



California Wild Sheep

Spring 2022

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Kenny Womacks - Center Front
Marble / Clipper Mountains
182 0/8"
Largest Ram in State 2021-22
Dry Creek Outfitters





ULTIMA THULE LODGE

CONTACT: DONALD C. MARTIN 310-766-3921



From the Editor's Desk

This is the first issue following the 2021-2022 DBH Season and the last one before our Annual Banquet and Fundraiser. It includes lots of CA DBH Pictures from the season just completed, great hunting stories from California and elsewhere, more on our 2022 Fundraiser (in person again, finally!), fun humor, a recap of our December Sheep Summit, AND MORE!

Good luck in the various state tag draws and raffles for 2022. I hope you have a base plan for the year that doesn't rely on those draws (took me awhile to learn the importance of that!). I trust you participated in the WSF Sheep Week – it was incredibly well done and made major money for wild sheep. We were all so thankful to be together again!

Feedback, ideas, articles & requests are always welcome. Best way to reach me is email: mike.borel@contextnet.com. Due date for input to the 2022 issue is May 20.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS YEAR — NOMINEES SOUGHT FOR CA WSF BOARD ELECTIONS

CA WSF has 16 Board positions with 2 year terms. Half of the positions expire each year, which enables Board continuity from year to year.

We are currently seeking Board candidates. To be eligible to serve on the Board you must have been a member for two years in total. We also have multiple committees, which are appointed by the President each year, but he appreciates volunteers! You do NOT need to be a Board member to serve on a committee. Serving on any committee is both fulfilling and fun. The Fundraiser committee is a good entry point.

If you would be interested in committing some of your time and talent to CA WSF please let President Don Martin or VP Operations and Newsletter Editor Mike Borel know!

In June you will receive a ballot, with candidate information, by email and also in the Summer newsletter. You will be able to vote by email, mail, or fax.

Board Members whose Terms expire June 2022: Mike Borel, Jim Fitzgerald, Ben Gordon, Don Priest, Paul Schultheis, Zack Walton, Darryl Williams, and Shawn Wood.

Board Members whose Terms expire June 2023: Adam Casagrande, Matt Burke, Ken Crother, Bob Keagy, Maggi Kouffeld, Don Martin, Glen Pyne, and Mike Torres.

After the Board election, we will be electing officers for the next 2 years. Positions include: President, VP Operations, VP North, VP South, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Make a difference, get involved today!

Board of Directors

Officers

President

Donald C Martin (2023)

Northern California Vice President

Ken Crother (2023)

Southern California Vice President

Glen Pyne (2023)

Vice President, Operations

Mike J. Borel (2022)

Secretary

Matt Burke (2023)

Treasurer

Adam Casagrande (2023)

Board of Directors

Jim Fitzgerald (2022)	Paul Schultheis (2022)
Ben Gordon (2022)	Mike Torres (2023)
Robert Keagy (2023)	Zack Walton (2022)
Maggi Kouffeld (2023)	Darryl Williams (2022)
Don Priest (2022)	Shawn Wood (2022)

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.

Content editing by Zack Walton
Humorous outtakes provided by Tammy Scott
Published by Beverly Valdez, ORC-KF1 LLC

Events

2022

April TBD	Desert Bighorn Council Mtg
April 29	Sheep Summit XXXI Sacramento DoubleTree by Hilton
April 30	CA WSF Annual Fundraiser Event 20th Anniversary! Sacramento DoubleTree by Hilton
May 20	Due date for articles for 2Q2022 CAWSF Newsletter
June 1	Ballots out for Board of Directors election
June 28	Completed election ballots due
August 20	Due date for articles for 3Q2022 CAWSF Newsletter
November 20	Due date for articles for 4Q2022 CAWSF Newsletter
December 2	Sheep Summit XXXII Ontario, CA

2023

January 11-14	WSF Sheep Show, Reno
January 19-21	GSCO Convention, Las Vegas
February 20	Due date for articles for 1Q2023 CAWSF Newsletter
February 22-25	Safari Club Convention, Nashville

President's Letter

As hunters, we are in tune with cycles, especially the change in the Seasons. And as we leave the Winter of COVID behind and enter what I hope is a renewed Spring “of normalcy”, we have a lot to be thankful for...and once again there is hope.

Hope that springs forth anew as we enter the application season. Each one of us, in our hearts, looks forward to this renewed opportunity. We all go back to zero and each one of us has a chance at the cliché “hunt of a lifetime”. As sheep hunters, we are hard-wired to embrace this hope. And I want to wish all of you luck in this upcoming application season.

These opportunities are not entitlements. We are not owed these things. The hunting opportunities awarded across the Western States are the by-product of successful conservation. Without conservation, there is no sustainable yield for us to harvest. Congruently, without hunting conservationists, there is no conservation.

All of us as members of CA WSF have embraced this idea; this ideology; this belief system. Our very being is founded in a culture that cycles around the seasons, with hunting at its core. For all that we take, we also take responsibility, and we give back. Often, we do this in surplus to repay a debt that can never truly be repaid. Nevertheless, individual responsibility is at the core of the North American Conservation Model. And we proudly embrace it.

With that said, I expect to see as many of you as possible on April 30 at the Doubletree by Hilton in Sacramento for our long-awaited reunion dinner celebrating, now, more than 20 years of wildlife conservation here in the great state of California. And though we may not agree with all of our state's politicians, we can still agree that there is still much to love about this great state, especially our goal to double the number of desert bighorns. With the hope that in doing so, we double the opportunity for people to appreciate the cycle of seasons and the cycle of life as we pursue California's most iconic specie, the desert bighorn.

Our GALAD program is off to a great start in 2022, by the time of this publication, our first drinker project will have been completed. In conjunction with the Society for the Desert Bighorn, the CA WSF will have fully funded and helped complete a 3-tank drinker system on the Fort Irwin Army Base in Southern California. We thank SCBS, our volunteers, and the United States Army for the hard work and cooperation in this collaboration.

Spring is the season of hope and renewal. There's no better time than now to renew your dedication to CA WSF and make plans to attend our event on April 30. If you are unable to attend, please help support our efforts to double the number of desert bighorns in CA and purchase tickets for our Stone Sheep hunt with Golden Bear Outfitters. They are available now at <http://cawsf.org/store.html> You do not need to be present to win.

And while you're there, consider donating directly to “Give a Lamb a Drink”. For more information on GALAD, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4CnyHzUwCdE> to watch Mike Borel discuss our program with our friend Bill Gaines.

So, save the date now and make your plans to attend. It will be refreshing to all be together again and I look forward to seeing all of you on April 30 in Sacramento.

Good hunting! Donald C. Martin



“THE GHOST” CA DESERT BIGHORN FROM THE MARBLE / CLIPPER MOUNTAINS

by Member Kenny Womack

I grew up in a family of enthusiastic hunters, so hunting has always been a part of my life, and it was fortunate that once I finished pharmacy school and had my businesses up and running, it became something I could really immerse myself in. My passion for hunting has allowed me to engage in hunts across the Western United States and even Internationally. Although, before this unforgettable hunt, I'd never hunted bighorn sheep before, despite applying for tags in California since they began a point system for sheep, antelope, deer, and tule elk in my late forties. While I had drawn tags for Deer and a tule elk over the years, I never really thought that I would ever draw a desert bighorn tag. After applying for more than 20 years, and now in my late 60's, I finally did!

My overall fitness and my ties with the outfitters that I choose are two major contributing components to the hunt. While I have attempted to stay in shape over the years by being an active hiker and cyclist, I increased my regiment, particularly with hiking, in preparation. This was critical because I've always had pain in one of my knees as a result of a torn ACL sustained during my collegiate football career. As for the decision of the outfitter I chose, my decision was influenced by my friendship with Cliff St. Martin, whom I had been long-time buddies with. I grew up competing against him in athletics at a rival high school, and we became closer at junior college when we both displayed our interest in hunting. While I was running my businesses and applying for tags, I noticed Cliff was guiding hunts and decided to hire him on the spot, if and when I earned my tag.

When the moment came and I finally received my tag, I contacted Cliff and his son Matt St. Martin, who is now the owner of Dry Creek Outfitters out of Three Rivers, California. In my conversation with them, I was told that they had been scouting large prospects and would prefer to hunt at the opening of the season, if possible, but unfortunately due to schedule conflicts we set the start day for January 12th. In the months, weeks, and days preceding up to the hunt, I spoke with Cliff on a frequent basis about the probable game and all other circumstances affecting the hunt up until my arrival on the 11th.



Kenny Womacks with 'The Ghost' Ram

When Tom Griffiths, one of my long-time hunting buddies, and I arrived at camp on the evening of the 11th, at dinner, I learned of a ram in the 180" range nicknamed the "Ghost" since it had been observed over the previous few years and had several missed shots taken at him, resulting in him disappearing for the next two or three weeks. Clay DeValle, Casey Nick, Brooks Stiltz, and Carlos Gallinger, all of whom deserve recognition and admiration for their hard work and proficiency, had seen and followed this ram in the days leading up to my arrival.

The next morning, we set out on a four- or five-mile hike uphill to a point that overlooked a draw where the "Ghost" Ram and his one horned companion had been bedding for the previous few days. It wasn't long before Cliff and one of the spotters located the rams making their way into our canyon. Still at more than 700 yards away, the rams only bedded for a short time before traveling back in the direction from which they came and out of our sight again. After a few minutes of discussion, we decided to continue moving on him that day.

Once we relocated to our preferred location, Cliff suggested I set up for a shot even though we hadn't located the rams yet. As I was doing so, the large "Ghost" Ram that we were pursuing began to emerge from behind the minor ridge in the draw and began easing down the side of the hill, trailed by the broken horned ram. While we didn't have a terrific position, we ranged the distance to be 490 yards. I finished setting up while attempting to keep my breath and excitement under control. I took the shot. While it

was an opportunity to get this infamous “Ghost” Ram on my first day of the hunt, I yanked the shot just missing over the ram’s back. Needless to say, both rams fled from the area.

The following day we chose to move to a location where spotters had seen a few rams previously. On an interesting side note, this eastern portion of the mountain had served as a training site for General Patton and his army that would combat Erwin Rommel’s Afrika Korps in northern Africa during the Second World War. There were signs of extensive shrapnel in certain sections, and on a previous trip, Cliff had discovered a Dr. Pepper bottle at a location named Patton ridge, reinforcing the idea that the great general was a big admirer of the beverage.

As for the hunt, we embarked on an eight-mile climb up Patton ridge, spotting a couple of rams along the way. While it was too late in the day to make a move on them, we took it as a good indication for the next day. We started the next morning and saw four or five rams on our way back up the ridge, but nothing worth chasing.

After returning to camp and enjoying a delicious dinner while watching curious Kit Foxes inspect the campsite, we decided to tackle the Marbles Mountains the next day. While heading to the Marbles, we received a call from a spotter that he had relocated the “Ghost” Ram and its broken horn companion. After arriving at 1:00, we began our five-mile climb up the southside of the mountain. When nearing the top, we spotted the two bighorns going through a cut in the hillside. Having a fair sense of where they were headed, Cliff and I continued to the peak.

After being forced to crawl on my side to get where we needed to be, Cliff eased his head over a ridgeline and stated that he could see the two rams. At that instant, we set up for the 240 yard shot. The “Ghost” Ram had come to a halt on the ridge’s precipice. With him being one step away from being gone, Cliff and I had a quick conversation about the shot. Cliff asked if I could make that shot with the animal quartered away, I stated that I believed I could. My first shot hit him and when he turned, I was able to finish him with two more shots. After arriving at the ram, we did a quick field dressing, and tagged him. We then took some quick informal measurements which to our astonishment showed that both his bases were nearly 17” and over 38” in length! Even after a huge 4” deduction on his right horn due to sinusitis he was well over 180! After positioning the ram for photos, we opted to start the five-mile journey back to the truck without the ram because of the time and the approaching night, having the plan to return in the morning to take pictures and retrieve the animal. When we returned the next morning, after a nice night’s sleep and another five-mile journey back to the animal, the excitement almost helped me forget

about my problematic knee, which had swollen to be approximately an inch larger than my other.

This was an incredible experience, and while getting a bighorn took me until I was 69 years old, the experience and trophy made the wait worthwhile, with the official score going down at 182 0/8”, I can’t thank Cliff and Matt St. Martin, as well as their great crew at Dry Creek Outfitters, enough; I’d gladly do another hunt with them, albeit probably not another bighorn due to my age and how long it took to get the tags for my first.

Sea Bass, Lime and Coconut Milk Ceviche

BY MIKE DESIMONE AND JEFF JENSSEN

Serve this bright, creamy dish as a starter or main course.



INGREDIENTS

- 1½ pounds fresh sea bass, deboned and cut into ¼-inch cubes
- Juice from 2 limes, preferably makrut
- Zest of 1 lime, preferably makrut
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon Espelette pepper
- 7 ounces coconut milk
- 3 sage leaves, cut into ribbons

DIRECTIONS

In large glass bowl, toss fish with all ingredients except coconut milk and sage. Let cure in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

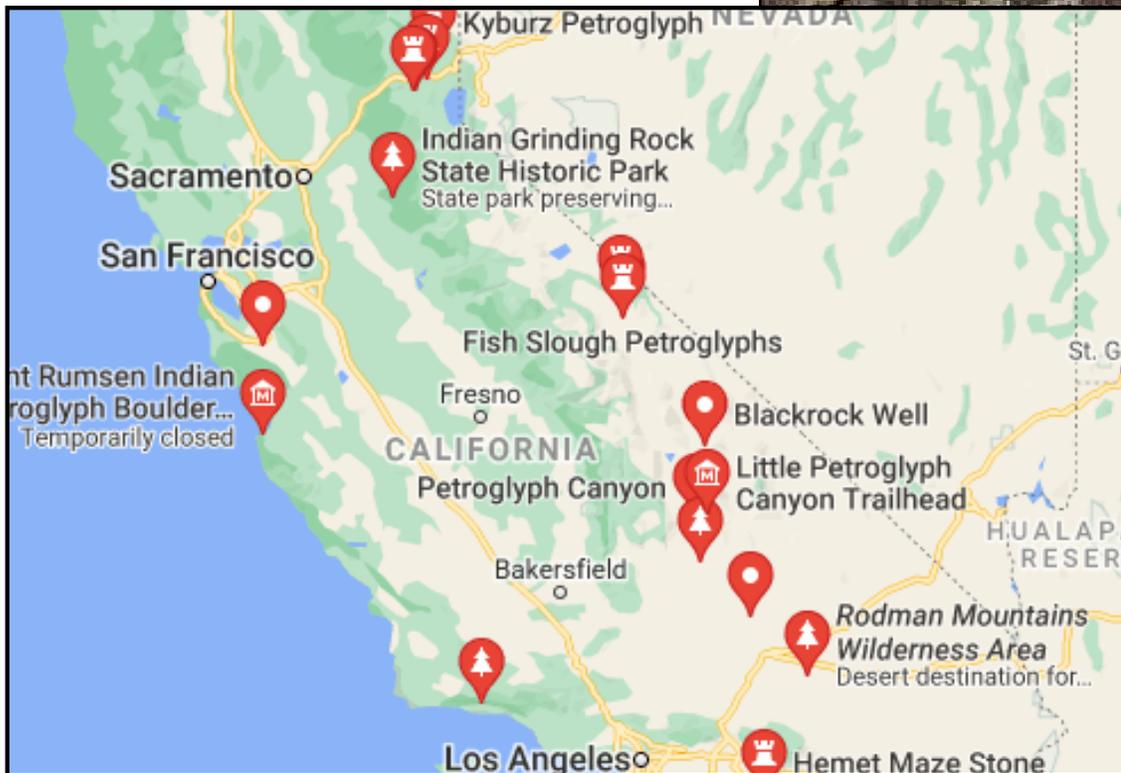
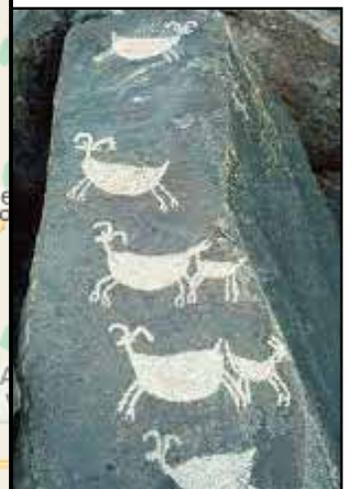
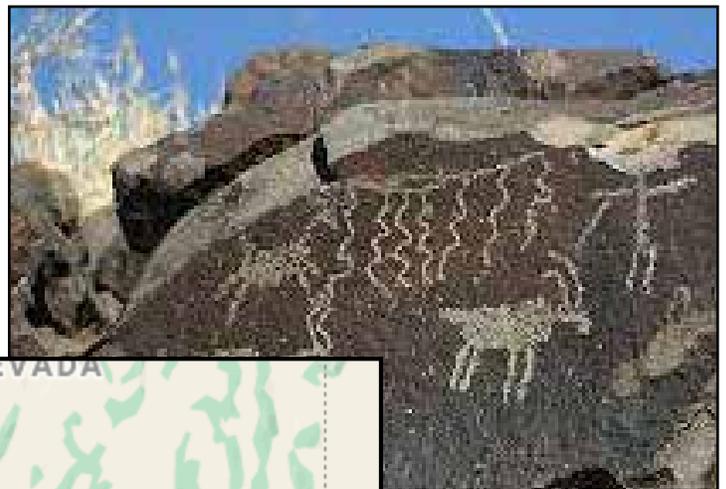
When ready to serve, toss with coconut milk and garnish with sage ribbons. Serves 8 as starter, 4 as main course.

PETROGLYPHS IN CA

By Mike J. Borel

California has a lot of Native American petroglyphs. See the map below noting the main locations, most of which are in Wild Sheep country!! Generally speaking, petroglyphs here range in age from 2,500 years old to 300 years old. And many of the petroglyphs depict wild sheep.

California Rock Art Foundation (CRAF), www.carockart.org, celebrates petroglyphs. It is an organization worth getting on their newsletter distribution. They have tour options periodically. I've done a couple and enjoyed it immensely. You may remember that we had Alan Garfinkel Gold, Ph.D. do a seminar at one of our CA WSF Fundraisers now several years ago. He is on the Board of Directors of CRAF.





Are YOU a CA Wild Sheep Foundation Life Member? NOW is the time to join or upgrade!

SHOW YOUR TRUE COMMITMENT TO THE WILD SHEEP OF CALIFORNIA AND THE WORLD! JOIN OR UPGRADE YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY.

You will be joining a hard working, and hard hunting, group of CA WSF Distinguished Life members when you join or upgrade.
Meet our Distinguished Life Members:

PEGGY BARNETT LEE
VINCE BLOOM
MIKE BOREL
JED BRUSSEAU
ADAM CASAGRANDE
KEVIN CHENG
DAVID COMBS
WILLIAM CULLINS
JIM DISMUKES
DAN EVENSON
SCOTT FINLEY
JAMES FITZGERALD
RICK GARZOLI JR
ANTHONY GIGLIOTTI
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SHAWN WOOD

Join as a Life Member (\$500)

Make a commitment now to continue PUTTING AND KEEPING WILD SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAINS of California! Join CA WSF as a Life Member or a Junior Life Member and receive ONE chance to WIN the special Life Members hunt in 2022.

Upgrade your CA WSF Life Membership (\$1,000)

Upgrade your CA WSF Life Membership to DISTINGUISHED Life Membership (\$1,000) to receive THREE chances to WIN the special Life Members hunt in 2022.

You may also join at the Distinguished Life Member level for \$1,500.

All Distinguished Life Members receive a PELOTON 240 VEST from Kuiu emblazoned with the CA WSF logo.

MY HELICOPTER COUES DEER HUNT

By Darryl Williams, Distinguished Life Member

This odyssey started at the CAWSF Banquet in 2014. Glen Pyne and I were anxious to go on our first Coues Deer hunt that October with Dan Adler (purchased at the WSF auction) when a Coues Deer hunt for two with Rom Dryden came up for auction. We watched as the bidding stalled and I bid just to keep things going...you guessed it...I bought another Coues hunt!

As we were already hunting in October, I contacted Rom to see if he'd be willing to put our hunt on hold while we tried to draw the December rut hunt. He agreed and we started applying along with our good friend Alan Hayes. Seven years later we drew and put plans in place for our hunt. Glen had a buffalo hunt in Africa and a trip planned to Mexico, so we agreed to start in mid-December. Unfortunately, some family responsibilities kept Glen from joining us.

Alan and I stopped on our way to Rom's to check zero on our rifles at the Tucson Rifle Club and arrived around 4:00pm. As we were hunting a short drive from Rom's home, it would serve as our base of operations. Pretty tough hunting to sleep in an actual bed, have a shower each evening and eat great home cooked meals.

Day one of the hunt started with Alan heading out with two guides and Rom and I going to a different area. Both groups saw lots of deer but no shooter



Search and Rescue doin' what they do!



He's Got a Ticket to Ride!

bucks. That afternoon Rom and I moved to another area where we saw a number of deer and one buck that I'd classify as a last day deer.

On day two, we essentially repeated day one. Rom and I saw over 100 deer in the valley we were glassing that morning, including two small bucks fighting. We did see two larger bucks across the valley move into a bowl and disappear. That afternoon we moved to another area and saw a few deer and a beautiful Coatimundi.

On day three, we all converged on the valley where we had seen all the deer the day before. Rom and I hiked in from the opposite side so we had the deer surrounded. We did see deer, but nothing like day 2. We did see a couple of good bucks move down a ridge into the same bowl as the day before. It was starting to look like all the larger bucks were staying up in the mountains. We also saw a large bobcat, and two groups of javelina.

That evening we decided to hike into the ridges near the bowl where we'd been seeing the larger bucks.

We left early enough to arrive in the area just before sunrise. The 5-mile hike in wasn't too bad and we arrived right on time. We set up to glass and Rom immediately found a group of nine deer – seven does and two bucks. We watched the deer feed for about a half hour and I talked myself into taking the larger of the two bucks.

I set up my rifle on Rom's tripod and waited for the buck to give me a broadside shot. Just as he was turning, the sun peaked over the mountains to my right and I was blind. We tried moving around, holding a hat to block the sun, placing a jacket over the scope – nothing worked. Rom finally moved my tripod to my right and hung a jacket over it – success! I steadied for the shot and missed! We were far enough away that the buck relaxed and gave me a second chance. At the shot he ran downhill and disappeared in the brush. One of the does followed him and stood above the bottom of the little bowl stomping her feet and blowing – we knew he was down.

After a few minutes we split up – Rom went high and I went low – and moved toward the bowl. Just as I stepped over the ridge top, my wounded buck busted out and I was able to drop him on the run at about 50 yards. That's when the excitement really started. As I turned to my left to go to my buck, I slipped and fell. I have no idea what I stepped on, but there I was on the ground crying like Nancy Kerrigan. I knew my ankle was injured pretty badly as I could feel my boot getting tight from the swelling.

I was eventually able to stand and walked about 50 feet before it was obvious my injury was more than a twisted ankle – there was no way I was hiking 5 miles back to the truck. Rom called 911, and after speaking with the operator and Search & Rescue, they dispatched a helicopter from Phoenix to fly me out. While we were waiting Rom took care of my deer – I couldn't even get to him for a field photo. After about 2-hours the helicopter arrived and flew me down the valley. Two of Rom's guides drove me to urgent care for x-rays and they determined nothing was broken – just a bad



2022 Coues Deer

sprain. The next morning, I drove 7-hours home – fortunately it was my left ankle.

After arriving at home, I noticed a lot of pain on the outside of my left calf. My wife got me in to see her podiatrist the next day and he determined that I had broken my left ankle in two places, fractured my fibula, and tore all the connective tissue in my ankle. I had to wait until January 5th for surgery to allow the swelling to reduce (the accident happened on December 18th). My surgery was a success and I have some memories that will last a lifetime!

I would like to thank Rom for great hospitality, an excellent hunt and taking such good care of me. I'd like to thank my good friend Alan for hiking in to help Rom pack my deer and rifle off the mountain. Alan was able to get his buck the day I left to drive home!

Words to live by...

Hunters cannot live life totally on purpose. We must live some of it accidentally, honing our skills on the scars of our mistakes. To grasp the adventure, we must also embrace a little danger, accept certain risks. Rockslides, slippery stream-crossings, tangle-footed horses, hypothermia, getting lost. Meeting these challenges and overcoming them, reveling in the adventure, makes us hunters, makes us strong.

Bill Sansom, "The Lessons Best Learned" Bugle Magazine, March/April 1999

REALLY RIGHT STUFF (RRS) CINCH-LR BINOCULAR TRIPOD ADAPTER

by Scott Gibson, Life Member

The Cinch-LR is a semi-permanent binocular clamp, it can be left on the optic when not mounted to the tripod. The Cinch fits in most chest harnesses. The dovetail is molded into the base, allowing most tripod users to quickly attach and detach their optic from their ball or pan head that uses the Arca-Swiss dovetail standard. The Cinch-LR Binocular Adapter is made in USA .

Most know by now, that our glassing can be greatly enhanced when our binoculars are stabilized off a tripod. Mounting binoculars to the tripod has always been the trick. The Cinch is simple, light and mounts to standard Arca-Swiss tripod clamps fast. Since the Cinch-LR is semi-permanently mounted to your binoculars, there is no adapter to lose in the field. If using a standard, other than the Arca-Swiss, RRS or the Manfrotto RC2 Dovetail, there is a 1/4"-20 mounting socket on the bottom of the Cinch-LR to adapt to a system of your choice. The Polymer Cinch-LR weighs in at just 1.6 oz. With the Cinch mounted, the binoculars easily fit in my bino bivy.

After a full season of use, I can happily report this is a well thought out and durable piece of gear. The Cinch is sturdy, I feel comfortable mounting the heaviest optics and the stability will enhance even the smallest binocular. Cost is \$45 directly from <https://soar.reallyrightstuff.com/Cinch-LR-Polymer-Molded>



Cinch-LR Polymer clamp



Swarovski EL 8x32s Binoculars mounted to tripod Arca-Swiss clamp



EL 12x50 Binoculars with the Cinch-LR easily slid in and out of bivy



Cinch-LR clamps Mounted to Swarovski EL 12x50s & 8x32s

FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE NEVADA BIGHORN

by Alan Shultz, Distinguished Life Member

I don't know where to start since it all happened so quickly. I knew when Nevada started this new "First-Come, First-Serve" program that I would have my best chance at getting a quality tag. I spent hundreds of hours logged in. And staring at a blank screen tests your patience.

I was late to the "point" game across The West. I have less than 10 points in most of the western states, so ever drawing a sheep tag was almost impossible. I figured Alaska would be my only chance at a sheep hunt, but that would come with a high price tag and I'm not there...yet.

It was Wednesday, November 10, about 5:15 pm when the tag popped up on Nevada's Department of Wildlife website. I had read what came up on the screen and couldn't get it added to my cart fast enough. My fingers were shaking with excitement! I was staring at the receipt on my phone and I couldn't believe it. A blue-collar guy with a desert sheep tag. Every emotion you can think of was running through me and I couldn't call my friends and family fast enough.

I had less than 10 days to prepare for this hunt and I didn't even know where it was. I spent the next week calling people, emailing people and E-scouting, trying to put together all the details. I rounded up 12 friends to come help on opening weekend. The first group of us got to camp on Friday morning after driving through the night. We slept for a few hours and as daylight came, we started off on our first day of glassing. I saw my first group of sheep that evening. They were about 1000 yards away on a bluff.

There were about 20 ewes and no mature rams. Went back to camp with a bit of frustration not seeing any rams so far but feeling hopeful that sheep were in the area. The season opened the following day. I knew there were going to be other hunters around and we hadn't found a ram yet. Nerves were setting in. But the season was long, and we had plenty of time.

On Saturday morning, the rest of the group reached camp. There were 12 of us in all. We split up in pairs and went back out to glass. A couple minutes into daylight, my buddy and I spotted a ram a few miles away. He looked mature but was too far to make the call as to whether or not he was a shooter. He was in an area we could not reach, so we decide to move on. We left that spot and decided to check in on a couple of the guys near one of the guzzlers. He and his buddy had spotted a nice ram, unfortunately by the time we



Alan Shultz (R) with Shawn Wood

got there the ram had disappeared and we could not relocate him. The guys had described him and said he was a shooter for sure.

My wife, my buddy Shawn and I all decided to hike around and up to the guzzler that was in that area. Where there's water, there's life. We started in, glassing as we went. Within a couple of hours, we had climbed up over the top of a mountain, and as we peaked over, there were about 20 sheep less than 100 yards away in a small ravine. They were not fazed by us, casually glancing up, then passing through. No mature rams, but such a cool experience to be so close to these animals. They're impressive!

We left there and headed to check in with another group of guys to see how they had done so far glassing. They had spotted a nice ram but was in a pretty sketchy area. We parked as close as we could get to where the ram was spotted, loaded our packs, and started up the mountain. Although the weather was fair, the mountain was harsh terrain, seemingly vertical, and unforgiving. It was a tough hike. By the time we got to the top of that mountain the ram had moved along the ridge and dropped down into another area. We decided where the ram had gone was not worth trying to get to. Much of it was unseen from our vantage point and darkness wasn't far off, so we headed back down to the truck.

We spent that night around camp talking about sheep hunting, telling stories, and trying to make a game plan for the next day. Sunday morning came and we headed out on another long hike to see what we could find. The morning air was biting cold, and the wind was blustery, cut right to the bone. We hiked for



just a few hours with no luck. With no vacation time left at work, we had to roll up camp and head home. After some discussion with the wife and some begging and pleading, I would be coming back for the long Thanksgiving weekend.

I returned to my sheep camp late Wednesday night, November 24. My friend Shawn had gotten there a day before me and had glassed all day without seeing any mature rams. We were informed that the other two tag holders in the unit had filled their tags and one of them had been the shooter ram from the previous weekend. We had only confirmed two mature rams and now two were harvested. We were a bit nervous but hopeful that one of the two we had seen the weekend before was still out there.

Thursday morning, we started out glassing. We spotted a few ewes and a few banana rams, but no mature rams. The day went by slowly and the number of sheep we were seeing wasn't what we had hoped. We spent Thanksgiving night in camp going over the next day's plans. I certainly wished I had all the eyes with me I had the previous weekend. With just the two of us in camp this trip, we could only cover so much ground.

Friday morning, we decided to drive to the highway and glass. From this location it was far off but we could see a lot more of the face of the jagged mountains. We spotted a couple of ewes and I decided I wanted to go in where they were and hope there would be a ram with them. We got back around to the other side of the mountains and started our hike up. We got to a good glassing spot and almost immediately found a couple of ewes. We hiked up higher and found a couple more. Then I spotted him!

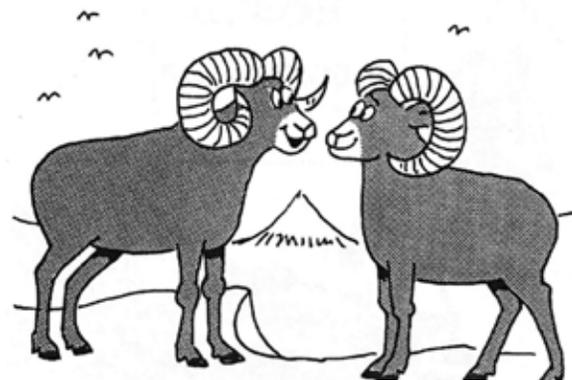
He was standing against a rock bluff facing us. You could barely make him out he blended in so well with the rocks. He was following a ewe. He was just outside comfortable rifle range. The ewe must have been hot because he was not leaving her. We ducked out of sight. We had a high rocky vantage point a couple hundred yards away from where we crouched. We hiked up to the top as fast as we could, and we knew we would be within shooting range. Within a few minutes we were at the

top. Unfortunately, the ram was nowhere in sight. We looked everywhere. There were still a few ewes feeding out, but he was gone. Suddenly, he skylined.

The ewe was coming over the ridge toward us and he was following her. He stopped, staring in our direction. I was leaning on a rock and had a good rest. I put him in my crosshairs. Shawn ranged him at 500 yards, but I needed him to come off the skyline and turn broadside. It felt like hours, but 35 minutes passed with him starring at the rock we were behind. I knew he couldn't see us, but he knew something wasn't right. The ewe bedded down and finally he walked towards her and turned. The range was 496 yards and I squeezed off the shot. It was a perfect shot. He ran about a hundred yards and died. I sat down and put my face in my hands. I just filled a tag of a lifetime, a desert bighorn sheep tag!

After a long time of trying to get to him, we finally found a route. The mountains here were steep and bluffed out all over, so finding a way was tricky. I was able to finally put hands on him and to see how mature he really was. He was a nine-year-old ram that was broomed off, cut up and scarred up from fighting. A true trophy of a lifetime. Sitting at the top of this mountain holding a desert bighorn sheep, you really get to soak in all the hard work and patience that paid off. I had so many friends come from all over the place to help me on this once-in-a-lifetime experience. Thank you all and you all know who you are. You all sacrificed time and money to help a friend. I appreciate everything.

When I got home from this hunt, I realized I had accomplished a hunting dream. It still seems unreal. A family that doesn't come from money or a lifetime of points across the west has a desert bighorn sheep on the wall. I could not have made this dream come true without the help of my beautiful wife who supports me whole heartedly. When you dream of hunting sheep for so long and then it happens, you realize your life goals don't really change. I went from dreaming of a sheep hunt to dreaming of more sheep hunts.



"You'll never guess who I
rammed into today!"

FUN AND INSPIRATION FROM ICONS OF SHEEP HUNTING

From Interviews conducted by Mike J. Borel for an "Icons of Sheep Hunting" Seminar for WSF

Funny personal experiences on a sheep or goat hunt:

- **Peggy Barnett Lee – Jane's John**

My first actual "hunt" arranged by my late husband to make sure I could really emotionally shoot an animal. The arranged hunt was in New Mexico (one of Ted Turner's ranches) for antelope. I was the only female and they only had a "men's " bathroom to use, so they let me use "Jane's john". I felt very special!!!! Turns out Jane Fonda LOVED to bird hunt, thus why she had her own john to use on the ranch. I guess it's OK to kill birds, just not animals? Apparently she wouldn't even allow the ranch managers to shoot rattlesnakes, as she was opposed to "killing". Go figure....

- **Renee Snider - In Mongolia, 2002, hunting the Altai**

I arrived exhausted in to camp very late at night. Our two yurts were set up in the center of a huge bowl surrounded by mountains. Went straight to my yurt, I had my own, and my guides shared one right next to me. When I came out early in the morning to start hunting, I asked Baasanhu where the toilet was???? (My guides, must have been 4 of them were all standing there waiting for me to come out of my yurt.) He mumbled something to the guys. They scrambled around and someone came with three pieces of wood , like kindling. Another man came with a sheet of white plastic, approx. 18" in width and 4' in length. Then another came with a tool, not a shovel. (I am standing watching this, not having a clue as to what they were doing). With the tool, they dug three holes shaped like a triangle. Then they took the white plastic and wrapped it around the wood pegs, using some sort of twine to attached to the pegs. Then they dug a hole center in the enclosed end of the triangle. I then understood that was my toilet.

When squatting over the hole one could see my knees poking out from the open end, and at least the top four inches of thigh and bottom and of course there was no barrier to keep from their view while standing up or squatting down. My toilet was to the side, not behind my yurt! They just stood and stared at me while I used the toilet.

You must visualize that arriving late at night in darkness I had no idea of the logistics of our camp. We were centered in a bowl and

surrounded by rocky mountains that were 150 yards in ANY direction. No trees and no rocks on the ground to go behind. Amazing!

- **Bob Logan**

1. Traveling to NW China for a hunt and on the first morning of the hunt found out I had packed my wife's Danner boots.

2. In Mongolia 1990, a big celebration dinner and the locals handed my hunting partner, Ron C, a bowl of Kumis, fermented mares milk including all the necessary hair, scum and dirt, he drained the bowl, and they refilled it and he did it again. I had read a few old hunting books on Mongolia and knew that you were supposed to take a sip and pass the bowl, I let Ron know on the third bowl!

Strangest meals in a sheep camp:

- **Rex Baker**- eating organs out of a coffee can with 3 men in a 2 man tent in Koryak Mtns.
- **Bob Logan** - in China where we were offered an appetiser plate of bugs and worms, salamanders and frogs thrown in to decide what our preferences were.

Most "Agonizing Miss":

- **Rex Baker** - missed world record Blanford sheep while hunting with Dr. Conklin; Gary Ingersoll got it the next hunt in the same spot. Missed the world record Astor Markhor with a borrowed gun at 600 + yards, can show the photo of the monster.

Wisdom you can share with sheep hunting fans in the < 1 Club or the < 1 International Club?

- **Bob Logan** - Enjoy the whole hunting experience, the local customs, food and traditions, we never came back from a hunt early, we stayed the duration to see new areas and appreciate local people and customs. Too many now want the 1 day hunt and tick off another species on "THE LIST", and sort of miss the experience of the hunt.

MANAGEMENT BECEITE IBEX IN SPAIN WITH CORJU HUNTING

by John Ware, Distinguished Life Member

A hunt — your memory of a hunt — is a puzzle composed of many pieces. The edge pieces are the basics; Who (Hunter(s), Guides), What (Target Animal(s)), When (Season, Travel, etc.), Where (Zone, Country, Region, Area), Why (Unique to you). The interior pieces will be made up of some great pieces that fit together and form beautiful vistas, easily distinguished that are obvious in where they belong in the overall milieu. These great pieces might be a trigger pull, first spotting of a great trophy, a great time shared around a campfire or over a meal, and many other pieces.

But there are also unavoidably some of those heinous single-colored similar-shaped pieces that are a pain to deal with. In your hunt puzzle those pieces are days glassing without spotting your target species, long grinding hikes, enduring horrible weather, and other challenges you grind through because it's part of the experience. Hunting Beceite Ibex in Spain seems to be a puzzle with few of those frustrating pieces, just having many unique and fun pieces. At least that was our first experience!

Fran Cortina of Corju Hunting Spain has been a generous long term donor of Ibex hunts in Spain for many years. Having purchased one management Beceite donation it was an easy decision to add a second hunter, and take some time to travel to Spain and make this hunt. One concern when scheduling was that Fran was confident that, in just two days, both of us would successfully take our animals. But we weren't. This is so contrary to most other hunting experiences that we scheduled the hunt for our first days in Spain so we could be sure to have additional time to add to the hunt. As it turns out, and as is usually the case, you can trust the professional. Spain is game rich with half a dozen targetable species including numerous ibex species, red stag, wild boar, and a couple of Chamois species available so there is no reason not to somehow upgrade your donated hunt purchase to reward the outfitter for his donation.

There were some preparations for undertaking this adventure beyond those normal for international travel in these fraught times, so I'd encourage anyone considering it to start very early, months ahead of time, so that you have ample time to check the boxes without stressing over schedules for getting the



John with management ibex in Spain

paperwork in order. It's all doable and Fran is a great responsive communicator who will coach you through the necessary paperwork, and answer questions along the way.

After a night in Madrid and a four hour drive, we were entering the Teruel region, passing by quaint little villages carved into rock outcroppings with stone facades, sometimes bisected by the highway. Once we checked in at Hotel Castellote, which faced out onto the main street. Fran introduced us to Jose, the local guide, who had hunted this area for many years. We walked across the street and had lunch at a local hangout, and with that we were ready to gear up and see what Ibex hunting was all about. We began seeing Ibex while still within sight of Castellote, and every small herd seemed to have at least one male that was sized correctly to be "management" or about 50 inches. Soon after leaving the town we noted large birds circling the nearby rock escarpments, and they seemed to be keeping pace with us. They were vultures, but a special breed.

Discussions in the car revealed that these scavengers were an endangered species and the local equivalent of Fish and Game preferred for carcasses to be left in the field, to help fortify the vulture population. Later research revealed they are Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*) and are indeed endangered.

At the third or fourth glassing stop we parked behind some trees and walked the road to look down onto terraces of olive and almond trees. Sure enough there were 30-40 ibex feeding on the trees at maybe 300 meters. There were a few huge males, beyond our budget, but majestic and graceful to see none-the-less.

Fran and Jose picked out one ibex which was “a bit big for a management animal, but perfect for Beverly”, she agreed and with that the hunt was afoot.

There was no way to make a stalk directly at them as we’d be exposed on a down-ward slope the whole way. So instead we drove back through town, came out on another side, and parked and hiked up towards the herd. We got a better look at them and again admired the larger specimens. They are wary wild animals despite being in a developed agricultural area, and one of the large herd must have caught sight of us so they ran uphill (which is the usual flight to safety for mountain dwellers), ironically ending up well within shooting range of where we had originally spotted them from. So we retreated to the car, and drove back around, parking and stalking up a short distance along the road to the overlook we were at previously.

We watched them for a while, guides relocating the correct animal. During this time we saw several ibex put the front hoofs against trees, reaching up to get to leaves they couldn’t reach from the ground. Then one large bull jumped from a dead-stop below a tree, up into the branches where he could stand and reach more browse. Amazing to see. After some tense moments of situating the shooter, shooting sticks, and then triple-checking the target since it was a large herd, intermingling, the target was acquired. Two shots put the animal down, congrats were made and after a brief drive trophy pictures were taken. The animal was efficiently caped and the carcass left for the vultures.

We had been hunting in Spain for a few hours.
Maybe 2 days is enough for two hunters to succeed!



Beverly with management Beceite ibex

We drove and glassed the area for a half hour or so after loading Beverly’s ibex into the hatchback. We happened to pass back by the kill site, and sure enough there were easily 75 to 100 vultures covering the carcass and blanketing the ground for 20 yards in all directions around it. The table had been set and the guests had arrived. Little remained of the ibex but bones after no more than one-half hour.

We went to a few other glassing spots, then relocated to a different part of the mountains. At one point we looked down on a herd of maybe half a dozen male ibex, and one was a management shooter. During the stalk they were spooked and ran up off the flat agricultural area, across a rarely used paved road, and up into the rocky escarpments and brushy hillside. Along with the guides, I was aborting the stalk, when a glance back revealed that the management animal had come to rest on a rock outcropping, clearly visible and standing broadside, at about 200 yards. He was basking in the rays of the setting sun, apparently having forgotten the threat from a few minutes before.

It was a steep uphill shot from prone. I had some struggles getting comfortable with the shot. Given the body position and cheek rest I kept ending up looking over the top of my glasses at a very blurry ibex. With the front of the rifle nestled on a back pack, and the left hand holding the glasses at the angle needed to put them in line, the shot was taken. Jose and Fran were immediately quite happy, proclaiming that he “dropped in his shadow”. This made for a good climb up to the animal, where humans took 10x the time it took the ibex to get to the same spot. The kill site did enable some very pleasing “mountain hunting” trophy photos.

The management criteria is less than 50”. My ibex taped out at 49 5/8”. Not bad for guides making the estimation at over 200 yards.

So within 4-5 hours both animals were down. Yes, two days is plenty of time for an ibex hunt in Spain with the right PH and outfitter! We had seen lots of management sized animals, and a more than a few larger trophies that would have been upper silver or even gold level. Of course on a different day things could have been different, but our guides assured us that in general they can tailor a hunting experience to the hunter’s preference, making it easier or harder.

The hunt included 3 nights’ accommodations at Castellote, so after a celebratory dinner we woke the next morning, and Fran was gracious enough to show us around town and the nearby area. After breakfast we made an excellent hike up to the top of the nearby mountainside to visit the excellently preserved Templar-era castle remains. We saw ibex along the way. Beyond some light preservation work and a few bridges and hand-rails it felt very raw and authentic. And we had free run of the place, with no other visitors and little constraints beyond common sense on where we could go.

We visited a 'church of rain' where seeps from a high cliffside next to the church provided a continual rain fall down into a pond, and saw ibex in the almond orchards nearby.

We also visited a local ham curing factory, where the owner himself gave us a tour, explained the processes, and rung us up for a selection of goodies we would take with us on the next leg of our journey. For an avowed carnivore, the aromas, uncountable number hanging dried hams and pork loins, and cool, dark, quiet of the place made for a near-spiritual experience.

Later research revealed that the Teruel region is renowned for jamón serrano (cured ham from the mountain range) or jamón de Teruel (cured ham from of Teruel) and its archaeological sites, so we definitely did well in our adventures for the day to make the most of where we were.



Dried meats / hams curing factory

After another quality dining experience and hearty breakfast the next morning, we made the return journey to Madrid.

We spent another week in Spain, including a day trip to the British overseas territory of Gibraltar and a few days in Portugal but those are more pedestrian touring tales best saved for another day.

Final thoughts:

Corju provided a rifle for us to hunt with so we didn't have to deal with traveling with a firearm. As it turned out it was the same make and model as one that resides in our gun safe which we've both hunted with before. It was a 270 WSM, where we have a 270 Win.

In the era of COVID you'd be well advised to overnight near your departing airport so you can get your COVID testing done and results back before the day of your travels. And don't forget to budget for the testing which isn't available for free like it is in the US.

The Best Roasted Hot Corn Dip You've EVER Tried! BY Simply 2 Moms



INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups Frozen Corn
- 8 oz. Chopped Green Chilies, drained
- 1/2 cup diced Red Bell Pepper
- 1 cup shredded Pepper Jack Cheese
- 1/2 cup Duke's Mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup Nonfat Plain Greek Yogurt
- 1/2 cup Grated Parmesan Cheese
- 2 Tbsp minced, seeded Jalapeno Pepper (optional, add some seeds for more heat)

TOPPING

- Thinly sliced rings of Jalapeno Pepper
- 1/2 cup shredded Pepper Jack Cheese

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 450 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Spread frozen corn on baking sheet and roast until charred, approximately 15 minutes, stirring once after 10 minutes.
- Set aside 1/4 cup of roasted corn for topping.
- While the corn is roasting, combine the drained green chilies, diced bell pepper, shredded Pepper Jack cheese, mayonnaise, Greek yogurt, Parmesan cheese, and minced jalapeno in a medium bowl.
- Stir remaining roasted corn into mixture and transfer into an ungreased baking dish.
- Sprinkle dip with 1/2 cup of shredded Pepper Jack cheese, sliced jalapeno pepper rings, and reserved roasted corn.
- Place in oven and reduce oven to 350 F.
- Bake for 25-30 minutes, until bubbly and edges begin to brown.
- Serve with tortilla chips, Fritos, and/or raw veggies to dip.

CALIFORNIA FISH AND WILDLIFE UPDATE

*by Jeff Villepique
Senior Wildlife Biologist Supervisor, IDR-South*

Drought remains a critical concern as California's deserts face another winter of below-average precipitation. The CDFW is taking proactive action to address drought impacts on desert bighorn sheep.

The Inland Deserts Region (IDR) has benefited from the Governor's drought emergency order and has used additional funding provided through the order to bring on a new Drought Terrestrial Species Monitoring and Mitigation Scientist, Sonja Schwartz. Sonja started in December, is based in Bishop, and brings a wealth of talent in biology and data analysis, having completed her Ph.D. at U.C. Berkely and worked as a data scientist and project manager. Sonja is also a skilled outdoorsperson who's held a leadership role for Inyo County Search and Rescue, where she's volunteered for over five years. Sonja has been working closely with the Desert Bighorn Sheep Program to assemble and validate information on wildlife water developments (WWDs) and natural water sources throughout California's desert ranges, with a focus on large mammal WWDs and springs critical to desert bighorn sheep.

In the office, Sonja has been compiling and organizing data and maps, from paper notes filed away in decades gone by, to various computer files changing staff have collected over the years. Her work cleaning and organizing those bits and pieces of information into a database has already paid off by identifying water sources in need of inspection. Sonja is also heading into the field, conducting site visits, and identifying overlooked repair needs. She's already dispatched a response team to make repairs to plumbing and a drinker box, thanks to the rapid response by dedicated volunteer Marty Ambrose, from the Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS) and two of our great new Scientific Aids, Gaby Chio, and Sara Murray, repairs were made to the Central Nopah WWD, and it's ready to collect rainwater. Thanks to SCBS volunteers for welcoming Sonja and working together.

The Desert Bighorn Program also secured \$300,000 of the emergency drought funding for helicopter work on WWDs. The contract to deliver external loads, including water tanks, WWD materials, and water-buckets, is currently undergoing expedited processing, and should be in place in time for scheduled repair and water hauling projects in late March, as well as for critical water deliveries, in case the rain remains elusive through the end of this season.

Project staff continue involvement in meetings and advocating a proposal to build three wildlife overcrossings across the Interstate 15 corridor, as part of the Brightline West high-speed rail proposal. Thanks to the advocacy of the Wild Sheep Foundation, in partnership with dozens of other non-governmental organizations, together with great folks inside CDFW and the National Park Service, the push for building that wildlife connectivity is looking like it will become a reality. There is an impressive level of engagement and momentum behind that proposal to maintain and enhance the connectivity essential to the long-term health of desert bighorn sheep populations, with benefits to many species.



While work towards making wildlife overcrossings a reality, hiring new staff, securing funding, and writing essential contracts like the helicopter drought emergency contract have taken priority, CDFW remains committed to completing a bighorn sheep management plan for the 21st century. That plan will incorporate the constructive comments scientific reviewers have offered as well reflect the shared interests of CDFW and WSF, as well as the comments CDFW will address upon receipt of comments in the upcoming public review and comment period (date TBD).

The Department continues working with our partners at the Bureau of Land Management on a programmatic environmental assessment (EA) addressing the work of the Department and its volunteers to maintain WWDs inside and outside of designated Wilderness. This process, too, has met with delays, as CDFW and BLM face challenges of staffing and getting new folks up to speed, however, we have the commitment of both agencies to complete that programmatic document that will enable CDFW and its volunteer support workforce to of keep water on the landscape. Again, I appreciate your help and support as we meet these challenges.

WATER DEVELOPMENT IN OUR CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT

by Debbie Miller Marschke, SCBS

For over 55 years, The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS) has been the California-based volunteer “boots on the ground” organization to provide man made water developments for desert Bighorn sheep. Before the passing of the 1994 Desert Protection Act, installing new drinker systems in arid zones involved the challenge of coordinating resources and a volunteer workforce. The locations of historic systems were selected with collaboration and expertise from the California Department of Fish and Game’s field biologists and an SCBS labor force; both fueled with passion and desire for the common goal. After the passing of the DPA, our State employees began to sink in a quagmire of interagency problems and legal disputes with special interest groups. This has continued to spiral into a history of inaction, leaving SCBS volunteers increasingly unsupported by the agencies that used to be equal partners.

Climate change has become a formidable adversary, complicating the situation. Last year, volunteers assisted in providing over 40,000 gallons of water by hauling water to guzzlers that did not receive enough precipitation to replenish themselves. Obviously, manually hauling water is an unreasonable and unsustainable water management plan. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor report, California’s precious snow pack base did improve due to a series of early winter storms between December 7, 2021 and January



Ram at Jen’s Eagle tank



The project crew: Project Manager David M’Greene, Mine Liaison Arioch M’Greene, Steve Marschke, Debbie Miller Marschke, Don Moore, John Voght, Robert Jewel, and John Maley

4, 2022. However, most of the California desert remains in some level of drought. Last year was the third driest on record in terms of precipitation.

There are also new threats to the already stressed deserts due to technological advances. California has been pushing initiatives which encourage solar energy farms and a high-speed rail between Rancho Cucamonga and Las Vegas. Installation of “efficient” technological advances comes at a cost to the environment, further fragmenting historical range lands and essentially removing available acreage that is usable by wildlife. Beginning with the installation of highways, paths of migration from range to range have become impeded by man made developments. Some States, such as Nevada and Arizona, have done a better job of mitigating the adversity with the installation of wildlife overcrossings. The biologists working for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon State University, and the National Park Service are currently collecting GPS collar data to support the installation of wildlife overcrossings in the Mojave, but there is no current plan on the drawing board that suggests the State will demand or support such actions.

For all the challenges, SCBS has strived to remain nimble and pivot attention to projects that we can achieve successfully. Opportunities arise, sometimes with unlikely partners. During the weekend of January 7-9, 2022, SCBS partnered with Kaiser Eagle Mine, on the Eagle Mine property near Desert Center, California. Since 1948, this property had operated as

Southern California's largest iron mine by supplying ore by rail to Fontana's Steel Works. The property was moth balled in 1981 but it's maintained by a skeleton crew. Upon the expansive property, the Mine and SCBS had installed two Bighorn Sheep drinker tanks which the mine employees have been maintaining for decades. It was the dying wish of mine superintendent Jennifer Roberts that these wildlife drinkers continue to be maintained for the benefit of the bighorn sheep. Recently, SCBS was contacted by the mine because the free standing water tanks had aged past their useful life. The Eagle Mountain mine welcomed SCBS and hosted a modest crew for several days to remove the aged tanks and install more efficient Raincatcher tanks as reservoir systems. This was a unique project working on two separate water systems simultaneously.

The first water system, now known as Jen's Eagle Tank is located at a higher elevation and closer to the Mine's property border with Joshua Tree National Park. The mine had installed the cylindrical upright water tank and attached the feeder hose to a steel drinker box and had been manually filling this tank with their water truck. The old aged reservoir had suffered at least 4 leaks on it's side due to Bighorn rams head-

butting the side and causing the tanks to split. After four field patches by the caretaker, this tank was no longer usable. The mine's caretaker assisted SCBS here with a backhoe to remove the old tank and replace it with a Raincatcher. During the installation, a class 3 Ram came in to investigate which was a welcome sight to everyone. SCBS plumbed the system and painted the Raincatcher with camouflage patterns to protect the system from UV light because this tank will not be buried. This was in accordance with the Mine's specifications.

The second water system, now known as Ghost Eagle Tank, is located within sight of the Mine's ghost town of 400 residential dwellings that used to house it's employees (hence, the name). Perched atop a hill overlooking the main facility, Ghost Eagle tank rests in the shade of an enormous water tower which used to service the town. Water was replenished directly from the tower to the tank by mine employees. It's our understanding that herds of Bighorn like to congregate here in the shade of the water tower during the summer months, taking advantage of the guzzler and precious shade. This reservoir tank had also suffered beatings inflicted by exuberant rams. SCBS swapped out the old upright tank for a Raincatcher reservoir and plumbed it to the existing drinker box. The stature of the Raincatcher is lower to the ground, so we should hope that this will make it less likely that the Rams will find it an attractive target to practice on.

SCBS had arranged to remain on the premises of the mine for three days and three nights to perform the work. The entire job was completed ahead of schedule, so SCBS was also able to hike and survey an enormous tinaja in the hinterlands of the Eagle Mountain property. We believe that Eagle Mountain Mine is very pleased with the results of this relationship, and we will continue to nurture our relationship with this partner. It is our hope that this endeavor will be the springboard for other Raincatcher systems upon the property, with the goal of locating them nearer to



Kaiser's heavy lift crane to load/unload



Removing the Jen's Eagle old tank



The new, improved Jen's Eagle tank



Ghost Eagle drinker



Finishing up at Ghost Eagle

the Joshua Tree National Park boundary. Our efforts to maintain and install new guzzlers within JTNP have been discouraged and unsupported in recent times, so finding a suitable alternative approach is our present solution to keep sheep on the mountain.

Thanks go to the project crew: Project Manager David M'Greene, Mine Liaison Arioeh M'Greene, Steve Marschke, Debbie Miller Marschke, Don Moore, John Voght, Robert Jewel, and John Maley. Technical advice and assistance during preparations provided by Glenn Sudmeier, Dave Mahosky, and Scott Gibson.

Special thanks to the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation for providing the necessary funding that made this project possible. Gratitude to Colleen Bowden for her generous donation which was used to purchase meals for the crew.

NEW TANK AT FT. IRWIN IS COMPLETE AND FULL OF WATER!



Only 600
tickets
available

100 Tickets
reserved for
4/30/22

Stone Sheep Raffle 2022



\$100 per ticket

Enter to win a 16-day Stone Sheep Hunt with Golden Bear Outfitters July 29 - August 13, 2023 in the the Telegraph Creek and Stikine River area of British Columbia. Golden Bear Outfitters' hunt area is over 8,000 square miles of rugged, mostly untouched wilderness in one of the oldest guide regions of BC. This is a hunt any mountain hunter will remember as "once-in-a-life!"

Golden Bear Outfitting provides: Air and ground transportation within the hunting area, a guide for each hunter and support personnel, lodging and meals, snacks and soft drinks, camping equipment, trophy preparation.

Value of the hunt is \$48,500.

Winner will be drawn at the California WSF Annual Banquet April 30, 2022. Winner will be notified by email or phone.

ADDITIONAL COSTS TO BE PAID BY WINNER (due July 15, 2023):

Air charter: \$1,500
Hunt Package GST tax: \$2,500
Wildlife Stewardship Fund: \$250
Government Royalty: \$450
License/tags: \$980

NOT INCLUDED IN YOUR HUNT

Hotel before and after the hunt
Tips/Gratuities
Crate and Freight charges for shipping trophies
Additional hunters or non hunters if arranged with outfitter
Additional trophy fees if arranged with outfitter
Non resident firearms fee



Wild Sheep Foundation President and CEO Gray Thornton hunted with Golden Bear Outfitters and says "...cannot recommend them highly enough!! The best!"

Tickets available at www.cawsf.org/store

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Marc Jarrard
Cady Mountains
January 2022
Hunting with Dry Creek Outfitters



Alan Shultz
Nevada Desert Bighorn
Hunting with Shawn Wood



Ron Munk
Marble - Clipper Mountains
Hunting with Dry Creek Outfitters
January 2022
Oldest ram taken in the State this year at 13+ yrs old

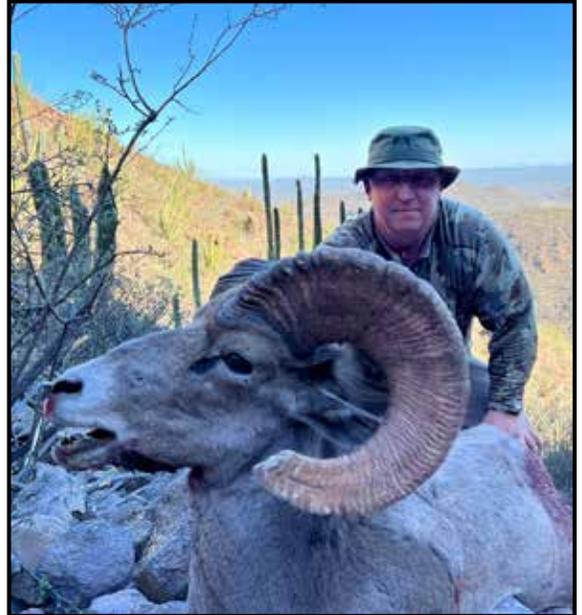


16 Year Old Youth Hunter Kaylee Howard
Marble / Clipper Mountains
173" Ram
Hunting with Dry Creek Outfitters

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



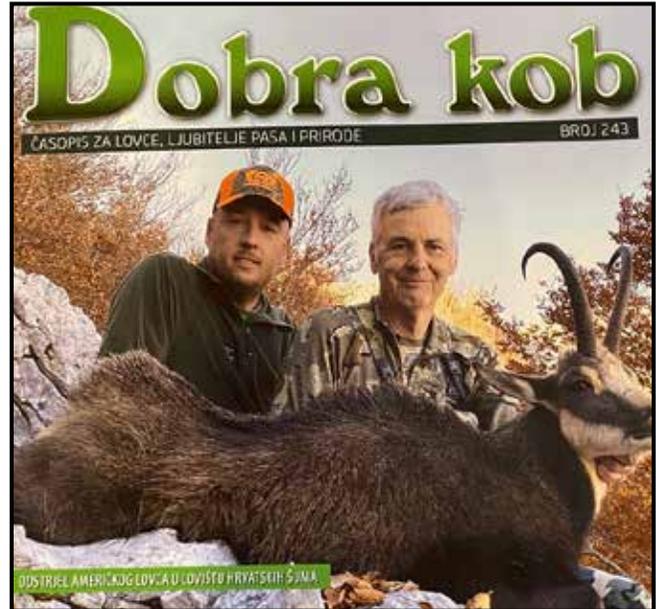
Maggi Kouffeld (L), Board Member
2021 B zone blacktail
Southern Trinity County
175 1/8 non typical
This is one incredible Blacktail!



Paul Schultheis, Board Member
Bighorn Sheep, Mexico
February 2022



Douglas Sayer
Texas Surprise Aoudad
2022



Correction to December issue: Steve Hunter's
Balkan chamois taken in Croatia is 31 7/8 SCI and
122.7 CIC. Both are new records. This is the biggest
Balkan chamois ever taken anywhere! Made the
cover!

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Tim Brazil
South Bristols
January 2021
Hunting with Dry Creek Outfitters
Largest ram taken in the unit past five years



Bill Willett
Kelso Peak, South Bristols
January 2022
Hunting with Dry Creek Outfitters



Brett Fuller
Arizona desert bighorn
December 2021
Dry Creek Outfitters



California desert bighorns
Photo by Carlos Gallinger
January 2022

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Bill Tittle
Gredos ibex, Spain
November 2021



Bill Tittle
Ronda ibex, Spain
November 2021



Bill Tittle
Southeastern ibex, Spain
November 2021



Jim Zapaltas
Cady Mountains,
Hunting with Kika Worldwide
January 2022
Completed his Grand Slam of North American sheep at
age 71!

2022 ANNUAL FUNDRAISER & ANNUAL BANQUET UPDATE

by President Donald C Martin, Distinguished Life Member

We are quickly approaching our annual fundraiser and banquet and I wanted to extend a personal invitation to every member to attend. Again, our event will be held in the Grand Ballroom at the Doubletree by Hilton in Sacramento, right across the way from the Arden Fair Mall. For navigation apps, please use: 2001 Point W Way, Sacramento, CA 95815, as your destination. Watch your email for additional information.

By the time you receive this publication, tickets and registration tables will be available via our website at: <http://cawsf.org/store.html>.

If you are unable to attend, please consider buying tickets for our grand prize raffle, a 16-day Stone sheep hunt courtesy of Golden Bear Outfitters for 2023. You do not need to be present to win. You can also donate directly to the "Give a Lamb a Drink" foundation (GALAD) and help us double the number of desert bighorns in CA through our effort to construct 90+ new drinker systems in the Southern CA desert. Both the Stone sheep tickets and direct donations to GALAD can be made at: <http://cawsf.org/store.html>

It's been a few years since we have all had an opportunity to get together and I'm excited to see all of you at our upcoming fundraiser. We will be celebrating over 20 years of wild sheep conservation here in California. You won't want to miss it.

If you are a Youth Life member over the age of 10, a Life member, or a Distinguished Life member, **YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST ATTEND. This year will be the last year that an Ultima Thule Outfitters(UTO) Dall sheep hunt will be available through random drawing to a life member.** YOU MUST BE IN THE ROOM TO WIN! UTO has been a great supporter of the chapter and we thank Paul and Donna Claus, the entire Claus family, and the guides and staff of UTO for their support. Once again, youth and life members will receive ONE chance each and Distinguished Life Members will receive THREE chances at the up to 10 day 1x1 Dall sheep hunt in Wrangell St. Elias Park and Preserve. This is literally the most exclusive over the counter sheep tag hunt in the world. The world record "Swank Ram" was taken from UTO's area in 1961 and those world record genetics exist today. Do not miss out on this final opportunity at the Dall sheep hunt of a lifetime.

Our live auction is coming along nicely and I can tease you with a couple of items of interest. We have multiple international capra opportunities including Sindh Ibex in Pakistan and ibex in Spain. In addition, our friend, Rowdy McBride has provided



an opportunity for trophy Aoudad in Texas. That is a great hunt and will be a very popular auction item. And we have at least one limited edition bronze of a Dall sheep titled "Ultima Thule" that comes courtesy of our friend Tim Shinabarger in Montana. The limited-edition piece may be viewed at: <http://timshinabarger.com/gallery>

Closer to home, it looks like we will once again have the exclusive Hopland Deer hunt permit for Columbian Blacktail Deer. This deer hunt is tremendous opportunity for access to the Hopland research station and is only available through wildlife conservation non-profit organizations like CA WSF. There will also be multiple youth/women only opportunities available here in California including hunts for: cow tule elk, wild turkey, and hogs.

Silent auction once again will provide a broad range of items for the gentlemen, ladies, and youth in attendance. I literally have an office full of items that I have been store-housing through the COVID years and now that we are about to have a live event...I can finally reclaim my office. I'd like to just take a quick second to thank some of the donors: Boyt Harness, Tony Caliguiri, Montana West, David Combs, Susan Martin-Costales and Darryl Williams. If you have items that you would like to donate to our silent or live auction or the general raffle, please reach out to me at: don-martin@earthlink.net or reach out to Beverly Valdez at: forthesheep@gmail.com

As many of you know, access to firearms is difficult but we are working to provide our traditional line up of "quality over quantity" firearms for the general raffle.

Our event will be here sooner than you think, so please make plans to attend now and buy your tickets early. Keep in mind, our event is youth friendly and they are our future, so please bring the whole family. It's never too early to start our young people down the path of the hunting conservation lifestyle. I look forward to seeing all of you in Sacramento on April 30!

FUNDRAISER BANQUET REGISTRATION

APRIL 30, 2022 EVENT AT DOUBLETREE BY HILTON

Be an "Early Bird" (complete registration by April 1, 2022) to get tickets for an Early Bird drawing for \$1000 in banquet credits.

- _____ **Single Dinner/Event Ticket - \$100; After April 16, 2022 - \$110** \$ _____
 > One (1) Dinner/Event includes entry to the Displays, Speakers and Auctions
 > Get one (1) chance at the Early Bird drawing if registered by April 1, 2022
- _____ **Youth Single Dinner/Event Ticket(s) - \$50 each (14 and under)** \$ _____
 > One (1) Youth Dinner, includes entry to the Displays, Speakers and Auctions plus special youth prize drawing. Must be under 18.
- _____ **Reserved 1/2 Table (5) Dinner/Event Tickets - \$475; After April 16, 2022 - \$525** \$ _____
 > Five (5) Dinner/Event includes entry to the Displays, Speakers and Auctions
 > Get five (5) chances at the Early Bird drawing if registered by April 1, 2022
- _____ **Reserved Full Table (10) Dinner/Event Tickets - \$900; After April 16, 2022 - \$1,000** \$ _____
 > Ten (10) Dinner/Event Ticket includes entry to the Displays, Speakers and Auctions
 > Get ten (10) chances at the Early Bird drawing if registered by April 1, 2022

General Raffle Tickets are \$20 each or select one of these packages

- _____ **\$100 Drawing Ticket Package** \$ _____
 \$120 (6) General Drawing tickets
- _____ **\$300 Drawing Ticket Package** \$ _____
 \$400 (24) General Drawing tickets and one (1) \$300 Bonus Drawing tickets.
- _____ **\$500 Drawing Ticket Package** \$ _____
 \$700 (42) General Drawing tickets, three (3) \$300 Bonus Drawing tickets and two (2) \$500 Bonus Drawing tickets.

Thank you for your generosity in sponsoring and donating to CA Wild Sheep Foundation

- _____ **Desert Bighorn Sponsorship** \$ _____
 Donate to underwrite firearms for the drawing; tax deductible. You will receive recognition in the event program and the quarterly newsletter. 1 firearm \$350 2 firearms \$700 3 firearms \$1050
- _____ **Donation to Help Sponsor the Event and Support Wild Sheep in California** \$ _____
 Please especially consider if you will not be able to be there! (Any amount)

Total Payment: _____	Check	Credit	VISA	MC	AMEX
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For your records, CA FNAWS (dba California Wild Sheep Foundation or CA WSF) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. FNAWS tax identification number is 69-0481140.

CALIFORNIA WILD SHEEP SUMMIT XXX – DECEMBER 10, 2021 “VIRTUAL”

by Mike J Borel, VP Operations, Distinguished Life Member

CA WSF hosted Sheep Summit XXX (yes, 30th) as a “virtual” event. The purpose of these summits is “to accomplish more collectively for Desert Bighorn in CA through sharing and collaboration, than the sum of what each organization can accomplish individually. Following is a summary of Summit XXX.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: CDFW, USFS, USBLM, USNPS (MNP, DV and JT), CAWSF, SCBS, DWU, Twentynine Palms Marine Base, China Lake Naval Base, Fort Irwin base, Oregon State University, WSF, CA mining interests, Modoc Nation and key independents (including Vern Bleich Ph.D., John Wehausen Ph.D., and others). 49 persons participated.

Information reviewed:

1. DFW Update - the Big Picture Scott Gardner
2. BLM - the Big Picture, and Water Management Brian Novasek
3. Status of the Sheep Plan Regina Vu
4. Desert Bighorn Sheep Update from the Region 6 - Surveys and Field Work including GPS collar information, movements Rick Ianiello, Jeff Villepique & Erin Schaeffer
5. OSU Update on Research and Activities Clint Epps, Ph.D.
6. Navigating the guzzler/drinker planning process for maintenance, replacement and new installations Brian Novasek & Leigh Karp
7. Update on Deep Sheep Program and status of other related initiatives Will Glad
8. Report on Recent Activities in WAFWA, Wild Sheep & Goat Council, Desert Bighorn Council, Boone & Crockett Club, WHBAB, Rocky Crate Chair at WSU, etc. that are of value and interest for CA wild sheep. Vern Bleich, Ph.D.
9. Update on Brightline Don Priest
10. SCBS Update Deb Miller-Marschke
11. GALAD (Give a Lamb a Drink) State Lands status, progress, funding Deb Miller-Marschke & Mike Borel

Our previously committed COLLECTIVE VISION FOR WILD SHEEP IN CALIFORNIA:

Ensure the persistence and restoration of healthy and sustainable metapopulations of bighorn sheep throughout their historical distribution in California.

Develop and use science as the basis for conservation and management.

Provide for recreational uses of bighorn sheep wherever appropriate.

Summit XXXI is scheduled for April 29, 2022 and will be “in person” at DoubleTree Hotel, 2001 Point W Way, Sacramento.

BIGHORN SHEEP HABITAT MANAGEMENT AT OLD DAD PEAK: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (PART II)

by Vernon C. Bleich, Ph.D.

This article continues the history of habitat enhancements for bighorn sheep that have been implemented at or near Old Dad Peak and the Kelso Mountains (ODP), and provides a brief history of the population occupying that area, which was to become the second zone opened to the harvest of bighorn sheep in California. As noted in Part I of this article, ongoing acceleration in the loss of corporate memory will make bits of history such as this useful in the future, because ‘generational amnesia’ becomes more evident with each passing year. It is my hope that this information will help slow that process, and even generate increased interest in prior management efforts undertaken on behalf of bighorn sheep. History is important, and science and wildlife conservation will become less informative if they are not viewed in an historical context.

In part I of this article, it was established that heavy use of the Old Dad Peak Guzzler was occurring, and Coombes et al. (1981) warned that the catchment could go dry during the forthcoming summer. That concern led the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Habitat Crew (Crew), the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (Society), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and other interested stakeholders to consider the potential for additional water developments at ODP. Jim Bicket, who was a highly respected wildlife biologist with BLM, worked closely with personnel assigned to Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-26-D—the formal name for the Crew—to facilitate construction of a third water development at ODP. A suitable location, as characterized by appropriate geology, isolation from public access, evidence of use by bighorn sheep, and a feasible construction site, was selected by the Crew, and the Vermin Big Game Guzzler (San Bernardino County #16) was installed on 21 November 1981. During installation, members of the Society and interested volunteers expended 153 person-days of labor and 8,700 vehicle-miles developing that water source. Heavy use of that newly developed water source by bighorn sheep was evident by the summer of 1983, and relieved some of the pressure on the Old Dad Peak BGG. Three years later, in November of 1984, members of the Society, along with CDFG and BLM personnel and additional interested parties made



major repairs to the Vermin BGG after it had been damaged by heavy runoff of storm water. Volunteers contributed 162 person-days of labor and 9,450 vehicle miles to that effort. The collection dam was replaced in 1991, and this guzzler continues to receive heavy use by bighorn sheep when water is available.

On 9 February 1985, an additional water development was constructed; this unit was christened the Kerr Big Game Guzzler (San Bernardino County #23), and was named in honor of Chuck Kerr, a long-time member of the Society. During this effort, members of the Society and interested parties contributed 543 person-days of labor and 25,180 vehicle-miles to commemorate Chuck’s many contributions to enhancement of habitat for bighorn sheep. The site of the Kerr BGG had been selected by Vern Bleich, Dick Weaver, and Don Landells, and was chosen because of abundant sign near a small tinaja, its isolation from roads and the public, presence of suitable geology, and feasibility of construction. The Kerr BGG is located about 5 miles SE of the Old Dad Peak BGG, and was receiving very heavy use by bighorn sheep by the summer of 1986; heavy use of the Kelso Peak, Old Dad Peak, Vermin, and Kerr big game guzzlers has continued to occur.

As outlined in Part I of this article, the population at ODP had continued to increase since 1978, and 135 individual bighorn sheep were tallied during an aerial survey on 29 July 1982. At that time, it became apparent that bighorn sheep were so numerous that a source of translocation stock was becoming available. Shortly thereafter, members of the Crew erected a

drop-net near the Old Dad Peak BGG and baited it with fermented apple mash and water, but bighorn sheep failed to utilize the baited site. Realizing that an opportunity to translocate bighorn sheep and restore them to vacant habitat would not last forever, the Crew constructed a corral trap at the Old Dad Peak BGG in June 1983, and water available at the guzzler became the “bait”. At that time, the potential for capturing bighorn sheep with drive-nets or a net-gun was not thought possible because of the extremely rugged terrain occupied by the population. A visit to the Old Dad Peak BGG by Bill Clark, of the CDFG Wildlife Investigations Lab, convinced the Crew that strategically deployed drive nets could be used to capture bighorn sheep despite the ruggedness of the terrain (Jessup et al. 2014). It also became clear that the sheep population was substantially larger than previously thought; in April 1984, 204 bighorn sheep were tallied during an aerial survey, even though 22 individuals had been removed for translocation the previous year. In 1990, an estimated 160 females and 205 males comprised the bighorn sheep population at ODP (Jaeger et al. 1991), despite the translocation of more than 150 individuals from 1983 to 1989.

It is generally agreed that habitat enhancements in the form of water developments at ODP contributed to a substantial increase in that population, in part by increasing the availability of a critically important resource, as well as by making a greater proportion of seasonally occupied habitat available on a year-round basis, but to which access previously had been restricted by an absence of water during summer (Bleich 2009). Weather has an important influence on population performance through the amount and timing of precipitation on forage production and nutrient availability (Wehausen 2005), and removal of feral ass (i.e., donkeys), and both likely have had a positive influence on forage availability for bighorn sheep. Favorable weather, provision of water, and removal of feral ass likely have had a positive effect on the ecological carrying capacity at ODP, with the end result being an increase in the bighorn sheep population.

Carrying capacity is not unlimited, however, and that realization prompted CDFG to utilize bighorn sheep comprising the population at ODP for translocation to 8 locations for the purposes of reintroduction or augmentation. The sex ratio became skewed heavily toward males by the removal of 110 females but only 46 males between 1983 and 1989. The skewed sex ratio, combined with the large increase in the population that had occurred, contributed to the initiation of a harvest program in 1987. Since 1989, an additional 43 females and 19 males have been translocated from ODP, and many dozens of additional mature males have been harvested from the population by sport hunters.

In 2010, the population at Old Dad Peak was estimated to be 250 individuals (i.e., between 201 and 300). In 2013, a disease outbreak resulted in a substantial loss of

individuals, and in 2019 the population was thought to number about 75 animals (i.e., between 51 and 100). The general hunting season was closed from 2014 to 2019 following the disease outbreak; following that closure, a single lottery tag became available for the 2020 and 2021 hunting seasons.

Enhancement of habitat in the form of water development, and capture or translocation of bighorn sheep, were confounded immensely by passage of the California Desert Protection Act (U.S. Congress 1994), which established the Mojave National Preserve (MNP) and transferred management authority for that vast area from BLM to the National Park Service (NPS). That legislation also created extensive wilderness areas across thousands of square miles of land formerly managed for multiple use by BLM both inside and outside of MNP and created substantial problems for habitat managers (Bleich 2005).

The management direction within MNP differed substantially from that of BLM, and those differences have resulted in a shift of emphasis from one of dispersed recreation and multiple use (BLM 1980) to one that emphasizes total protection to the extent provided by the CDPA. Within days of passage of the CDPA, then Regional Manager Fred Worthley and I participated in a meeting with NPS personnel, and the newly named assistant superintendent demanded that CDFG cancel the 1994 deer season in that area; that demand was strongly rebuked by the Regional Manager. The same administrator next endeared himself to the conservation community by refusing permission for the Crew to conduct a long-planned aerial survey of ODP; had that survey occurred, the 1996 loss of at least 50 bighorn sheep to botulism poisoning (Swift et al. 2000) might have been averted. The assistant superintendent eventually moved on, but not before creating further controversies and additional problems in the Mojave Desert and elsewhere.

Management activities on behalf of bighorn sheep again were confounded when a recent—but now former—superintendent approved a “water management plan”. As released for public review in 2018, many organizations, including the Society, the California Wild Sheep Foundation, Wild Sheep Foundation (National), and numerous other organizations and concerned individuals realized its potential impacts on efforts to conserve bighorn sheep, and vigorously opposed the plan. Further, the California Department of Fish and wildlife (CDFW) expressed serious reservations about the plan during the public review process. Moreover, the Wild Sheep Foundation noted that the plan was agency-centric and emphasized that it failed to take a landscape-level approach to the conservation of bighorn sheep comprising one of the largest metapopulations of that species in California. Despite these concerns, the plan was approved with essentially no changes; the superintendent has since moved on.

Some habitat enhancement work within that

metapopulation of bighorn sheep has occurred since completion of the water management plan, but primarily has been in cooperation with private landowners and on inholdings within the boundaries of lands subject to NPS management. Water has, however, been transported on a number of occasions to the Kerr, Kelso Peak, and Vermin wildlife water developments through a cooperative agreement with NPS. After years of trying to obtain permission to refurbish the Old Dad Peak BGG, that project also was accomplished. No additional habitat enhancements, however, have occurred within MNP since completion of the water management plan. Further, the continuing absence of a landscape-level strategy, albeit clearly an objective that cooperating agencies should advocate for, remains an obstacle to an ecosystem approach to the conservation of bighorn sheep.

Inspections and maintenance of existing water sources located in, and outside of MNP have, for the past 20 years, been carried out almost exclusively by non-governmental organizations and, in particular, by volunteers from the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep. A former program (Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-26-D) within CDFG, the agency having the statutory responsibility for wildlife conservation in California, worked almost exclusively on habitat enhancements for bighorn sheep, but that program has been completely eliminated. A similar program, but having the primary responsibility for inspecting and maintaining existing habitat improvements and the construction of additional developments where a need is identified, is nonexistent in CDFw. Although private organizations have assumed responsibility for inspection and maintenance activities for more than two decades, that situation is not sustainable. In the absence of strong and continuing advocacy that such a program be reestablished in the agency, I fear little progress will be made toward that objective. In closing, I encourage the California Chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep to press forward with calls to reestablish that program.

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—Dr. Vern Bleich is a wildlife biologist that worked for the California Department of Fish and Game for 34 years and served as Project Leader for the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Recovery Program from 2001–2008. Although retired from state service, he remains active as a scientist and continues to contribute in meaningful ways to the conservation of mountain sheep and other large mammals inhabiting arid environments. For additional information, he can be contacted at: vcbleich@gmail.com.

CA WSF WANTS YOU – As a Member!



Please share this info with your friends.

Are you a Californian? A transplant to or from? Do you hunt wild sheep? Do you dream about hunting wild sheep, especially in California? Do you want to help assure that wild sheep thrive for future generations? Do you want to be part of a growing organization that is making a positive difference?

If you answered yes to one or more of those questions – please join CA WSF! If you are able, join or upgrade to Life Membership or to Distinguished Life Membership. The Desert Bighorn in California are doing well and CA WSF is making a real difference by raising funds, getting connected, working with CDFW, and by collaborating with SCBS to add rainwater catchments to preserve and enhance Desert Bighorn populations in California.

Joining is very easy – www.cawsf.org or email Beverly Valdez at forthesh sheep@gmail.com.

Want to get even more involved? Email Don Martin, President, at don-martin@earthlink.net.

CA WSF is a proud Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation – you'll want to be a member there too! www.wildsheepfoundation.org.

WIGGY WADERS — WORTH MORE THAN THEIR WEIGHT IN YOUR PACK

by Maggi Kouffeld, Life Member

As a kid I immensely enjoyed turkey hunting with my dad, but there was something bittersweet about the process of getting to the hunting spots and wading bare foot through a swollen spring-fed creek at 0400 in the morning. Fast forward to my adult life and I still enjoy chasing those cagey critters on crisp mornings but with the help of Wiggy Waders I'm a good bit more comfortable.

Wiggy's has been around since 1986 and they're a true champion of American made products; never outsourcing any manufacturing to foreign countries. Known mainly for their sleeping bags, their lightweight waders are one of my favorite accessories and make me question wading life prior to my discovery. I first purchased them for an Ibex trip in Kyrgyzstan when they were itemized on Bryan Martin's (Asian Mountain Outfitters) gear list. Simple yet effective for short stream crossings; they are a light weight, waterproof sleeve that goes over your boots and pants up to your hips. Wading in your hunting boots and pants is a much safer option than rock hopping, having wet feet in cold conditions or "ouching" your way across sans boots.

At 13 ounces, their weight-to-use ratio has earned them a permanent spot in my pack for most fall, winter and spring hunts. They are constructed of urethane-coated ripstop nylon on the upper, a thin rubberized sole on the bottom and have webbing straps at the top to secure to your belt. They fit rather loosely on the legs but that doesn't hinder movement and allows for wear over bulky cold weather gear. Size is based off men's sole size varying from 5-16 and a proper fit will cut down on extra fabric around your boot which could be a tripping hazard. Also, if you are traversing quick moving water, I highly recommend using trekking poles for stabilization and a way to gauge water depth.

Maintenance is minimal but important. They are hydrophobic and most of the water can be shaken off after use but at the end of the day remember to take them out and hang until fully dried. The seams are taped and mine have held up well, but I would recommend keeping some "Tenacious" tape on hand for field repairs on longer trips.

A while back I had the pleasure of talking to the company owner, Jerry. However, I started our conversation by inadvertently offending him when I



pressed the question of whether or not his products were in fact American made. The conversation that followed confirmed that he was committed to producing products on our soil. This confirmation is one more reason why I am sold on Wiggy's. He also made a point to give credit to a Pennsylvania hunter that approached him many years ago with the wader concept; he simply brought that vision to life. If you have a moment, go to their website Wiggys.com and see what they have to offer. For the minimal price of \$85 you can save yourself a lot of discomfort with their simple slip over waders. I can attest to the value of this product and have worn them while mountain hunting in New Zealand, Alpine hunting in Alaska, and everywhere in between. They're worth a lot more than their weight in your pack.



THE PROBLEM WITH SHEEP HUNTING BY BRYCE M. TOWSLEY

Excerpt from 2007 American Hunter Magazine

“The problem with sheep hunting is that by the time you can afford it, you are too broken down and worn out to enjoy it.” Wise words from a limping, Advil-popping, hollow-eyed 50-something sheep hunter in a Whitehorse bar.

Sheep hunting is different, so are sheep hunters. When Hemingway wrote that the “very rich are different from you and me”, he might well have been speaking of sheep hunters. They are a unique subculture of the broader hunting society; they’re exclusive, a bit cliquish and intensely focused.

The cynics might quote the next line from that famous exchange: “Yes, they have more money.” And in part they would be right. Sheep hunting is an expensive avocation and most of the hardcore hunters are men of means. But, that’s hardly a given. I know one obsessed sheep hunter who is a state police officer. He works all the overtime he can find, picks up second jobs and lives like a monk, all to feed his addiction. What makes a sheep hunter is hard to pin down. They are fit, of course, dedicated without question and perhaps a bit obsessed. But that describes many people from tennis players to rabbit hunters. With sheep hunters there is something else, something hard to define, and nothing exposes it completely other than witnessing it first hand.

The High Country Inn in Whitehorse, Yukon, is a gathering point for sheep hunters and I arrived two days before the season opened as a buffer against the almost certainty of Air Canada losing my luggage. That’s when I first started to realize that sheep hunters were different. There were many like me: first-timers dipping a toe into this fringe of big-game hunting. But the hardcore, addicted, experienced sheep men stood out. They seemed to feed off each other and emerge with auras that marked them as different. They talked of Stones, Dalls and slams, but then, we all did. Somehow it meant more when they spoke.

When we met there 10 days later, the bar was occupied by gaunt men with hollow, vacant eyes and scraggly beards covering bleeding, wind-burned faces. Their clothing hung on expended frames and they wore their fatigue like a badge of honor. *Sheep hunting takes a lot out of a man, sometimes more than he has, and it leaves nobody unchanged.* The eyes of the first-timers gave them away, and they formed two camps: those clearly infected with the sheep-hunting virus and those who will never, ever subject themselves to it again

Sheep hunting is hard. It’s also expensive. The first makes it a young man’s game, but the second ensures that most young men can’t play. What makes all the difference is a guide who understands that.



Guide and author (R) with a hard-won trophy with 39½-inch horns

I could see it in their faces when I started shopping for a hunt a few years ago. Some tried to hide it, but others just couldn’t help themselves. They looked at this middle-aged, overweight, gray-haired guy and made judgments without all the information. One asked me, “Who would be doing the sheep hunting?” I thought it was pretty clear that it would be me and found the question both odd and insulting. One guide working his booth at a show didn’t even attempt to hold back. I asked about sheep hunting and the first words out of his mouth were, “You can’t do it.” Surprised and insulted, I muttered something to the effect that I am tougher than I look. “Yeah, that’s what they all say at the bottom of the mountain. You all think you’re tough, but none of you are.” I resisted the urge to say what I was thinking and I simply took my checkbook and walked away.

Then I talked with Chris McKinnon. I had hunted with Chris at his Alberta whitetail camp some years back. I knew he was a sheep-hunting guide for years and that he had recently purchased Bonnet Plume Outfitters in the Wernecke Mountains in northeastern Yukon. “We have one opening left for 2006.” Chris told me. “It’s yours if you want it.” He made no judgments other than to say, “This is a hard hunt, be ready.” His area has some of the steepest slopes in North American sheep hunting, so his advice was an understatement. But I trained hard all spring and summer, and by the end of July I was as good as I was going to get. Would it be enough? Nobody ever knows.

As is typical of remote north-country hunting, our charter plane from Whitehorse arrived at the nearby gravel landing strip several hours late. Even though in August it’s light for more than 20 hours a day this close to the Arctic Circle, it created a scramble for the two Super Cubs to ferry hunters and guides out to their hunting areas.

Chris was flying one of the planes and because he would guide me personally I was the last to go. I was packed

and ready when he returned at 9 pm. It was still raining, so we decided to wait. Of course, the rain continued in the morning and it was late before we could fly.

Eventually we were airborne and flying over some of the most spectacular remote country in the world. After landing in the Canyon Mountain Range, which sounds easier than it was, finally, we were standing in sheep country.

The rain returned and started what would become a theme. Chris, Tom Mattell (a friend along to help pack) and I huddled under the downwind wing and waited it out. When it stopped we shouldered our packs and headed up the river. We eventually climbed into our slightly soggy sleeping bags and waited for morning.

Breakfast was mouthfuls of instant oatmeal while glassing the surrounding mountains. As soon as our bowls were empty we shouldered our packs and started up the river, stopping often to glass. An hour later, we were still in sight of camp and already had located six legal rams. The closest was also one of the most promising.

The hard rain during the night had caused the river to rise to twice the depth of the previous day; it was milky with glacial runoff, running swift and cold. The ram was on the other side of this mini-torrent, so we crossed the river, as we had so many times the day before when it was a simpler choice.

Exiting the stream on a sheep trail, we climbed the steep mountain for what seemed like days. What was already getting to me was the relentlessness of it all, how you can't escape it. If you stop to rest you must dig in your heels to keep from sliding down the mountain. That strains the already quivering legs you are trying to rest. I wanted to reach the top as much for a chance to ease the pain in my legs as I did for the sheep.

When we finally belly crawled over the ridge, the ram was gone. We decided that he had fed over the top and was probably on the far-side slope. We scrambled back down our trail, giving up all that hard-earned elevation like it meant nothing at all. Back in the streambed we headed upstream again; Chris set a brutal pace.

We moved up the streambed past the next ridge and then the next, before exiting to climb the backside of the third ridge. If anything, this climb was steeper and longer, but when we came over the top, the ram was waiting. We belly crawled up to a rock outcropping. Chris placed his backpack as a rifle rest. I settled into shooting position as Chris ranged the sheep at 300 yards. As the ram fed, unaware of the predators stalking him, I tried to calm my breathing and to sort through a lot of emotions. It was still early in the hunt, but this was a very good ram. Did I want to shoot now and end it, or continue to hunt? Could I take it physically if this pace continued for another eight days? How much would it take to slip and blow out a knee? I had already come close a couple of times on these rain-slicked rocks. I was still nursing a knee injury that I had suffered while training and it was a long way from 100 percent.

I was here for two things, the experience of hunting sheep, and ultimately to shoot a sheep. I had already experienced sheep hunting, although not as much as I would have liked. Still, I needed to decide and soon. Shoot? Don't shoot? I looked through my binocular and asked Chris again what I already knew; his answer confirmed that this was a very good ram.

Finally the ram turned broadside. I put the 300-yard crosswire behind his shoulder and when the Remington's firing pin dropped it was settled. There were a few tense moments as the sheep started to roll, and then he lay still.

Every scrap of meat must be packed out and, with a full body cape, that made for a lot of weight. Going down that steep and rocky mountain proved to be tougher than climbing up it. We attempted a shortcut, which was a big mistake. But, as sheep hunters do, we survived. After several brutal hours we crossed the still rising river to camp.

I would have been content to crawl into my tent and pass out a while, but Chris was worried about more rain filling the river and trapping us here, perhaps for days. He and his airplane needed to be back at base camp, so he made the decision to pack up and try to make the gravel bar where we left the Super Cub.

We had to cross the river several times, carrying packs filled with all our wet gear and the sheep. Chris had most of the sheep weight, but Tom and I also added some to our already too-heavy packs. It had been a long and brutal day already, climbing and descending that mountain twice. Now we were attempting this 6-mile trip downriver, hampered by the high water and carrying heavy packs. We had to cross more often, as gravel bars we had walked up the day before were gone, hidden under the water or washed away. I was nearly spent when we started and about halfway to the plane I didn't think I could continue. I hated my pack. I detested my soggy boots. I despised my soaked pants that were constantly being dragged off my pain-racked frame by the weight of all the water. It seemed like everything I owned was conspiring to kill me, torture me or at the very least tick me off.

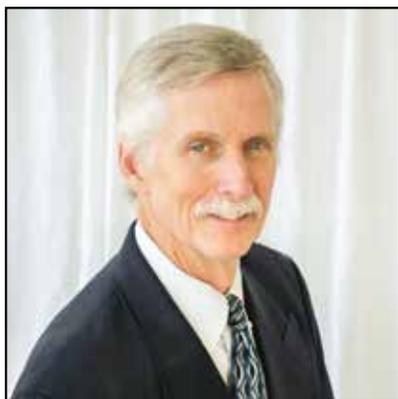
Each time I came around a bend I expected to see the red plane. Each time I did not it was like dying a small death. I staggered along, wanting to quit, willing myself to keep going. Time lost all meaning; there was only pain and movement. Until at last I spotted the Super Cub.

If it had been 6 feet further I don't think I could have made it. I dropped my pack in the shadow of the wing and suddenly my head was spinning and I thought I would pass out. We had been going hard for about 20 hours. It may have been the condensed version, but I thought at that moment I had experienced what it means to be a sheep hunter, and I knew I was lost forever in this glorious obsession.

2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION OFF & RUNNING

BEARS OVERWHELM THE COMMISSION

By Bill Gaines and Associates



As we near the end of February, the year 2022 is still just warming up. But, when it comes to California politics, 2022 is already red hot.

At our State Capitol, State Legislators returned from their “Interim Study Recess” on January 3rd to begin the 2022 Session and wasted no time getting their seats warm. Meanwhile, over at the California Fish and Game Commission, the New Year was ushered in with animal-rights petitioning for an end to all bear hunting in California.

Fortunately, the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF) was prepared and on the lookout and is already playing defense on all issues of concern, while also playing a little offense of our own.

Let us start with the latest out of our State Capitol.

2022 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION OFF & RUNNING

AB 1223 (Levine) – Firearms and Ammunition: Excise Tax – DEAD

Highlighted in both our Fall and Winter 2021 Issues of California Wild Sheep, AB 1223 is legislation that CA WSF has actively opposed since its introduction a little over a year ago. This proposal by Assembly Member Marc Levine (D/10-San Rafael) would have imposed an additional excise tax in the amount of 11% on the price of long guns, firearm parts and ammunition and 10%

on the price of handguns and required that the revenues be used to fund gun violence prevention research, education, and programs.

Last Session, AB 1223 easily passed through the Assembly and to the Assembly Floor by the end of May 2021. On our side was the fact that – because AB 1223 proposed a tax – the bill required a 2/3rds vote to pass off the Assembly Floor. In early June, AB 1223 was brought up for a vote on the Assembly Floor but failed to pass – falling just short of the 2/3rds vote needed. Reacting quickly, the author requested and received approval to amend the bill to add an “urgency clause” which allowed the bill to linger on the Assembly Floor and be brought up for vote at any time – all the way up to the January 31, 2022 deadline for the Assembly to pass bills introduced in their house during the 2021 Session.

Painfully aware that AB 1223 could be brought up for a vote during any remaining Assembly Floor Session in 2021 – and knowing the author would bring it up if he had the votes – CA WSF continued to actively oppose the bill, while nervously monitoring all Floor activity throughout the remainder of the 2021 Session. Thankfully, AB 1223 was never brought back up.

Fast forward to January and the 2022 Session, and our Assembly Floor watch began once again. On January 24, 2022, with the deadline for bills introduced in 2021 to pass out of their house of origin only one week away, AB 1223 showed some life when it took on non-substantial amendments and added some co-authors. As the final few days and minutes leading up to the January 31st final deadline ticked away, CA WSF continued to reach out to Assembly Members urging their continued strong opposition to the bill and nervously monitored all activity on the Assembly Floor. When the final gavel adjourned the Assembly Floor Session on January 31st without AB 1223 coming up for a vote, AB 1223 was finally dead.

AB 1753 (Gallagher) – Fish and Wildlife: Poaching Violations – Probation Period

In an effort to curb poaching, over the course of the last several years CA WSF has worked to help craft and pass two important bills to increase penalties for the most egregious offenses – including legislation which significantly increased

finer for possessing more than three times the daily bag limit and the illegal take of wildlife for profit or personal gain, and legislation which increased penalties for the illegal take of trophy-class animals.

Unfortunately, these positive efforts took a major step back in 2020 when the State Legislature passed

AB 1950 (Kamlager) which reduced the maximum probation from three years to one year for all misdemeanor violations whose provisions do not call out a specific probation length. Because current Fish and Game Code does not specify maximum probation periods for any poaching crimes, the effect of AB 1950 was to limit probation for even the most serious misdemeanor poaching violations to one year.

Prior to passage of that legislation in 2020, a judge could sentence individuals convicted of serious poaching crimes to probation that would prohibit them from hunting for up to three years. The option of a longer probationary period also helped to ensure that penalty assessments could be collected.

Further, California and most other states are members of the "Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact." Created in the 1980s, the Compact includes reciprocity provisions, so that if an individual's license is suspended by a member state, their license can also be suspended by other member states – thus ensuring that individuals are not simply able to cross state lines to get around hunting restrictions.

To address this serious concern, Assembly Member James Gallagher (R/3-Yuba City) has introduced authored AB 1753 – legislation which would reinstate a maximum 3-year probation for the following serious violations of the Fish and Game Code:

- §12012 – The illegal take of wildlife for profit or personal gain
- §12013 – The illegal take or possession in the field of more than three times the daily bag limit
 - §12013.3 – The illegal take of trophy deer, elk, antelope, bighorn sheep or wild turkey
 - §12002.3(b) - The illegal sale purchase of abalone

In 2021, Assembly Member Gallagher introduced AB 645 – similar legislation which passed out of Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee on a unanimous vote, but was held in Assembly Appropriations Committee and not heard.

AB 1753 has also been referred to the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee but has yet to be set for hearing.

SB 370 (Dodd) – Big Game Management Account: Uses

As reported in the Summer 2021 Issue of California Wild Sheep, SB 370 by Senator Bill Dodd (D/3-Napa) would authorize the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to make grants to, reimburse, or enter into contracts or other agreements with public and private entities –including nonprofit organizations – and federally recognized Indian tribes for the use of the funds from the Big Game Management Account (BGMA) to carry out their big game program. SB 370 is co-sponsored by CA WSF and the California Deer Association with the assistance of Gaines & Associates.

The BGMA was established in Fish and Game Code §3953 via the passage of SB 1058 (Harman) – legislation sponsored by conservation organizations in 2010. The intent of our legislation was to ensure that revenues generated via the sale of wild sheep and all other big game tags were deposited in the BGMA and earmarked for land acquisition, projects and programs which benefit those big game species, and expand big game public hunting opportunity and related public outreach.

Knowing that DFW already had the authority to partner with other types of entities, one of the goals of our bill was to ensure that DFW could also partner with non-profit organizations to advance their big game program. For the past 12 years, DFW has, in fact, used BGMA funds to enter into agreements with for-profits, non-profits and other types of entities to help implement big game programs and projects. However, a 2020 internal audit of the BGMA by the DFW Audit Branch determined that, although Fish and Game Code §3953 does allow DFW to enter into agreements with non-profits, it prohibits them from contracting with all other types of entities.

The ability of DFW to enter into agreements with public and private entities and federally recognized Indian tribes to implement programs and projects is essential to the successful management and health of California's big game species. As just a few examples, important big game related efforts performed by for-profits that are now precluded by the audit's determination include helicopter surveys and captures of wild sheep and other big game; research and analyses performed by universities which are not non-profits; and laboratory tooth analyses necessary to determine the age structures and health of big game populations.

By fully restoring the ability of DFW to also enter into agreements with public and private entities and federally recognized Indian tribes, SB 370 will insure DFW has all the tools necessary to implement all the programs and projects that are essential to the successful management of wild sheep and other big game species.

During the 2021 Session, SB 370 quickly passed through the Senate and to the Senate Floor before the end of April. In May 2021, although SB 370 was moving swiftly, the author pulled SB 370 from further consideration until 2022 due to a rule which limited Legislators to moving only twelve bills during the 2021 Session.

Wasting no time, on the fourth day of the 2022 Session, January 6, 2022, SB 370 was brought up for a vote on the Senate Floor, easily passing off on a unanimous vote. Now in the Assembly, SB 370 is pending referral to Assembly policy committee.

SB 865 (Dodd) – Junior Hunting Licenses: Age of Eligibility

California law currently requires that residents be less than 16 years of age to be eligible for a junior hunting license. SB 865 by Senator Bill Dodd (D/3-Napa) would extend the eligibility for a California junior hunting license from 15 years of age and under to 17 years of age and under. If approved, SB 865 would help build hunter numbers by allowing California's youth to take longer advantage of an inexpensive junior hunting license, as well as the many special "apprentice" hunts now made available by DFW and many nonprofit conservation organizations. SB 865 would also bring hunting licenses in line with California law which generally deems someone as an "adult" at 18 years.

The current price of a resident adult hunting license is \$52.66, while the current cost of a junior hunting license is only \$14.04. Additionally, junior license holders are exempt from purchasing an upland game bird validation, a state duck stamp, and wildlife area hunting passes. The significant difference in the cost of an adult hunting license and associated permits relative to a youth hunting license and any necessary permits has proven to be a notable barrier to many who would otherwise take part in the hunting opportunity California has to offer.

There has been 65% decrease in the number of hunting licenses purchased in California since 1970. This decrease, combined with associated declines in the sale of stamps and related permits, has resulted in serious reductions in annual funding made available to DFW to carry out their public trust wildlife management responsibilities. To address this serious revenue shortfall, DFW is collaborating with stakeholders on a Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) task force to increase public interest and involvement in hunting related activities. SB 865 would mark a big step forward in this R3 effort by allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to continue to have access to high quality special youth hunting activities at an affordable cost – increasing the likelihood that they will become life-

long hunters and conservationists.

SB 865 is co-sponsored by CA WSF, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the California Deer Association with the assistance of Gaines & Associates.

SB 865 has been referred to the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee but has yet to be set for hearing.

HSUS PETITIONS F&G COMMISSION TO BAN BEAR HUNTING

In late December 2021, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) petitioned the Fish & Game Commission to close the hunting season for black bears, while calling for DFW to further study the state's black bear populations, the impacts of drought and wildfire on their populations, and to update their 1998 black bear management plan. To sell the ban on bear hunting to the Commission, HSUS cherry picks data out of a recent DFW report on bear hunter harvest and uses it to imply California's bear numbers are plummeting. Further HSUS suggests that since the bear management plan is out of date, the methodology the state is using to estimate current bear populations is out of date, as well.

The HSUS petition to ban bear hunting came before the Commission for action at their February 2022 meeting. CA WSF was "in attendance" and proud to speak on the issue on behalf of our members. In our testimony, CA WSF began by stating that we were strongly opposed to any ban on bear hunting. We then noted that, although the 1998 bear management plan is dated, the methodology DFW is currently using to determine the health of our state's bear populations is not, and that the variety of methods used are well established and accepted in the scientific community to annually provide the best available science on California's bear populations with a high degree of accuracy. We then stated that, although the petition claims that our bear population is in peril, the fact is that the best available science documents that California's bear populations are not only healthy but possibly at historic levels. We closed our testimony by noting that, although we strongly oppose a ban on bear hunting, as a wildlife conservation organization we do support and encourage the DFW to update the bear management plan.

Following testimony by CA WSF and dozens of other organizations and individuals on all sides of the issue, the Commission referred the petition to DFW for their review and recommendation, as was expected. DFW is scheduled to bring their recommendation back to the Commission at their April meeting. CA WSF will be in attendance and fully prepared to represent the interests of our members.



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