheep tracks. You could see where they were converging on a small light-colored patch of dirt. It was a natural mineral lick. With this fresh in my mind, I walked up the main wash and was only about 200 yards from Hyten Tank when I noticed a larger area that the sheep had been using as a mineral lick. I set up a trail camera and was able to get pictures of sheep using this natural mineral lick. This explained the difference in use between these two water sources, as well as shedding light on the use pattern of the other water sources in this mountain range.

A year or so later I went to look at the newly installed drinker in the Newberry Springs area at the old quarry site. Looking around I noticed only 50 yards away, in an area that was still in its natural state, another mineral lick that had been used quite extensively. I came back a few days later and actually got some video of sheep using both the water and the mineral lick, and I spotted other licks in the area.

This got me thinking about how this might play into the natural history of bighorn sheep and their water sources in the Newberry Mountains. We can start with Newberry Springs. The spring is only about a mile away from the quarry's water/mineral lick. This natural water source has been unavailable to bighorn sheep for over a century because of human presence. When it was available to them,

this spring had a mineral source right next to it in a small depression – perhaps 10 or 15 acres – that has a salty alkali soil. The minerals and salts of this depression would have washed down from the very sources that the sheep are using today. So it is that the quarry's water/mineral lick mimics the original and natural environment very closely and leads to a more natural distribution and internal biology of this herd.

New Springs is approximately 4 miles away. I've watched and maintained this spring since the mid-1980s. It was part of our camera survey for several years. In that time the desert bighorn seem to use the spring once or twice a week in the summer months. It produces a fair amount of water and is never dry.

Kane Springs has been producing water since ancient times and has been improved for the use of cattle. I have known and watched the spring for many years. It has been part of our photo survey and we've collected a lot of data there. It seems that this spring is used by bighorn sheep in an erratic manner, some years more than others. It is about 5.2 miles from the quarry's water/mineral lick.

BBG 25 was built in 1986, and I helped choose its location. It is about 3 miles from the quarry's water/mineral lick. I watched and maintained it as the area captain from its construction to the year 2000, when I start wandering more widely across the Southwest. In those first 14 years I don't think a single bighorn sheep ever drink from it. Most the time it had water. This was always puzzling to me. The guzzler is in a beautiful little canyon that is very isolated and quiet, perfect escape terrain and some of the best vegetation in the Newberry Mountains. When you got 200 or 300 yards away from it, you could tell the bighorn sheep had been there. Then sometime in 2008 I heard that the people who were working the Newberry quarry were seeing a lot of sheep and they had put out some water for them. So I went to investigate. It was everything that BBG 25 was not. To start with, the water was near a paved road and a large noisy conveyor belt that hauled rock. Also in this area there was a rock crusher, and a considerable amount of blasting was going on regularly. Yet looking around at all the tracks and droppings at this water source I could see that there were a fair number sheep here and they were using this water constantly. At this time I did not notice the

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mineral lick. I thought it would be worth looking at BBG 25 to see if things had changed, since it had been several years since I'd been there.

When I got there I was surprised to see tracks and droppings everywhere and even beds near the guzzler. The place smelled like a stockyard. I found this to be interesting and worth investigating more. My first thought was that the population had shifted from Ord Mountain down to this area perhaps due to some unusual weather pattern. I spent two or three days walking Ord Mountain. To my surprise there was more sign of desert bighorn sheep on Ord Mountain than I had ever seen before. So I did some walking in the Rodman Mountains and the West Ord Mountains. They all showed a significant increase in bighorn sheep activity. I came to the conclusion that there had been a significant increase in the population of bighorn sheep in this area. This had occurred in the seven or eight years that had elapsed since I walked these mountains regularly. While there is no hard data on this subject, it is my opinion that this population easily doubled and more likely tripled in that timeframe. I realize this would seem to be a bit too much of an increase to those people who deal with bighorn sheep, but I stand by this estimate. Of course at the time, I had no idea why. I had not yet noticed the mineral lick at the quarry. From 2008 onward the population seems to have been stable and spreading. Judging from the trail cameras, this herd seemed to be very healthy.

Given all this, here are some thoughts and observations on the subject of desert bighorn sheep water and natural mineral licks.

The fact that large herbivores will often go to great extent to get to the right salt or minerals is nothing new. I witnessed this myself once on a hunt in the Canadian Rockies, where I saw Stone's sheep walk through more than a mile of dense forest to get to a salt lick. Another time in Africa I saw a place where the elephants would bash their way through a mile or two of jungle to get to a salt/mineral lick that had a small perennial stream by it. The importance of a salt or mineral source for desert bighorn sheep is not the question here. What is needed now is species-specific knowledge about the relationship of water and mineral sources.

With this in mind, those of us in the desert bighorn sheep community can see that the story that took place at the quarry in the Newberry Mountains is a familiar one. It's happened many times that desert bighorn sheep seem to want to hang around an operating mine or quarry in spite of all the noise and human activity that's going on there. It may be this combination of water and minerals, sometimes in the form of "crushed rock," that is the key.

For many years, I have observed in the Newberry Mountains that the desert bighorn sheep in this range do not use the salt blocks put out by the cattlemen. Perhaps we should start scrutinizing this particular issue of artificial salt blocks collectively and develop a knowledgeable and decisive position on it.

If we take stock of what's going on at some of these mines and quarries – in particular the Newberry quarry and places like Hyten Tank – we may find some information that is valuable to understanding such things as population dynamics and maintaining the overall health of a herd of desert bighorn sheep. These situations seem to indicate the importance of having the right minerals close to a water source. I think the history of the Newberry quarry backed up by the photo survey indicates this. People who know desert bighorn sheep generally do not think that a place 2 or 3 miles from a spring is very far, considering the distances that desert bighorn will go when they want to. But when it comes to the utilization of minerals perhaps we should rethink this idea.

Another thought or idea that should be considered is manipulating the habitat utilizing minerals. There are many ways that this could be done. Perhaps one of the most simple and straightforward ways to do this is to find a place where the sheep are using a natural mineral source and take a truck load of this dirt to another spring or guzzler to see what happens. Using some of the modern surveillance tools, such as trail cameras and radio collars, could give us a precise and useful knowledge of this relationship. Modern radio collars with their GPS location systems could really teach us something about water and mineral licks. Some of these collars even have the ability to tell us when the sheep's head is in the downward position. So when we find a GPS location with a lot of concentrated activity and the sheep have their heads in the downward position, we can look on Google Earth to see if there is a vegetation or water source there. If not, it would be a good candidate for a mineral source. This type of data may already exist and only needs to be reviewed in the light of these ideas to reveal this relationship of water and minerals.

Not all mineral sources may be tightly focused and easily revealed in this way. As an example of this, I expect to find Teresa Springs in the Marble Mountains to be a very rich and valuable water/mineral source, with the minerals unevenly distributed for a half mile or more. Doing investigations like this will also give us more mineral sources to analyze and learn what minerals or nutrients the desert bighorn sheep are going after and need. It is also possible that we may find that some of these

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water mineral licks do more damage than good, due to such things as mercury and arsenic. In time we will be able to develop a species-specific and site-specific knowledge of water/mineral sources.

With this thorough understanding of the water/mineral relationship, we would have insight into how this issue has affected such things as disease propagation and control, why some herds have

survived and others have not, and metapopulation distribution. In doing so, I think we will find that certain springs that are thought of as “popular” to desert bighorn sheep are in fact crucial to their survival and are actually a “water/mineral resource.” Perhaps this nomenclature will become part of the lexicon of desert bighorn sheep management.

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## **OPENING BRIEF FILED IN PAYETTE FOREST/BIGHORN SHEEP CASE**

In September 2014, Holland and Hart, LLP filed its Opening Brief on behalf of the Idaho Wool Growers Association, et al. in the Payette Forest/bighorn sheep case.

According to the brief, at the Forest Service's (FS) urging the district court made three legal errors in approving the FS National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures. The court also applied the wrong standard of review to the wool growers claim that the FS failed to obtain the special expertise of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). The core of the suite can be categorized into three parts.

First, the FS failed to comport with the plain meaning of NEPA and its implementing regulations that required it to obtain ARS's special expertise on the merits of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). This requirement is at the heart of NEPA. It compels the lead agency to consider other agencies' special expertise and in so doing, improve the Draft NEPA analysis before it is finalized and presented to the public. No deference is owed to the FS's interpretation of NEPA or its implementing regulations because the statute and regulations are unambiguous and the regulations are those of the Council on Environmental Quality, not the FS.

Second, the FS erred in failing to supplement its Final SEIS with significant information showing that the FS had incorrectly interpreted the Lawrence study.

Third, the FS failed to consider important aspects of its predictive models. One model predicted a risk of

contact between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep without uniformly considering physical barriers to sheep mobility that would have affected the likelihood of contact. Another model predicted disease outbreaks following contact between the species while ignoring information in its own files showing that during significant portions of the year, the species were not on the national forest allotments at the same time. That model also failed to consider the lifecycle of disease transmission and the effect of the passage of time on the probability of a disease outbreak.

These failures show a pattern of FS errors and omissions that could have been avoided had it taken the time necessary to conduct "a transparent process done correctly" as instructed in previous litigation.

Had the FS obtained the special expertise of ARS, it would have both complied with its clear duty under NEPA and acquired the additional information it needed to conduct a supplemental analysis of the Lawrence study. The FS would have also adequately considered key information that was omitted from its new models. For these reasons, the brief requests that the court vacate the Final SEIS and Record of Decision and remand the matter back to the FS for compliance with the law.

Joining Idaho in the case are the American Sheep Industry Association, Public Lands Council, Colorado Wool Growers Association, Wyoming Wool Growers Association, Shirts Brothers Sheep and Carlson Company, Inc.



# California Chapter Wild Sheep Foundation

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Have you hunted Sheep? Yes  No

If "yes," which sheep have you harvested? (Please list and note year)

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