

California Wild Sheep

IN THIS ISSUE

From The Editor's Desk.....	3
President's Letter.....	5
Against All Odds	6
Desert Dreaming	8
Recap Of The July 20, 2024 DBH Hunter Orientation	10
Tips From The July 2024 DBH Hunter Orientation	11
State Lands Project – Game On!	17
Government Issues Update	20
The Way Of Things.....	21
CDFW Wildlife Branch Update.....	22
The East Chocolate Mountains: A Brief History Of California's Fourth Bighorn Sheep Hunt Zone (Part III)	23
The Politics Of Conservation	27
Last Campfire.....	30



BRENT MASON
Newberry-Rodman-Ord Mountains
2023-24 Season
Hunting with Dry Creek Outfitters
See the story on page 8



ULTIMA THULE LODGE

CONTACT: DONALD C. MARTIN 310-766-3921



From the Editor's Desk

Happy Late Summer/Early Fall! Hunting season has begun. I did not draw any tags – poor me. I hope you had better luck and drew something good.

I feel more alive in the Fall with the anticipation of scheduled hunting trips. This 3rd Qtr issue is always challenging regarding hunting stories. This issue does include some great hunting stories, fun pictures, drinker work, important information you want to know, fun humor, AND MORE!

Your feedback, ideas, articles, pictures & requests are always welcome. Best way to reach me is email: mike.borel@contextnet.com. Due date for input to the 4Q23 issue is November 10.



ANTELOPE TAQUITO APPETIZERS from Tony Gigilotti

These appetizers are a quick fix.

Use all of the same spices that you use when you cook up tacos or fajitas and simply roll everything up tightly in flour tortillas. Brush with a little olive oil and baked until golden brown, about 12 minutes. ~Enjoy!

And as always if you don't have ground antelope, substitute with venison or elk.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground antelope
- 2 Anaheim chilis or 4.5 ounce can of chopped green chilis
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon coriander
- 1 cup shredded Monterey jack cheese
- 1/4 cup cotija cheese, crumbled
- 8-10 flour tortillas
- olive oil

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 425 F.

Heat an outdoor grill and roast the Anaheim chilis until the skin is charred. Remove from heat and set aside to cool. Carefully scrape off the outside skin and discard the seeds. Using a sharp knife, finely dice up the chilis and set aside.

Heat a skillet over medium heat and add 1 teaspoon of olive oil. Add the ground game and cook until lightly browned. Combine the seasonings and the chopped chilis with the meat. Remove when fully cooked.

Layout the flour tortillas and evenly divide the meat in the center of each one. Top each one with both cheeses and roll up tightly placing the seam side down on a non stick cooking sheet. Brush the tops of each taquito with olive oil and bake until golden brown, about 12 minutes. Slice each one into thirds and serve with guacamole and sour cream.



SO I GOT MY CONCEALED GUN PERMIT YESTERDAY...

...and went over to the local Bass Pro Shop to get a small 9mm pistol for home protection.

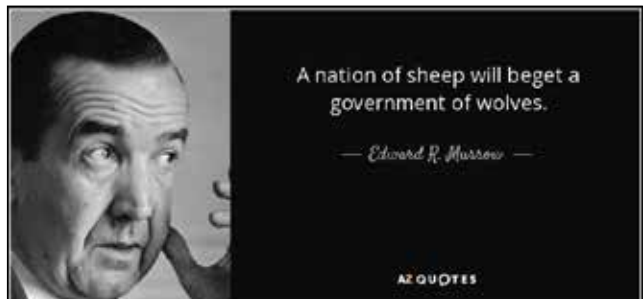
When I was ready to pay for the gun and bullets, the cashier said "Strip down, facing me."

Making a mental note to complain to the NRA about the gun control wackos running amok, I did just as she had instructed.

When the hysterical shrieking and alarm finally subsided, I found she was referring to how I should place my credit card in the card reader!

I've been asked to shop elsewhere in the future. They need to make their instructions to seniors a little clearer.

I don't think I look that bad!



Board of Directors

Officers

President

Donald C Martin (2025)

Northern California Vice President

Ken Crother (2025)

Southern California Vice President

Glen Pyne (2025)

Vice President, Operations

Mike J. Borel (2026)

Secretary

Scott Gibson (2026)

Treasurer

Matt Burke (2025)

Board of Directors

Jim Fitzgerald (2026)

Ben Gordon (2026)

Robert Keagy (2025)

John Oldenkamp (2025)

Don Priest (2026)

Brenton Scott (2026)

Matt St. Martin (2025)

Greg Tooley (2026)

Mike Torres (2025)

Steve Torres (2026)

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

2024

October 25-27 New water installation, Location TBD

November 20 Due date for articles for 4Q2024
CA WSF Newsletter

December 3 Sheep Summit XXXV, "All Virtual"

2025

December 6-8 New water installation, Location TBD

January 10-12 New water installation, Location TBD

January 15-18 WSF International Sheep Show
Reno

January 22-25 SCI International Hunters Convention
Nashville, TN

January 25-26 GSCO Convention
Nashville, TN

February 20 Due date for articles for 1Q2025
CA WSF Newsletter

February 21-23 New water installation, Location TBD

April 25 Sheep Summit XXXVI
In person, Sacramento DoubleTree

April 26 CA WSF Fundraiser Banquet,
Sacramento DoubleTree

May 20 Due date for articles for 2Q2025
CA WSF Newsletter

June 1 June 1 Watch for your 2025
Board of Directors Election Ballot

President's Letter

The cycle continues and here we are again amid a new hunting season. I have already seen the early season successes of those lucky hunters pursuing thinhorn rams in the Northwest Territories and Alaska. As I write this, our own desert bighorn season is about to kick off here in the White Mountains Unit in a week. Good luck to all of you in the Whites. That is a very special and difficult hunt as you will be pursuing desert bighorns at the highest elevations anywhere in North America. Deer season is already open across a large part of California, and I've already seen some great bucks harvested. Tule elk PLM ranches have been hunting elk for over 3 weeks already and there are some great bulls being taken. I too, will be helping soon on a Roosevelt Elk hunt with a great friend and I look forward to starting my 2024 Guide season with a bang! Literally! I wish all of you good luck this Fall wherever your hunting travels may take you.



If you attended our 2024 Fundraiser at the Doubletree by Hilton in Sacramento, you are aware that we had completed a drinker build in collaboration with our friends at Kuiu. Kuiu's Conservation Direct (KCD) program fully funded the entire project and provided most of the volunteers. The project was conducted April 18-21, with an additional volunteer work party, lead by CA WSF Director Scott Gibson, finalizing the project on or about April 28th. The project was a huge step forward for both CA WSF and Kuiu's Conservation Direct. This was KCD's first conservation project in the state of California and I'm confident it will not be their last.

I want to take a moment to specifically thank CA WSF Scott Gibson for his dedication and tireless effort to this project. Three years in the making, this drinker, the largest in California, was a huge professional collaboration. However, project leader Scott Gibson's efforts were "Above & Beyond" and as such he was awarded the 2024 CA WSF "Above & Beyond" Award this year at our event in Sacramento for his efforts, a well-deserved award indeed.

The best news is that on July 15 between 2:21 and 5:45 pm a monsoon thunderstorm passed directly over this brand-new drinker. In its first rain event, your newest drinker collected over 1200 gallons of rainwater to benefit desert bighorn sheep and endangered or threatened wildlife. Eight days later, on July 23rd, an additional 100 gallons of rainwater was captured. This newest drinker is now a source of life-sustaining water for wildlife where before there had been none.

Kuiu recently released KCD's seventh film featuring this project however it is not widely available to the public just yet. The easiest way to view the film on YouTube is to visit my Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/donald.c.martin/ scroll down to my Aug 4. Post and click on the link to view the film. Please give a thumbs up to the video and leave a comment to help support future additional Kuiu Conservation Direct projects to benefit desert bighorn sheep here in California.

I wanted to touch briefly on our Annual Fundraising dinners. Our next event will be April 26, 2025 once again at the DoubleTree in Sacramento — SAVE THE DATE! However, we are investigating other venues for 2026 — we are looking for a venue that meets our needs and answers your requests for a more family friendly location with events for a weekend trip. We are offering a Stone sheep hunting opportunity to one of our lucky members at next year's event (see page 13 for entries) or see the website.

Thanks again to everyone that turned out in Sacramento. I look forward to seeing all of you next Spring. Remember you can support the chapter at anytime by donating directly to "Give a Lamb a Drink." Your donations are tax-deductible, and you can make them at www.cawf.org/store.html and click on "Give a Lamb a Drink" to participate. Help us continue our current success and live up to our motto of "Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountain!"

Thank you, and again, good luck this Fall!

Donald C. Martin

AGAINST ALL ODDS

By Hal Stauff, Member

On June 7, 2023, I received a letter from Regina Vu, Desert Bighorn Sheep Coordinator at California Department of Fish and Wildlife notifying me that I had been drawn for a coveted tag for Desert Bighorn Sheep Hunt 510, the Newberry/Rodman and Ord Mountains. I immediately texted my good friend Jerry Lowery in Reno, an experienced sheep hunter and guide, and asked if he would like to assist me on the hunt. He said of course and we made plans to attend the mandatory Desert Sheep Hunter Orientation at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area in Davis, CA on August 12, 2023. The orientation is put on jointly by California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wildlife Restoration, California Chapter Wild Sheep Foundation, and the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep.

Although I went to the Orientation less than optimistic about the likelihood of harvesting a ram, I was encouraged by the incentive I received from other hunters, outfitters and Department of Fish and Wildlife personnel. One hunter, Richard Sawaske, introduced himself and said that he would be scouting the unit prior to the season and would share with me what he saw and where and do everything he could do to help me, so the hunt was on!

The season ran from December 2, 2023, through February 4, 2024, we decided to skip the opener because of appointments I had with the VA in December and family commitments Jerry had, so we planned the hunt for the first week in January. The closer we got to the hunt date the more excited I became. Then just days before the season opener Jerry called to let me know he tore his rotator cuff in his left shoulder and with the pending surgery and recovery time he would not be able to assist me on the hunt. The news was devastating, I did not know what to do. I had no way of getting down to the hunting unit or getting around once there.

After much thought I decided that in the best interest of the Department's conservation effort for Desert Sheep management I would turn my tag in to be reissued. After talking to Lai Saechao at the License and Revenue Branch,



Hal Stauff with his "Against the Odds" ram

on the morning of November 30, 2023, I put my sheep tag in the mail. That same day I got a call from Jerry to tell me he got a call from James Hamilton with Freedom Hunters Organization and that he wanted to talk to me. That afternoon James called me to explain that Freedom Hunters sponsors hunts for disabled veterans and that I had been selected, unbeknownst to me Jerry had applied my hunt for consideration, and he asked if I could get the tag back. I spoke with Anthony Pace at Freedom Hunters Organization, and he confirmed that they would be sponsoring my hunt, and that James would be assisting me on the hunt. I could not believe the generosity and timing and immediately called Lai to let her know the good news. She said she would return the tag as soon as she received it and would help me with the Mobility Impaired Disabled Persons Motor Vehicle license, which is required to shoot from a motorized vehicle, she was incredibly supportive and helpful.

The day after Christmas I received a call from Cliff St. Martin of Dry Creek Outfitters (DCO), he said he had heard of my dilemma from Richard Sawaske. Cliff mentioned that Dry Creek Outfitters would like to volunteer their services. I was overwhelmed that the premier California Outfitter for Desert Bighorn Sheep wanted to volunteer to help on my hunt, it was truly a late Christmas present.

James and I decided on the second week in January for the hunt, however emergency surgery on my left foot in December and the release from my doctor pushed the hunt back to the last week in January. I was beginning to wonder what else could go wrong. January 25 finally arrived with no further ado.

James picked me up at my home and we headed down to Barstow. We arrived with enough daylight to head south down to Dry Creek Outfitters camp in the hunt area. We were introduced to the Dry Creek Team and other avid sheep hunters who had volunteered to help on the hunt.

We all had a wholesome dinner and agreed to meet at camp the next morning at 7:00 AM.

Daylight broke with the desert covered with heavy frost and wind gusts of 9 miles per hour coming out of the north. After meeting at camp, we all headed out to various locations in the hunting area.

Around noon a good ram was spotted halfway up a mountain our group was glassing, he was quite the distance away. After conversing with the group James said we are going to see if we can get you close enough to get a shot, I am thinking 150 yards or so... boy was I wrong. There were no roads so James and the DCO crew literally pulled and pushed me in my wheelchair across the desert flora, over alluvial fans, down through and up washes while trying to keep out of the site of the ram. Two and one-half hours later we were within shooting range of where the ram was last seen, and we waited for him to reappear in the cluster of rocks in which he had vanished.

It was getting late in the afternoon when he was spotted above where we thought he would be at about 450 yards away. I had a short window of opportunity for a shot. He was moving up to the crest of the ridge and stopped looking away from me at a slight angle providing me with an opportunity to shoot. I aimed and held on his right shoulder and squeezed off a round. At the report of the shot the ram bolted and turned right and ran north across the face of the mountain, he never stopped to give me an opportunity for a second shot and disappeared into some rocks where he was last seen. We glassed the area until dark. The next morning four men were dispatched to the location where he was when I shot, and two men searched the area where he was last seen. The rest of us continued to glass the surrounding areas in search of the ram. We scoured the topography on foot and by glassing in search of the ram to no avail. In retrospect I believe that, although the cross wind was not

significant from where I took the shot it could have been a factor on the face of the mountain where the ram was, pushing my shot to the left.

On day three we continued to look for any sign of the first day ram in the morning with no sightings. In the afternoon we separated to various locations to glass for sheep. About midafternoon Clay DeValle and Carl Erquiaga spotted two rams, one high on the mountain and one below some cliffs close to the valley floor. Upon arriving at their location, as luck would have it, we discovered that there was an old two-track road that crossed the desert floor and up the other side of the ravine that the ram was feeding. Casey Nick slowly maneuvered the UTV up the two track towards where the ram was. When we finally reached a point where we thought we were across from where the ram was last seen we realized that we were above him. We quickly turned around and stopped the UTV within 350 yards of the ram.

Incredibly he did not spook and bedded down facing away from us. I struggled to get him in my rifle scope site, the half windshield on the UTV prevented me from holding low enough to get the ram in my cross hairs. Cliff and Casey kept an eye on the ram while James quickly helped me out of the UTV and into my wheelchair. We set up the tripod with the backup rifle and I zeroed in on the ram, he was 347 yards out. Shortly he stood up and turned right and provided me with a broadside shot. I settled in on his vitals and squeezed the trigger. The ram lunged and expired at the bottom of the ravine. I felt a sense of redemption with the shot. There was a lot of hooting and high fives followed by a celebratory shot of Fireball to memorialize the success of the hunt. What an awesome experience!

The next day Dry Creek Outfitters broke camp we said our goodbyes to them, and the other volunteers and James and I headed back to Barstow for the night. The next day, on our way home, we met up with Ana Selberg, with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, to inspect the ram and plug the horns. She aged the ram at 11 years, a gnarly old desert warrior. I could not be happier with my once in a lifetime trophy.

A big thank you to Anthony Pace and James Hamilton with Freedom Hunters Organization for sponsoring and assisting me on the hunt.

To Cliff St. Martin and the Dry Creek Outfitters crew: Johnston St. Martin, Caden St. Martin, Casey Nick, Clay DeValle and Matt Divine, to avid sheep hunters: Richard Sawaske, Carl Erquiaga, Jeff Bugni and last but not least Carlos Gallinger, the guru of California desert sheep and their habitat, who all volunteered their time and expertise in making this 'Against All Odds' hunt a dream come true, from a grateful veteran.



Hal Stauff with Dry Creek Outfitters team

DESERT DREAMING

By Brent Mason, Member

Imagine my surprise when I received an email from the California department of Fish and Wildlife that stated in bold letters: "SUCCESSFUL".

My first thought was that this was some sort of typo or mistake. I immediately dialed the number on the confirmation letter and was shocked to realize that indeed it was true. The tag was for desert bighorn sheep in the Newberry, Rodman, and Ord Mountains.

I was at work at the time and I was so excited that I had to leave my office. When I got to the parking lot I couldn't help but to whoop and holler out-loud. An elderly lady in a nearby car gave me a look as she drove by. She must have thought I was crazy.

"Now What", I thought to myself. I knew nothing about hunting in California. I decided to contact the Hunt Advisor department of the Hunting Fool. Soon I was connected with one of the hunt advisors named Matthew and we talked about my thoughts and expectations. He told me he had the perfect guy, and he would be glad to make the initial contact. After a few more conversations I was hooked up with Cliff and Matt St. Martin of Dry Creek Outfitters. After several conversations it became clear to me that Cliff, Matt and their whole team would take great care of me and do everything possible to make this once in a lifetime tag-draw an incredible experience.

Matt and I kept in touch over the summer months and talked a few times about their scouting trips to the unit and what they had been seeing. I live in Alaska and our short summer season is always chock-full of outdoor pursuits such as commercial fishing, river rafting, trips to our remote cabins and scouting for the upcoming hunting season; I knew that I would not have time to fly down to California to scout for rams. Luckily I wouldn't have to.

I was excited to hear back from my guides that they had been seeing lots of mature rams in the area. I could hardly wait! It would be a long few months of waiting and dreaming.

Finally, I received a call from Matt with Dry Creek Outfitters. It was opening day of the Season in California. He notified me that the first hunter in camp had gotten his ram on the first day. They had also seen two other rams-of-interest as well. "I highly recommend that you change your plane ticket and get down here ASAP".

My heart was pounding in my chest as I hung-up and began making the necessary changes to my travel plans. It wasn't long before my bags were packed and I was ready to leave.

I flew into Las Vegas, rented a car, and a few hours later pulled up to Matt on the side of the road. I followed him



Brent Mason with the Dry Creek Outfitters team

the final few miles into camp down a dusty dirt road. After situating my things in the tent I made my way to the dinner tent to formally meet the crew. After some dinner and a few stories, it was off to bed as it had been a long day of traveling and Matt said that it would be a 4:30 A.M. start time.

The next morning while having some breakfast we discussed the plan and made arrangements for the members of the crew to split up in the area where the rams-of-interest had last been seen. Matt showed me the rams they had spotted on his trail cams. The pictures included several nice ones. He pointed out one in particular that was very unique. He said that it probably would not score as well as one of the others, but it was a full curl and carried its mass all the way out. He explained that it didn't have as large of bases but with its length it should score well.

As a lifelong Alaskan hunter, I have been fortunate enough to harvest a number of Dall Sheep and I have always been a fan of length over mass. After studying the photos at-length, it was decided that the longer horned ram was going to be our target ram. After sticking around camp for a little while waiting for it to get light, I was able to take a quick shot to confirm that my .300 Ultra Mag was zeroed in; It was go time!

Leading up to this hunt I had spent quite a few days in the field hiking on a variety of other (Alaskan) hunts including caribou, dall sheep, grizzly bear, and moose. My fitness level was not something I was worried about, but I quickly discovered that walking in the sand washes is quite a workout on the calf muscles!

After a few hours of hiking, we made it to the top of a peak that was situated smack in the middle of the unit. We were in a great spot to glass for sheep. The first day flew by as we were able to spot upwards of 25 rams. It was cool watching so many nice mature rams; We even had a couple of nice

rams walk to within a hundred yards of our position. After all of the day's activity I was extremely excited to see what day two had in store.

It was windy in camp the next morning despite being somewhat protected by a large outcropping of boulders. We didn't realize the full extent of the wind until we started walking out in the open. Luckily the wind was at our backs on the way-in and it scooted us right along! Soon we had completed the five mile walk into the last known area of the rams.

We spent the whole day glued to the binos with no sightings of our target ram. It was about 3:00 p.m. and Matt was studying a ram far-off that had potential when something caught my eye on the mountain behind us. A ram had walked out onto a shale slide near the top of the mountain. The spotting scope confirmed our suspicion; It was our target ram! We talked about making a play for him right then-and there, but after discussing it we decided that with the steepness of the ridge and the distance involved we would not be able to get within range before dark. We decided to play it safe and slowly backed off the ridge and out the wash back towards camp.

When we arrived at camp we found out the rest of the crew had also spotted the ram and had watched him retreat over the ridge right at dark. Based on the strength of the wind we all felt like there was a really good chance that the ram would not travel far and was most likely bedded down for the evening. I barely slept that night in anticipation of what might happen the next day.

We awoke early the next morning and started the long walk into the area a second time with high hopes of spotting the ram again. When we were almost there, Matt suggested we change course and head straight for the ridge where we had last seen him. After working our way through numerous boulder fields, we started the ascent of the ridge. It was a few hours of slow, steep walking when we finally reached the top of the ridge where we hoped we would be in a good position. We slowly made our way along the ridge and finally got to a rock outcropping overlooking the saddle where we believed rams would likely pass-through. We got set up in the rocks with a good rest and decided to wait.

Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, two rams appeared; They were standing about a hundred and fifty yards away. "That looks like the one!", I said.

After a quick confirmation from Matt, I got myself poised and ready. All I needed was for him to take a step one way or the other so I could have a broadside shot. He took a few steps to the right and was slightly quartering away when I pulled the trigger. The ram dropped in his tracks and rolled over once and came to a stop. "Holy smokes", I thought. It happened so fast that I didn't even have a chance to think about it or get nervous. After the shot I was so excited that it took me quite some time to calm down and actually realize what had just happened. I had done it. I had actually harvested a Desert Big Horn ram! This was something I never believed that I would be able to do in my lifetime.

As they always say apply, apply, apply because if you don't you will never have the chance and you might just be like me and get the chance of a lifetime. I can't thank the Huntin Fool enough for the info and knowledge I have gained from their publication and for setting me up with Dry Creek Outfitters.

I would also like to send a big thanks to Cliff, Matt, Johnston, Casey and Blue of Dry Creek Outfitters for all the effort. Without their countless hours pre-scouting and time spent behind the glass I would not have been able to harvest such a great ram. They made things so easy and enjoyable that it barely felt like I had to work hard to fulfill the dream of a lifetime.



A very happy Brent Mason with his ram



A very picturesque view of the mountains!

RECAP OF THE JULY 20, 2024 DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTER ORIENTATION

by Mike Borel, VP Operations, Distinguished Life Member

This event was organized by CDFW – primarily Paige Prentice and Danielle Glass. It is a mandatory attendance meeting for California bighorn sheep tag holders. There was a huge turnout of not only new tag holders but also their friends and family, outfitters, guides, CDFW, CAWSF and SCBS personnel. It was a normal, hot day in July. Fortunately, the Yolo facility has air conditioning, but it strained to keep up with 55-60 persons!

Tagholders I met, in alpha order:

Gregory Askew	Vincent Grimaldi	David Null
David Coleman	Jessica Haddox	Matthew Petrini
David Comer	Tanner Harris	Todd Roberts
Dale Davis	Brian James	Doug Roth
Randall Fortune	Paul Kelly	Michael Siefert
Rodney Garzon	Bradley Lucich	Randy Virtue

The agenda was filled with good information on how to be successful along with the important requirements that every tag holder needed to know. Throughout the day everyone stressed **“YOU ARE AMONG THE “LUCKIEST PEOPLE ON THE PLANET”**.

Agenda:

- Program History and Bighorn 101 (CDFW - Glass)
- Recent events and projects (CDFW - Glass)
- Preparation and safety in the desert (SCBS - Miller-Marschke)
- Spotting Sheep (CAWSF/SCBS – Kerr)
- Judging bighorn sheep (CAWSF/SCBS – Kerr)
- Recommended glassing equipment (CAWSF/SCBS – Borel)
- Ram Awards (CAWSF/SCBS – Martin)
- Past hunter Testimonial (CAWSF – Crother)
- Regulations / Conditions (CDFW - Glass)
- Check-in procedures (CDFW - Stelter)
- Q&A session (All)
- Tag distribution and adjourn to lunch

See more about some of the tips on the next page.

Following the morning of presentations, CA WSF and member Ken Crother once again provided a superb grilled chicken, salad and mac n cheese lunch.

After lunch we stuck around to answer additional hunter questions and just to talk about bighorn sheep and bighorn sheep hunting!!

We received many complimentary and appreciative remarks about the program on that day and since.

TIPS FROM THE JULY 2024 DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTER ORIENTATION

by George Kerr, SCBS / CA WSF Member

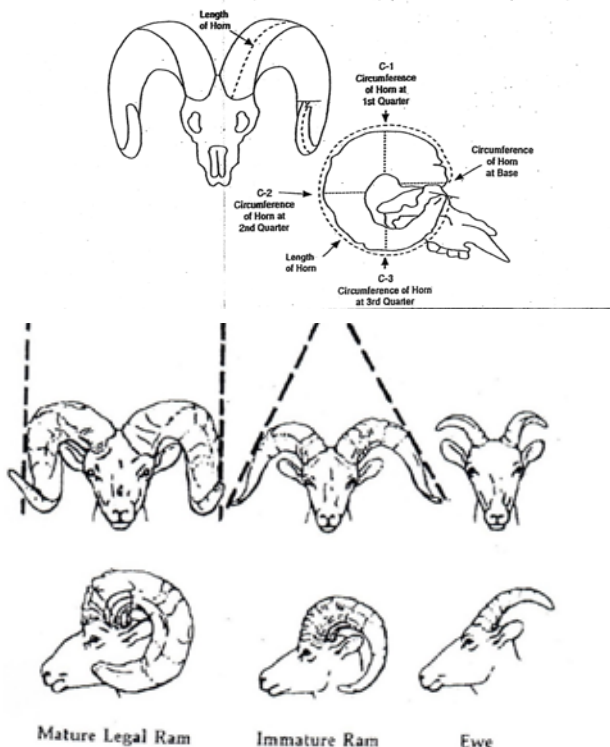
There was a lot of good information shared with the attendees at the mandatory Desert Bighorn Sheep Hunter Orientation meeting. It would be impossible to have it all here but here is a small taste so that you will be one step ahead when you get the notice and become **"ONE OF THE "LUCKIEST PEOPLE ON THE PLANET"**.

TOP TEN REASONS PEOPLE DON'T HARVEST TROPHY RAMS

10. NOT IN SHEEP SHAPE – Ill prepared mentally and physically
9. POOR EQUIPMENT – Optics, not the right gear/equipment specific for desert sheep hunt
8. NOT ENOUGH HUNTING EXPERIENCE – hunt a lot before sheep!
7. NOT ENOUGH TIME TO HUNT – limited time in the field
6. NO HELP, OR TOO MUCH HELP – either way is bad!
5. BAD ADVICE, POOR INFORMATION – talking with the wrong people
4. POOR OR NO PLANNING – no pre-scouting in the field
3. WEATHER OR STORMS – wind, rain, cold, heat can all develop instantly!
2. POOR SHOOTING – practice, practice, practice and be sure to sight in your rifle immediately before
1. DID NOT TAKE NOTES OR LISTEN TO EXPERTS AT THE ANNUAL SHEEP HUNTER'S CLINIC!

METHOD 11

For wild sheep, aoudad and tur



FINDING BIGHORN SHEEP

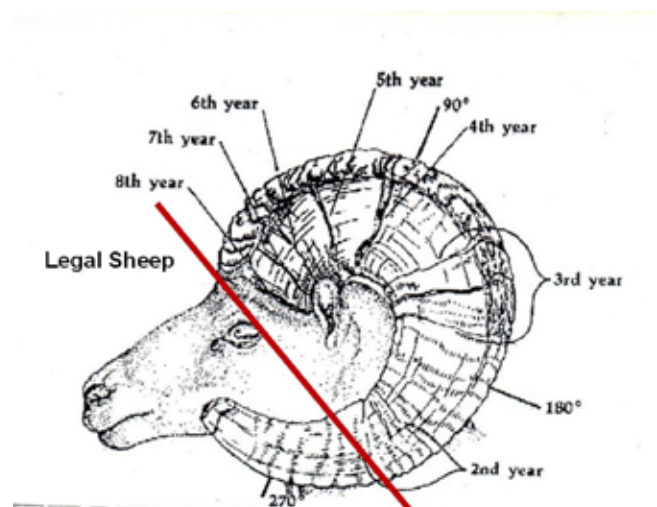
- Recognize current habitats, terrain, water sources during pre-scouting
- Don't over-scout close to the hunt dates
- Any weather event will change things
- Look for odd shapes, angles, movements

Once you start being able to see sheep, you'll find sheep everywhere!

JUDGING BIGHORN SHEEP

Get to know the 'average' size for the zone you are hunting... Then look for:

- Big mass at bases
 - Mass throughout the length of horns
 - Brooming / damage to indicate age
 - "Blocky" body with large head / horns to match
- and
- Compare to other rams
 - Try to get closer
 - Look at lots of photos of DBH and their scores
 - Learn to count the rings, measure the quarters, or other tactic to estimate
 - Hire a guide!





Are YOU a CA Wild Sheep Foundation Distinguished 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:

JUSTIN AKINS
PEGGY MAY BLOOM
VINCE BLOOM
MIKE BOREL
JIM BRICKER
JED BRUSSEAU
ADAM CASAGRANDE
KEVIN CHENG
DAVID COMBS
WILLIAM CULLINS
JOSHUA DARNELL
BRET DISMUKES
JIM DISMUKES
NOAH DISMUKES
DAN EVENSON
SCOTT FINLEY
JIM FITZGERALD
STEVE GINGRAS
RICK GARZOLI JR
SCOTT GIBSON

ANTHONY GIGLIOTTI
BEN GORDON
TINA GORDON
JUSTIN HALLOCK
DAVID HARTWIG,
DISTINGUISHED LIFE #6
CORY HIGGINS
TYLER W. HIGGINS
GARY HILL
ERNEST HOLLOWAY
PATTY HOLLOWAY
SHAD HULSE
BRETT JEFFERSON
BOB KEAGY
BRYN KERN
MAK KERN
RANDY LASKOWSKY
PEGGY BARNETT LEE
CHASEN MARLER
MAKENA MARLER

DONALD C MARTIN
JEFF F. MARTIN
JOSEPH MASSOLO
ROGER MCCOSKER
RICHARD M. MCDREW
KYLE MEINTZER
NICK METTA
ANDY MOECKEL
PATRICK OILAR
JEREMIAH OLDENKAMP
NATHAN OLDENKAMP
CHRISTOPHER PEATRESS
JEREMY PECHTEL
JEFF PERACCHI
DON PERRIEN
JOHN PESTORICH
DON PRIEST
CAROLINE PYNE, DVM,
DISTINGUISHED LIFE #1
CONNOR PYNE, DVM,

DISTINGUISHED LIFE #2
GLEN PYNE, DVM,
DISTINGUISHED LIFE #5
MADISON PYNE,
DISTINGUISHED LIFE #4
TRAVIS PYNE,
DISTINGUISHED LIFE #3
TOM REA
MASON ROGERS
DAVE ROWAN
PAUL SCHULTHEIS
RICH SELLERS
ALAN SHULTZ
DAN SMITH, JR.
DAN SMITH, III
DANIEL SMITH, IV
RENEE SNIDER
ADAM STARR
BROOKS STILTZ
BILL TITTLE

MICHAEL TORRES
NATHAN TREADWELL
REUBEN VALLES
ZACK WALTON
JOHN WARE
JIM WARNER
SHAINA WARNER
SIMON WHETZEL
DARRYL WILLIAMS
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 2023.

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 2023.

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

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

2025 STONE SHEEP HUNT Special Drawing



ONLY 1500 TICKETS AVAILABLE

\$100 PER TICKET



Yukon Stone Outfitters

14 day 1x1 hunt with Yukon Stone Outfitters

Dates: July 30 - August 12, 2025

(FIRST HUNT OF THE SEASON!)

Location: Pelly Mountains, Yukon, Canada

Does not include: commercial airfare, charter flight, Tag and Preservation Find fees, Government Harvest Fee, 5% GST, or gratuities.

Read full rules at CAWSF.org

Get Tickets by Mail, Fax, or ON LINE

Mail order form to:

CA WSF

1630 Williams Hwy 151
Grants Pass, OR 97527

FAX order form to:

650-409-6005

ONLINE ORDERS:

www.cawsf.org/store

Name

Address

City State Post Code

Day Phone

Email

Payment Methods

☐ Check
Make check payable to:
CA Wild Sheep Foundation

☐ MasterCard

☐ Visa

Credit Card Number

Expire Date

CCV Code

Billing Postal Code

Signature

Orders must be received by April 12, 2025. Drawing held April 26, 2025. Do not need to be present to win.

HIGHLIGHTING RECENT AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS IN TRAVEL WITH FIREARMS

By Bob Keagy, Distinguished Life Member

It's the hunting season, and you're packing up "Old Betsy", dreaming of high places and full curls. Depending upon whether you are going to another state, Mexico, Canada or a more exotic destination, you need to be aware of the laws governing your bringing "Old Betsy" into another jurisdiction. Remember that your local guide will be able to help you sort out any peculiarities of gun laws at your destination. He has probably answered your questions many times to many clients, and he wants you to show up happy and ready to go. He is your best ally.

Let's highlight some recent changes and some pending proposals (Remember- this is just a highlight! This is an increasingly complex field and close coordination with your in-country guide and professional guidance by booking agents or Travel With Guns (now "TWG Travel") is very highly recommended to avoid unpleasanties!

INTERSTATE TRAVEL WITH FIREARMS:

Federal law 18 USC § 926A provides that every U.S. citizen may legally transport firearms across state lines as long as he or she is legally allowed to possess the weapons in both the state of origin as well as the destination.

You can legally transport firearms across state lines as long as:

You can lawfully possess firearms in your state of origin, and the state of destination.

The firearm and ammunition must be stored out of reach (not in the glove compartment or center console).

Although it may not be required, it is a good idea to lock your ammunition and guns in separate lock boxes in the trunk or anywhere out of immediate reach.

It is important to note that 18 USC § 926A only allows you to travel through, not to, the states in which it's illegal to carry firearms. In states with strict gun laws (such as California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York), it may be a good idea not to stop at all. In addition, be sure to comply with any magazine and ammunition restrictions that are in place at your destination. Many parks, refuges and federally-administered land areas do not allow firearms, so check before



you go. With a little care and advance planning, interstate travel should be pretty straightforward.

It is important to also note that our friends at both the NRA and SCI maintain extensive domestic travel databases to provide up-to-date guidance to members.

MEXICO AND CANADA:

Again, your local guide or booking agent, if you have one, will be your best advisor. It is, after all, a big part of their job.

When you cross international borders, a document called "Certificate of Registration For Personal Articles Taken Abroad", better known as the "Form 4457" becomes absolutely crucial (see: www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/cbp_form_4457.pdf). You must have this Customs and Border Protection (CBP.gov) form filled out anytime you take a firearm, or firearms, out of the U.S.. It is available online, and requires a visit to your nearest Customs and Border Protection office, where your firearm (unloaded!) will be inspected, the serial number checked and the form then stamped and signed by a CBP agent. This is pretty straight-forward and at no cost. Make and keep several copies to provide to customs and other officials.

SO, WHAT'S NEW?

For Mexico, you must now also list your scope on the Form 4457, as well as the rifle, giving serial number and make. Your guide will contact you for the same info, beginning the import license process and hunting license from his end. Coordinate closely with your guide. Increasingly, guides are using quality "camp guns" already in-country, and you may want to inquire about this.

For Canada, there is now a listing of some 1500 firearms that are banned for import into Canada. Although many, perhaps most, are semi-automatic AK, AR or M-14 type weapons (including the Ruger Mini-14 and variants), 50 caliber

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION FOR PERSONAL EFFECTS TAKEN ABROAD
19 CFR 148.1

NAME: _____
NAME OF OWNER: _____ ADDRESS OF OWNER: _____
STREET: _____
FIRST NAME: _____ MI: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____
DESCRIPTION OF ARTICLES: _____

I certify that the information shown herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
PORT: _____ DATE: _____
SIGNATURE OF OWNER: _____
SIGNATURE OF CBP OFFICER: _____

1. Complete the Original only.
2. Prior to departure, present the described articles and the completed form to a CBP Officer for comparison and signing of the form.

Browning, or handguns, you must check with your guide for the latest status of your weapon. You can also review the list online at www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/frms/paf-afa-en.aspx. This is in addition to other formalities of entry to Canada, which are listed online at Canada Border Services Agency (go to link: www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/import/iefw-iefw-eng.html). Remember, your Canadian guide is your best friend.

Again, SCI has a database available to members on travel to major international hunting destinations.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL:

The form 4457 used to have a form expiry date in the upper right hand of the form. Several foreign governments viewed this as the expiry of approval authority to transport the listed firearm, and this caused some problems for members, particularly in Africa. This form expiry control number has now been removed to avoid confusion, and is currently on the ICE website (www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/cbp_form_4457.pdf).

On international trips, including Mexico and Canada, there is a new limit on the number of firearms that may be taken out of the country by one person; the new limit is three firearms. There is no discussion or justification offered for this limitation.

There are many pitfalls and precautions to taking firearms internationally, and these have been covered exhaustively covered elsewhere (e.g.: Form 4457, checked baggage only, locked hard cases, ammo limited to 5 kilos, carriage of firearms arranged in advance with carriers, etc.etc.- see Craig Boddington's article on this <https://sportsafeld.com/2017/>

gun-travel-travails/) but disturbingly, the Bureau of Industry and Security ("BIS") of the Commerce Department has advised via the Federal Register that they are "considering" certain additional changes to current rules. The purported driving force behind these considerations is to preclude nongovernmental/sporting firearms being diverted from sporting purposes to cartels, terrorists and others that might destabilize a foreign government or be inimical to U.S. foreign policy interests.

Among the changes being considered are putting an expiry on the Form 4457, with various expiries out to 180 days being suggested. There is no support given for this proposal, and, depending upon individual plans, could introduce an entirely arbitrary limit on travel. Secondly, the BIS is considering requiring personal-use weapons taken abroad be entered into the extremely complex and commercially oriented Automated Export System (AES). The AES is designed for commercial use, requires an EIN (Employer Identification Number), and is used to track U.S imports and exports. Hence, hunters seeking to take personal firearms abroad would be subjected to extensive AES filing requirements, to no apparent purpose.

Finally, and perhaps most disturbingly, an "Inter-agency working group" consisting of the State Department and the BIS has been formed and have proposed an expansion of countries where there is a "presumption of denial" of export of personal firearms. This "interagency working party" is to "evaluate firearm diversion and misuse risks on a country-by-country basis" and "continually assess" the "risks of diversion of both lawful and unlawful firearms". They are considering a greatly expanded list from present, including 36 new countries, some of which are major hunting destinations, such as Chad, Central African Republic, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uganda. If this list were approved, it would be extremely difficult to overcome the "presumption of denial" and take your own personal firearm. Note that, again, many guides now have acceptable "camp guns" but this is not always the case, and in any event, mountain hunters for argali, urial, ibex and chamois tend to prefer very specialized and highly individual weapons. Please recall that these changes are only under "consideration" at present, and SCI has filed a five-page letter in opposition.

I hope that this has been of interest, hopefully helpful, and "Happy hunting" to one and all!

Bob

Note from the editor: In addition to the legal requirements and restrictions, be aware that your local airport of departure or your air carrier of choice might enforce their own additional rules. From personal experience of one member you don't want to be at SFO at 5 AM running from the international terminal to the domestic terminal in hopes of finding an open gift shop so you can purchase an additional lock because your airlines doesn't care about the TSA regulations you have printed out to show them you are in full compliance but wants to have their own rules followed.

INFO OF INTEREST ON HUNTING GEAR – BINOCULARS THAT CAN “DROP A PIN”

By Mike Borel, VP Operations, Distinguished Life Member

While on some rifle training in Hamilton, Montana with Snowy Mountain Rifles, I was exposed to a pair of binoculars from SigSauer that can “drop a pin” at a location you specify for ranging. I can see a lot of uses for this feature –

1. Marking a down animal (cuz it never looks the same when you are on site).
2. Figuring out if a location you can get to will be in range.
3. Marking an animal to simplify helping your partner see the animal.

With more thought, there are likely more uses. This particular model was a Kilo10K-ABS HD Gen II. I was also impressed with the clarity and ease of operation.

I've since learned the latest Leica Geovids can also do this.

DANG! A new and compelling reason to upgrade my binoculars AGAIN!! DOUBLE DANG!!



Active-Matrix OLED display for graphical
real-time ballistic information



Active-Matrix OLED display for graphical
real-time ballistic information

STATE LANDS PROJECT – GAME ON!

by Debbie Miller Marschke, SCBS

California State School Lands were granted to the State of California on March 3, 1853 by an Act of Congress (Ch. 145, 10 Stat. 244) for the purpose of supporting the development of public schools. These lands consisted of the 16th and 36th sections of land in each township, and have remained reserved for future schools that were needed as California lands were sought by homesteaders, treasure seekers, and businessmen alike. Today these parcels still occupy the sparse Mojave Desert landscape, waiting for a population that will never come. Some of the parcels are landlocked within "Wilderness". Others are so remote from the nearest road or settlement that the reserved State Land is, for all intents and purposes, useless

More than 10 years ago, Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep Executive Board Member Glenn Sudmeier studied these blue colored squares upon the map while he contemplated whether or not the State of California would consider leasing the land to SCBS. As a matter of fact, the State was interested in a mutually beneficial relationship which would put these arid lands into service for the good of the State, it's wildlife, and the community. Sudmeier sprang into action, scouting these parcels with his desert rat compadres or anyone he could cajole into hiking for miles "just to see what is over that hill". He identified the best State Land candidates which contained suitable characteristics that would appeal to the bighorn population. SCBS then bit the bullet by hiring professionals to prepare the proper studies and documentation, which was paid for with precious financial resources using funds from the Big Game Management Account. On June 18, 2015, SCBS submitted the formal application to the California State Lands Commission to lease 90 parcels of land for the development of Raincatcher style Bighorn Sheep guzzlers. On December 9, 2022, the SCBS lease application was approved by the State Lands Commission.



Sheep at a drinker 2024 (Rick Halter Photo)

There has been slow but steady progress and we have now completed all of the necessary steps to move forward with construction for four of the parcels. Engineering plans have been drawn (thanks to Glenn Sudmeier), tanks, tread ramps and other supplies ordered and received in inventory. The Rain mats are currently being fabricated and will be picked up shortly. SCBS and WSF member Jef Bugni has helped greatly by making the run from his place (near Pumpkin Center) up to Madera to pick up the tanks. That breaks the trip up into two manageable segments and splits the efforts across two volunteers so we don't burn anyone out with grueling 14 hour days pulling a trailer and tanks.

We had SCBS Board Members Jeff Crouse and Jenny Hinojosa perform the biological resource survey per the "Best Management Practices" clause of the lease. Crouse and Hinojosa are professional revegetation specialists, so SCBS was lucky to already have their skills available for this project. They've identified a few minor issues to work around, primarily a few small cacti that we need to avoid damaging at each site, but no "sensitive" species that would cause us to relocate the entire project. CDFW and USFW were contacted and no raptor nesting sites are known to be in the vicinity of the subject parcels.

SCBS President Steve Marschke made initial contact with the NAHC and the local Native American tribes and only two of them responded – and that was to say they didn't have any comments and weren't interested in participating in the on-the-ground resource survey but if we found anything "significant", the tribes requested SCBS to let them know.

Archaeologist David Nichols, who is currently employed by the NPS, did the archaeological resource survey for us as a volunteer. No cultural resources were found at three sites, one site is still outstanding due to David's schedule but he assures us that it will be completed before the fall.

CA WSF has committed to making funds available for the next four projects. One of these projects will be co-funded by the Andrew Pontious tribute fund. Please see page 20 for more information.

SAVE THE DATES!

We have scheduled these dates for new State Land guzzler construction, one complete project for each weekend:

October 25-27, 2024

December 6-8, 2024

January 10-12, 2025

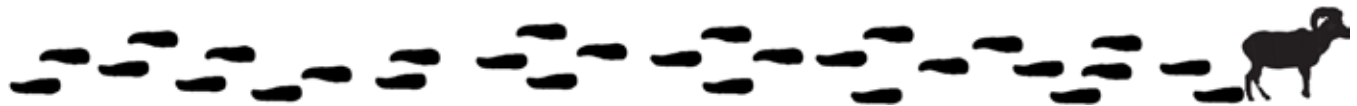
February 21-23, 2025

All four future projects are located in the Mojave Desert, located off the Interstate 40 nearest to the town of Ludlow.

Details and sign ups for each project will be announced

by email. If you have not already joined our volunteer email list, please do so now if you can help us this fall. It's important to the future of this State Lands Program that our first installations are well supported and as perfect as we can execute. They will serve as a template for the continual construction for the remaining parcels for the next 10 years and beyond. To join our volunteer email list, contact me at debmillermars@gmail.com.

Even better, if you are currently not a member of SCBS, consider joining now or renewing your expired membership. We can use everyone's participation in our efforts. SCBS is a non profit 501c; we have no paid employees, all membership dues and donations go directly into efforts to keep sheep in the mountains! You can join through our website at sheepsociety.com. SCBS also has an active Facebook page, which is constantly updated with fantastic desert bighorn photos and videos obtained by our members in the field. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/934106009976651>



OVEN BAKED FALAFEL from Tony Gigilotti

Great for a snack or as a side dish!

INGREDIENTS

400g Split skinless fava beans (may use chickpeas, but it's creamier with fava)	6 Tsp of garlic
100g Green onions	2 Tsp Ground Coriander
100g Leeks	1 Tsp Cumin
50g Cilantro	1 Tsp Cayenne (leave out if you're spice sensitive)
50g Parsley	2.5 Tsp salt



DIRECTIONS

- 1) Wash and soak the beans for 8 hours
- 2) Put the green onion, leeks, cilantro, and parsley in a food processor pulsing to begin breaking them down. You do not need to take the cilantro leaves off their stems, but it will be easier to get a better consistency
- 3) Add the beans on top, slowly adding them and mixing/chopping depending on the size of your food processor
- 4) Continue processing until the batter is smooth then add the spices
- 5) Heat your oven to 425; if you have convection use this feature
- 6) Place the mixture in a bowl and either by hand or hand mixer begun whisking to add air. You want the batter to feel and look light and fluffy
- 7) On a baking sheet with either foil or wax paper place a light layer of oil
- 8) Shape the falafel with a cookie scoop placing them on a sheet before gently flattening them by hand
- 9) Lightly brush or spritz the top of each falafel with oil and place in the oven
- 10) After 10-15 min flip the falafel and bake for another 5-10 min until golden brown



LAST ALARM 6/14/24 ANDREW PONTIOUS

On Friday June 14, 2024, Firefighter Andrew Pontious tragically lost his life in the line of duty while battling a large vehicle fire in the city of Palmdale. A 19 year veteran with the Los Angeles County Fire Department, Andrew was a courageous, selfless, proud protector of life and property. He was highly respected by his peers for his leadership, work ethic, bravery and generosity.

Andrew was a lifelong advocate for wildlife conservation; his passion for conservation developed when he began hunting for quail and chukar in the Southern California desert. Andrew's early experiences of hunting and the outdoors inspired him to seek a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Management at Humboldt State University. After graduating, he worked for the Pacific Lumber company surveying the threatened Northern Spotted Owl population before going on to become a Los Angeles County Firefighter in 2005.

In 2003, Andrew had the rare privilege of drawing a tag for a Desert Bighorn Sheep hunt in the Sheephole Mountains. This hunting experience ignited a desire to make a difference for conservation of desert wildlife; specifically for wild sheep. Andrew joined the Society for Bighorn Sheep (SCBS) and for the past 20 years has volunteered on numerous projects with the California Wild Sheep Foundation (CAWSF) and the Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF). Andrew took on the role of guzzler captain for multiple guzzlers. (A guzzler is a man-made self-filling water catchment system that provides supplementary water for wildlife). Andrew maintained these guzzlers in extreme heat and weather conditions when water was scarce or unavailable. Mile hikes through rough terrain, water supply drops from helicopters and providing maintenance and repairs to these guzzlers has made a huge impact on the conservation and survival rates of Wild sheep and other desert wildlife.

In Honor of Andrew, we are seeking funding for a grant to support his conservation efforts of desert wildlife; specifically his contribution to wild sheep. The grant will include new guzzlers that will be dedicated to Andrew to continue his legacy of conservation.

Donations can be made via PayPal/Venmo:

<https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/ZKSFYFET2B2V2>



Or send donations of any amount to:
Beverly Valdez, CAWSF
1630 Williams Hwy #151
Grants Pass, Oregon 97527
Please make checks payable to:
CA Wild Sheep Foundation
Notation: Galad/Andrew Pontious
Your donations are tax deductible

California Wild Sheep Foundation is a nonprofit organization; donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. CA FINAWS tax identification # 68-0481140



GOVERNMENT ISSUES UPDATE

by Don Priest, Distinguished Life Member, Board Member

OPPOSITION TO THE CADIZ WATER PROJECT

Cadiz Inc. (Cadiz) is once again moving to attain the rights to pump enormous amounts of water from a Mojave Desert Aquifer underneath the Mojave Trails National Monument and the Mohave National Preserve. The Cadiz Water Project (Project) is looking to extract 50,000 acre-feet of water annually, though the US Geological Survey estimates that the recharge rate, the rate in which the aquifer is refilled by rainfall, is only 2,000 acre-feet. Cadiz is looking to attain public funding to subsidize the planning, construction and operation of the Project to help bring this scheme to fruition.

This would be devastating to nearby springs which have been shown by published research to be connected to this aquifer, specifically the Bonanza Spring in the Clipper Mountains. This Spring is utilized by Desert Bighorn Sheep, quail and other desert wildlife. The California desert ecosystem and our desert's water and wildlife are too precious, and the balance too delicate, to experiment with in determining if any water can be extracted from our state's precious underground aquifer resources so vital to our desert's natural environment.

CA WSF, along with a coalition of other wildlife conservation partners, has sent a letter to the US Board of Reclamation, State Water Resources Control Board and the California Department of Water Resources detailing our strong opposition to this Project. We have urged these agencies to deny any public funding that would support the development of this Project.

CA WSF with our partners will continue to fight to keep this Project from coming to fruition; and, we will keep you, our members, up-to-date as this issue develops.

BRIGHTLINE WEST HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT – WILDLIFE OVERCROSSINGS UPDATE

As CA WSF indicated in our last article, CDFW has indeed hosted a stakeholder meeting in July 2024 in order to update the various state agencies and the public on the Brightline West High-Speed Rail Project (Project) I-15 overcrossings details and future construction timeframe.

This Project has many 'ground-breaking' achievements for California. Within Section 3 of Senate Bill 145, signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in July 2023, *'This bill would, if an intercity passenger rail project is constructed within the Interstate 15 right-of-way, require the department to ensure the construction of 3 wildlife crossings and appurtenances at 3 priority locations, as provided. The bill would authorize the department to solicit proposals for, accept unsolicited proposals for, negotiate, or enter into an agreement with*



a rail entity, as defined, to develop and construct the wildlife crossings and appurtenances, as specified. The bill would establish parameters for this authorization.' This is a first time such a Public-Private partnership has been specifically identified for California. Another first will be the use by this Project of arch type pre-cast structures after a seismic analysis and approval process has now been completed.

\$91.6M has been raised to support the estimated \$84M total construction cost for the three crossings. The pre-cast design has certainly helped in keeping the costs of the Project manageable, especially in comparison to initial cost estimates.

The three crossings and the settled, identified locations will each be approximately 100 feet wide, similar to those utilized in Arizona. Fencing will be placed along the highway to direct wildlife to the crossings, with the fencing location and distances set by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW).

Brightline West indicated in the meeting that the crossings will be built concurrent with the rail-line construction. Their estimated Project construction start is within the next year, with completion of the overcrossings in the next two years, and the Project itself within four years.



CALIFORNIA WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

ELECTION 2024 RESULTS

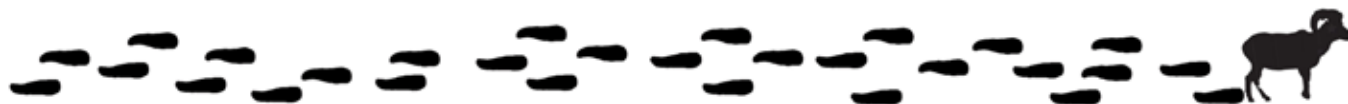
Thanks to all members participating in the Board elections in June. A special thank you to the Board members who have dedicated so much time and energy over the past year to our goal of PUTTING AND KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAINS, especially outgoing Board members Paul Schultheis and Tammy Scott who are leaving the Board but remain involved and dedicated to CA WSF. And a big thank you to Brad Aboltin, Vince Bloom, Tony Gigliotti, and Casey Nick for standing for election this year. We look forward to seeing you on the ballot again in the future!

Board Officers for 2024-2025 are:

President:	
Donald C Martin	don-martin@earthlink.net
VP Operations:	
Mike Borel	mike.borel@contextnet.com
VP Northern CA:	
Ken Crother	kcrother@cogentsupplies.com
VP Southern CA:	
Glen Pyne	pawsnclaws@sbcglobal.net
Secretary:	
Scott Gibson	scottygibson@gmail.com
Treasurer:	
Matt Burke	matthew.burke124@gmail.com

Board members in addition to officers are:

Jim Fitzgerald, ramhunter34@yahoo.com
Ben Gordon, bgordonhunts1@yahoo.com
Bob Keagy, RSKeagy@gmail.com
John Oldenkamp, john@oldenkamptrucking.com
Donald Priest, donpriest@primanagers.com
Brenton Scott, brentonscott@aol.com
Matt St. Martin, mstmartin270@gmail.com
Greg Tooley, greg_tooley@yahoo.com
Michael Torres, michaeljtorres@charter.net
Steve Torres, mtlion2002@hotmail.com



THE WAY OF THINGS

by Carlos Gallinger



Bighorn sheep group
Photo by Rick Halter

There used to be Native campsites, and it happens even today, where you would understand that it was almost like a conveyor belt with water, food, and minerals.

So as you camped there for two or three months you would expect every week or so for a new group of sheep to come in. Because they were coming for the different resources and if you understood where and why and what, and understood the sheep you could pin it down to the exact game trail they were going to use.

Except from Archpodnet, interview with Carlos Gallinger.

CALIFORNIA FISH AND WILDLIFE UPDATE

WILDLIFE BRANCH UPDATE

by Paige Prentice, Statewide Bighorn Sheep Coordinator

Greetings everyone! I'm delighted to be back with CDFW, and I'm honored to be the Statewide Bighorn Sheep Coordinator. .

My new position is somewhat different from my predecessor Regina Vu's position in that it now encompasses working with all the bighorn populations in California, not just desert bighorn. This means that I am based in the Wildlife Branch at Headquarters (West Sacramento), but I'm working closely with the Sierra Nevada Recovery Program, the Peninsular Recovery Program, as well as the Desert Bighorn Program (see map). My new role in Sacramento doesn't allow me to do as much fieldwork, but I am able to focus on the foundational work (some might say "bureaucratic gymnastics") necessary to keep our regional staff's boots on the ground, collecting the data we need to manage these populations effectively. This is honestly my dream job. There's a lot that needs to get done, but I'm four months in and happy to report progress.

At the top of my list is the infamous Statewide Conservation and Management Plan for Bighorn Sheep in California. I'm pleased to share that we completed the Tribal Review process on August 5th, and we received some helpful and informative feedback. We are in the process of incorporating the feedback and we aim to have a draft of the Plan available for a 45-day public commenting period starting early September. I will notify CA WSF once the plan is available—we look forward to receiving your feedback.

In addition to the Statewide Plan, I have been working closely with Region 6 staff on regulation changes for existing desert bighorn hunt zones to propose to the Fish & Game Commission. It is our hope that these proposed changes will result in increased hunting opportunity for the 2025/2026 hunt season. For example, we're considering increasing the tag quota range for the Newberry, Rodman, and Ords (Zone 10) and then splitting the hunt season into two sections. We'd also like to have the flexibility to assign the fundraising zones (i.e. Marble/



Paige Prentice

Clipper/S.Bristol and Cady) to the zone of CDFW's choice each season based on the population data, instead of having them "locked-in" or "stuck" in a zone that can't support the tag. We are still in the early stages of this regulation cycle and the details of the language and proposed regulation changes are still being discussed. We will continue to share updates throughout the year. As a reminder, all proposed changes will ultimately need to be approved by the Fish & Game Commission in April 2025. Furthermore, of interest to many of you, we are actively exploring options and collecting the data necessary to support the addition of new hunt zones within the next couple of years.

Speaking of hunting, CDFW hosted the annual Desert Bighorn Hunter Orientation on July 20th for a group of very excited hunters. Thank you again to CA WSF for hosting lunch and to all the amazing guest speakers. The White Mountain desert bighorn hunting season is rapidly approaching with a start date of August 17th. The rest of the general season Zones open on December 7th. It is a very enthusiastic bunch of hunters this season and we wish them all the best of luck!

Last but not least, as summer wraps up all three Programs are getting ready for a busy fall of helicopter captures and surveys. Stay tuned for updates!



THE EAST CHOCOLATE MOUNTAINS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA'S FOURTH BIGHORN SHEEP HUNT ZONE (PART III) “... DROUGHT AND DONKEYS, OH MY!”

by Nancy G. Andrew, Steven G. Torres, and Vernon C. Bleich

This is the third and final essay in a series of articles describing the work involved in the opening of California's fourth bighorn sheep hunt zone. In the first installment (Andrew and Bleich 2024), we provided a brief history of the habitat evaluations that were conducted, and a summary of how that investigation came about. In the second installment (Andrew et al. 2024), we provided a brief summary of historical population estimates for the eastern Chocolate Mountains, that portion of Imperial County in which the hunt zone was located, as well as a summary of the harvests for the three years during which the zone was open to hunting and a brief discussion of the closure. In this final installment, we describe the reasons for reducing the harvest to zero, the history of why the zone was closed, the ramifications of that decision, and how a shift in administrators and their differing philosophies and a willingness to reconsider previous policy has resulted in a lower probability that zones currently open to hunting of bighorn sheep will be permanently closed to hunting of mature rams in the future. As was intended by California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG; not to be confused with the current California Department of Fish and wildlife [CDFw]) biologists Dick Weaver and Vern Bleich, who worked together on the legislation that authorized the hunting of bighorn sheep in the mid-1980s, open zones now can remain as such, but the harvest may be set at zero when deemed desirable or necessary, and then reinstituted when management objectives again have been met.

Prior to the opening of the East Chocolate Mountains Hunt Zone (ECMHZ), demographic data (Andrew 1984, Andrew et al. 1997) and other information were incorporated into a management plan required by the enabling legislation (Bleich

et al. 1993), and that information was based largely on results that later appeared in professional publications. Following preparation of the management plan, preparation of the requisite

environmental document ensued. Public comments were received and addressed, and the East Chocolate Mountains were proposed by the California Department of Fish and Game to be opened to the harvest of bighorn sheep in 1994 (Torres et al. 1994); the California Fish and Game Commission concurred with that recommendation, and the ECMHZ became a reality.

This conservation effort represented an exciting and innovative time because we were incorporating new technologies and methods into our desert sheep management program. This was a pioneering time for using global positioning system (GPS) tracking to accurately record our helicopter flight paths, which we used to establish standard survey zones, flight routes, and intensities. At the same time, we implemented a simultaneous observer double-count survey protocol to generate an additional independent helicopter population assessment measure. Geographic Information System (GIS) technology was in its infancy at the time but was being implemented in wildlife research, and the effort to employ this new technology was a collaborative effort between the University of Rhode Island and CDFG. This initial GIS research



allowed a much-improved analysis of population distribution and demographics, which we subsequently implemented on a statewide basis; application of these newly developed techniques resulted in the opening of additional hunt zones, which will be addressed in future articles. In short, the spending hundreds of man-hours while surveying bighorn sheep populations and the experiences gained, when combined with these novel methods represented a program-wide commitment to the statewide implementation of pioneering approaches that remained in place for many decades have provided a reliable method of deriving estimates of relative abundance for all age classes, at the level of the population, and a method of deriving a measure of precision for the overall estimate of population size. Despite the rapid evolution of models and sophisticated computer programs, these methods are now recognized nationally and retain their importance in terms of developing population estimates and obtaining demographic information.

Following the extensive investigations described in parts I and II of this account that were emphasized and described in detail by Torres (1993), three permits were allocated for the ECMHZ in 1994, 6 permits were allocated in 1995, and 3 permits were available in the 1996 hunting seasons; in addition, the ECMHZ was open to individuals that had purchased a fund-raising permit if they chose to hunt there. During each of those years, hunter success was 100% (CDFG 1994, 1995, 1996). A severe drought occurred in the early 1990s, however, and the population of bighorn sheep declined concomitant with the decreased precipitation throughout southeastern California. Numerous additional ground surveys were conducted by Leon Lesicka of Desert Wildlife Unlimited and Nancy Andrew to augment the helicopter survey results, but their efforts confirmed the results of the intensive aerial surveys and indicated a substantial decline in bighorn sheep numbers.

Concomitant with the drought, an increased abundance of feral donkeys represented an unchecked stressor that further impacted the

availability of water and use of waterholes by desert sheep. In the East Chocolate Mountains, desert bighorn sheep rely on a limited number of critically important surface water sources, many of which are ephemeral, and dense non-native vegetation prevents those specialized ungulates from obtaining water along the Colorado River. During our intensive range-wide surveys, we began recording observations of more donkeys (>90) than bighorn sheep! Additionally, those feral donkeys began ranging further west from the Colorado River, and were gaining a foothold far beyond the federally designated herd management area near the Colorado River. Federal legislation (the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971) and state law (California Fish and Game Code section 4600) both precluded the immediate removal of donkeys despite the impacts they were having on habitat and the water sources upon which bighorn sheep depended. Additional federal legislation (the California Desert Protection Act of 1994) exacerbated the situation by making it nearly impossible to maintain, let alone enhance habitat for desert bighorn sheep within designated 'wilderness' (for an enlightening discussion of some of the nonsensical arguments associated with enforcement of the 1994 Act, see Bleich 1999). Despite these challenges, however, the prior construction of four artificial water sources, installation of burro exclusion fences around two large tinajas, and a close working relationship with local personnel from the Bureau of Land Management lessened the impacts of the drought and the increased number of donkeys, which are able to outcompete bighorn sheep for needed resources during periods of subnormal precipitation (Marshall et al. 2008).

Unfortunately, aerial and ground surveys continued to confirm a clear and substantial decline in measures of population abundance used to derive measures of population size and, based on a conservative approach to harvest, CDFG biologists recommended a temporary halt to hunting of bighorn sheep in the ECMHZ. As a result, the Fish and Game Commission took regulatory action consistent with the Department's recommendation, and the ECMHZ was closed

beginning in 1997 (Epps et al.2003). The original intent was that the recommended closure would be temporary and that hunting would be resumed when demographic information indicated such was appropriate. That, however, was not to be and, in the absence of a proposal for a ‘new’ hunt zone, the ECMHZ could not be ‘reopened’ if such a recommendation were to be made.

At the time, certain administration officials were convinced that a zone having no available permits (i.e., no harvest opportunity) was synonymous with a hunting closure, and that if additional harvest opportunities were to occur, the ECMHZ would have to be re-established through the regulatory process and would be a complex undertaking. Any action to reopen the hunt zone would require preparation of a formal environmental analysis, a new proposal, circulation of the proposal for public scrutiny and comment, responses to the public and, eventually, approval by the Fish and Game Commission if it concurred with the Department’s recommendation. None of the above occurred, largely the result of differences in the interpretation of just what a closure to harvest meant.

Unfortunately, the Department’s determination was that if the limit was zero, then the zone had been formally closed and could not be considered for reopening in the absence of the public process needed to establish a new hunt zone—as described above. Since that time, some influential personnel have moved on, and additional legal changes have occurred in the way that bighorn sheep harvest proposals are worded. One important factor has been the ability to suggest a range of permits for each zone early in the regulatory process, with the minimum to be made available is set at zero but ranging upward to what field staff recommend as the maximum number of mature males potentially available for harvest. Recommendations for the actual number of permits to be issued for each zone are approved at a meeting of the Fish and Game Commission during the spring of each year following final recommendations from CDFw.

The approach of using a range of tags having

a minimum of none, when combined with the recognition that a harvest of no animals is a management decision specific to a zone that remains open to some level of harvest when demographic information indicates some harvest is appropriate, has reduced the complexities that led to the closure of the ECMHZ. Unfortunately, any recommendation to allow the harvest of bighorn sheep in the ECMHZ will necessitate the full process of proposing a ‘new’ hunt zone if there is to be a future harvest therein, but additional hunt zones, among which is the Newberry, Rodman, and Ord mountains, have been approved by the Commission in the recent past; thus, the process can be replicated in the eastern Chocolate Mountains at an appropriate time.

There is every reason to believe the current strategy is suitable and workable, and harvest levels in at least two other zones considered to be permanent have been set at zero for public permits or remained available only to those holding a special fund-raising permit, or even set at zero permits for several consecutive years. As an example, the Sheephole Mountains Hunt Zone, which was closed to harvest from 2014 to 2023, is proposed to be opened to the harvest of one mature male bighorn sheep in the 2024 season. Currently, there is a recommendation for tags in the San Geronio Wilderness Hunt Zone (SGWHZ) to be zero, but the zone itself remains ‘open’, and when that population again satisfies the criteria to support a limited harvest of mature males, the allocation of tags will be increased to an appropriate number greater than zero.

When the legislation and initial regulations were formulated, Dick Weaver and Vern Bleich anticipated that once a zone was established, the number of sheep available for harvest would be set on an annual basis, that available tags could be as low as zero, but the zone was not to be considered closed as a result of any such recommendation. Intentions are not always interpreted the same way by all individuals, but it appears that this issue has been resolved. When the data again support a harvest in the SGWHZ, it will not be necessary to establish a ‘new’ hunt zone. Similarly, recommendations for a harvest of zero animals for

any other zone currently open to the hunting of bighorn sheep will not require that the zone be ‘re-opened’. That is, however, unless a poorly informed bureaucrat determines otherwise.

The next installment in this series describing the opening of additional hunting opportunities for bighorn sheep in California will address the Orocopia Mountains, located in central Riverside County. Stay tuned!

Literature Cited

- Andrew, N. G., and V. C. Bleich. 2024. The East Chocolate Mountains: a brief history of California’s fourth bighorn sheep hunt zone (Part I). *California Wild Sheep*, Spring 2024:33–35.
- Andrew, N. G., V. C. Bleich, P. V. August, and S. G. Torres. 1997. Demography of mountain sheep in the East Chocolate Mountains, California. *California Fish and Game* 83:68–77.
- Andrew, N. G., S. G. Torres, and V. C. Bleich. 2024. The East Chocolate Mountains: a brief history of California’s fourth bighorn sheep hunt zone (Part II). *California Wild Sheep*, Summer 2024:33–35.
- Bleich, V. C. 1999. Wildlife conservation and wilderness management: uncommon objectives and conflicting philosophies. *North American Wild Sheep Conference* 2:195–205.
- Bleich, V. C., N. G. Andrew, and G. P. Mulcahy. 1993. Mountain sheep management plan: East Chocolate Mountains. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California, USA.
- CDFG. 1994. 1994 big game hunting. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California, USA.
- CDFG. 1995. 1995 big game hunting. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California, USA.
- CDFG. 1996. 1996 big game hunting. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California, USA.
- Epps, C. W., V. C. Bleich, J. D. Wehausen, and S. G. Torres. 2003. Status of bighorn sheep in California. *Desert Bighorn Council Transactions* 47:20–35.
- Marshall, J. P., V. C. Bleich, and N. G. Andrew. 2008. Evidence for interspecific competition between feral *Equus asinus* and mountain sheep *Ovis canadensis* in a desert environment. *Wildlife Biology* 14: 228–236.
- Torres, S. G., V. C. Bleich, and A. M. Pauli. 1993. Status of bighorn sheep in California, 1992. *Desert Bighorn Council Transactions* 37:47–52.
- Torres, S. G., V. C. Bleich, and J. D. Wehausen. 1994. Status of bighorn sheep in California, 1993. *Desert Bighorn Council Transactions* 38:17–28.
- Torres, S. G., V. C. Bleich, and J. D. Wehausen. 1996. Status of bighorn sheep in California, 1995. *Desert Bighorn Council Transactions* 40:27–34.

—The late 1980s and early 1990s were periods of substantial expansion in hunting opportunities for bighorn sheep in California. During that period Nancy Andrew was first a graduate student that Bleich hired to work on habitat and demographic investigations in the East Chocolate Mountains, after which she was employed as the Southern Colorado River Unit Manager for many years prior to retirement; Steve Torres, with more than 30 years of service with the Department, was California’s bighorn sheep coordinator and was closely involved with the demographic aspects of the effort to open the East Chocolate Mountains to hunting of bighorn sheep; Vern Bleich, who worked 34 years for the California Department of Fish and Game, was Nancy’s immediate supervisor, and served as Eastern Units Supervisor for the Department’s Region 5. The authors especially thank, the late, Leon Lesicka and members of Desert Wildlife and the Imperial County Fish and Game Commission for their support of this effort, and CDFG Regional Fred Worthley and Wildlife Chief Red Hunt for their encouragement, endorsement, and approval of our work and recommendations. This article is part of an effort to ensure an accurate account of past management accomplishments on behalf of bighorn sheep in California does not fall victim to ‘generational amnesia’. Individuals with questions can contact Vern Bleich directly at vcbleich@gmail.com.

“Deep in the guts of most men is buried the involuntary response to the hunter’s horn, a prickle of the nape hairs, an acceleration of the pulse, an atavistic memory of his fathers, who killed first with stone, and then with club, and then with spear, and then with bow, and then with gun, and finally with formulae.”

— Robert Ruark, *Horn of the Hunter*

THE POLITICS OF CONSERVATION

KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN AND YOU IN THE FIELD

By Bill Gaines, Gaines and Associates

ELECTION 2024 - WANT A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR HUNTING? DO YOUR SCOUTING!

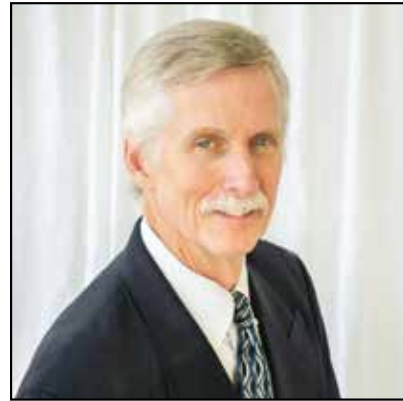
Every fall is important to those who hunt because that is when the hunting seasons for wild sheep, and nearly all other game species, begin to open and at their best. But this fall will be even more important for other reasons. On November 5th, we will elect the President, congressional and state representatives that will determine the course for our state and nation for the near future and far beyond.

Successful hunters begin their hunt months before they hit the field before dawn on opening day. They do their homework by determining where they want to hunt and putting in for their tags, then scouting the areas they have successfully drawn a tag for to learn the terrain, habitat, and the tendencies of the game they plan to pursue. If you take hunting seriously and want to maximize your chances of success, you leave absolutely nothing to chance. When it comes to who is elected to make decisions for our nation, and your state, you must be every bit as vigilant.

If you do not think that who is elected to office is important to you, your children, or the ability of future generations to enjoy our outdoor traditions, think again. Talk to the houndsman who can no longer use his hounds to pursue a bear or bobcat. Think about it when you are on the search for pricey and illusive "non-lead" ammo for your favorite rifle because traditional lead loads are illegal in our state, or give it thought when you pay an additional 11% excise tax next time you purchase a new rifle or box of ammo. Or perhaps it will sink in when you run into yet another newly locked gate this fall on the logging road which leads deep into that mountain you and your family have hunted for decades.

Yesterday, your ability to hunt was pretty much solely determined by the populations of the game species you wanted to pursue. Today, the greatest, and most immediate threat to hunting is not the health of game species, but rather political decisions made by the officials we elect. Who is elected in November will not only impact high profile issues such as our economy, our military, immigration, and our healthcare – *but also what you can hunt, where you can hunt, what you can hunt with, and possibly whether you can even hunt at all.*

Although the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF) would love to tell you exactly which candidates would fight hardest to protect and promote our outdoor heritage – because of our non-profit charitable status – we cannot. But we can provide you with some guidance to help you prepare for this November's election with the same care and determination you are taking to prepare for this fall's hunting season.



REGISTER TO VOTE

First things first...to vote, you must be registered. If you are not registered to vote – **get registered**. Or maybe you think you are registered, but you're not. Remember, you must **re-register** if you have moved, changed your name, or changed party affiliation. Every state except North Dakota requires people to register if they want to vote. In California, you must register 15 days before Election Day, but there are ways to conditionally register at any time up to and including Election Day. However, if you live outside California, depending on your state, your registration deadline could be as much as a month before an election.

GONNA BE HUNTING ON ELECTION DAY?

If you will be on a hunting trip on November 5th, lucky you! But know that you can still have your voice heard by voting via absentee ballot. Requirements for voting by absentee ballot differ by state. In California, county elections officials mail vote-by-mail ballots to all active registered voters. But if you choose to vote-by-mail, your absentee ballot must be postmarked on or before Election Day and received by your county elections office no later than 17 days after Election Day. If you are not sure your absentee ballot will arrive in time if mailed, you or your designee can bring it to any polling place in the state between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

CHOOSING WHO TO VOTE FOR PRESIDENT, OF COURSE...

Arguably, the most important decision you will make this entire year will be who you vote for to be the next President of the United States. We all know that the President has final decision authority over any federal bill that passes through Congress – including legislation that may impact public access to public lands, science-based wildlife management, sporting arms and munitions, methods of take, and hunting opportunity in many other ways. But our next President can also make major decisions which directly impact hunting *without any input from Congress* via the power provided the

office by the Constitution, or pursuant to Acts of Congress to enact Executive Orders (EO). For example, in the last few years alone, several new national monuments have been established via EO in California – severely reducing hunting access and opportunity to some of our most special hunting areas.

But the greatest and longest lasting legacy of our next President will likely result from any appointments they may make to the U.S. Supreme Court to fill the seat of any justice that may retire or pass during the next four years. Once confirmed by the U.S. Senate, *these appointments are for life*. In just the recent past alone, those seated on the Supreme Court have been tasked with making “final” decisions on such highly controversial topics as abortion, immigration, and, of course, our Second Amendment – just to list a few. In short, our next President will likely make decisions that will endure throughout the rest of our lifetimes, and for generations beyond.

BUT THERE'S MORE...

Of course, we all know who is running for President and probably have a good feel for their respective positions on issues of importance. But you may not know who the candidates are who are running for California's open U.S. Senate seat, your congressional district, or to represent you in the California State Senate and Assembly. If you don't, do your scouting to learn who those candidates are, then evaluate them the same way you would research where you are putting in for your next big game tag. Watching debates is a good way to gather information on candidate's positions on high profile issues you care about. But you will have to dig much deeper than the debates, go on-line, watch the evening news or your local paper to find out a candidate's true feelings on hunting, animal-rights, science-based wildlife management, public access to public lands and other issues of importance to the conservation community.

Although not always possible, the best way to get the detailed information you want is to flat out ask them. With a little effort, you can almost always catch them at a town hall meeting, or another campaign stop and quiz them directly. If that's not possible, call or write to their office to get the answers to the questions you have. If they have held office before, or are the incumbent, check out their actual voting record on issues of importance. A candidate's voting history is public.

Depending on their non-profit status, some organizations will even post voting guides which provide information about a candidate's positions or voting record on different issues. As just one example, many pro-Second Amendment organizations will post details of a candidate's view or votes on gun control. But don't stop there, if you can't find what you need looking on the websites of those who are on our side, look on the websites of those who aren't – several animal-rights organizations will also post information to promote those who *oppose* our heritage.

Finally, do not forget that our November 2024 California state ballot contains more than just candidates running for state or federal office. It also contains numerous propositions which

will, in some way, impact you and the ones you love. As of August 9, 2024, eleven statewide ballot propositions have qualified for the November 2024 ballot in California. These include propositions which would increase drug crime and theft penalties, raise the minimum wage, issue billions of dollars in bonds to fund construction and modernization of public education facilities, state and local parks, environmental protection, water infrastructure and energy projects, and much more.

But do your homework and know what you are voting on. Although it may be lengthy and painful – be sure to fully read the language of what each proposition would do, as the titles of these proposals are carefully chosen and often intentionally misleading. As just one example, the title of Proposition 117 on the June 1990 California ballot was tamely named “Wildlife Protection. Initiative Statute.” Although the proposition's title did not even mention mountain lions, buried deep within the measure was language which designated the species as a “specially protected mammal” and prohibited them from being hunted, injured, possessed or sold.

NOW GET OUT AND VOTE!

Any way you slice it, our November 2024 election will frame the future of our outdoor heritage for the rest of our lives and beyond. Before November 5th, be sure that you have done all your scouting so you can be sure to cast your vote for a bright future for hunting on election day.

Author's Note: There are several good websites that will help make it easy for you to register to vote, check your registration status, apply for an absentee ballot, identify candidates for your area, and provide other useful information – www.sos.ca.gov/elections/, www.usvotefoundation.org, www.rockthevote.com/, www.vote.org/voter-registration-deadlines/, and www.vote411.org/ ...just to name a few. To check out voting records, go to www.Congress.gov and/or www.legislature.ca.gov/. Happy Hunting!

2024 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

Now that we have taken a deep dive into how to ensure the right people are elected to represent our interests in the upcoming election, let us look at what those whom are already in office are up to.

The two-year 2023/2024 Legislative Session will come to a close upon adjournment on August 31st. As we now approach the middle of the final month of the Session, our State Capitol is at full steam. Below is a brief update on the status of some of the legislation CA WSF is working on behalf of our members.

Bills are listed in numerical order, not in order of priority or interest.

AB 1889 (Friedman) – Conservation Element: Wildlife and Habitat Connectivity.

As amended in June, AB 1889 by Assembly Member Laura Friedman (D-Burbank) would require the conservation element of general plans to consider the effect of development within the jurisdiction on the movement of

wildlife and habitat connectivity. The bill would require local jurisdictions to analyze connectivity areas, permeability, natural landscape areas, existing or planned wildlife passage features, and consider the barriers caused by development to wildlife and habitat connectivity upon the next update of their general plan on or after January 1, 2028.

Having passed through the Assembly and over to the Senate before the end of May, AB 1889 passed out of Senate policy committee in June and is currently on "suspense" in the Senate Appropriations Committee. AB 1889 is scheduled to be heard in Senate Appropriations Committee on August 15th.

AB 2320 (Irwin) – Wildlife Connectivity and Climate Adaptation Act of 2024: Wildlife Corridors: Fish Passage

Existing law requires the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to prepare and submit an annual report to the Legislature on progress made towards achieving the state's goal to conserve at least 30% of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030. As amended in June, AB 2320 by Assembly Member Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks) would require the agency to include an update on the state's progress towards addressing priority wildlife corridors, and goals for wildlife corridor protection in the next five years. As recently amended, AB 2320 also now requires reporting on progress made towards addressing the ability of fish to access appropriate habitat at all points in their life cycle.

Like AB 1889, AB 2320 swiftly passed through the Assembly and over to the Senate by the end of May. AB 2320 then passed out of Senate policy committee in June and is currently on "suspense" in the Senate Appropriations Committee. AB 2320 is scheduled to be heard in Senate Appropriations Committee on August 15th.

SB 1163 (Dahle) – Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions: Wildlife Salvage Permits

As amended in June, SB 1163 by Senator Brian Dahle (R-Redding) would – upon appropriation by the Legislature – authorize the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a pilot program to collect and compile information and data on vehicle-wildlife collisions via the creation of a smartphone app that would allow motorists to report the location of vehicle-wildlife collisions easily and in real-time.

Further, upon appropriation, SB 1163 would authorize the Fish and Game Commission to establish a pilot program for the issuance of wildlife salvage permits that allow motorists to salvage edible portions of deer, elk, antelope, and/or wild pig killed on our roadways.

SB 1163 would "sunset" on January 1, 2029, to allow DFW, other relevant agencies, and the Commission to evaluate the results and consider next steps. Similar laws and policies have passed and are already successfully in place in Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, and Montana.

SB 1163 passed through the Senate and over to the Assembly before the end of May. In June, SB 1163 passed out of Assembly policy committee and the bill is currently on "suspense" in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. SB 1163 is scheduled to be heard in Assembly Appropriations Committee on August 15th.

SB 53 (Gonzalez) – Firearms Safety Certificates

SB 53 by Senator Anthony Portantino (D-Glendale) would require the owner or other lawful user of a firearm to store the firearm in a locked box or safe that is listed on the Department of Justice (DOJ) roster of approved firearm safety devices. Further, SB 53 would require that a firearm that is sold or transferred include or be accompanied by a lock box or safe on the DOJ roster.

SB 53 would exempt the sale or transfer of a firearm from the above requirement if both of the following apply: 1) a purchaser or transferee already owns a lock box or safe that is listed on the DOJ roster; and 2) they present the dealer with an original receipt for purchase of that lock box or safe, or other proof of purchase or ownership of the gun safe as authorized by the Attorney General.

The requirements of SB 53 would take effect beginning January 1, 2026.

Introduced on December 5, 2022, SB 53 passed through the Senate and over to the Assembly before the end of January 2024. SB 53 then passed out of Assembly policy committee in June and is currently on "suspense" in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. SB 53 is scheduled to be heard in Assembly Appropriations Committee on August 15th.

The Five Most Famous Laws in the World

- 1) Murphys Law - The more you fear something happening, the more likely it is to occur.
- 2) Kidlin Law - If you write a problem down clearly and specifically, you have solved half of it.
- 3) Gilbert Law - When you take on a task, finding the best ways to achieve the desired result is always your responsibility.
- 4) Wilson Law - If you prioritize knowledge and intelligence money will come.
- 5) Falkland Law - If you don't have to make a decision about something, then don't decide.

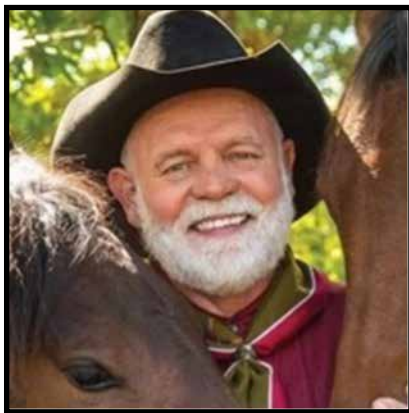
LAST CAMPFIRE

LET US NOT FORGET ANDREW PONTIOUS, STEVEN B. KIMPLE, AND FRED WOHL



Andrew Pontious (1971–2024), an active and dedicated volunteer and member of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, was a first responder and veteran firefighter with the Los Angeles County Fire Department, with which he had served for 19 years. Fire Fighter Pontious was assigned to Fire Station 93 in the City of Palmdale, and he died on 14 June 2024 while trying to put out flames that had engulfed a large tractor when an explosion occurred. Andrew was a husband and father, and he will be missed; flags were flown at half-mast in his honor. He was a good guy and worked hard on behalf of the conservation of bighorn sheep and other wildlife.

Steven B. Kimple (1941–2024) played an unheralded but infinitely important role in the restoration of bighorn sheep to the western transverse range in Ventura County. Following graduation from college in 1963 he joined the Marine Corps as a 2nd Lieutenant, served in the first American combat battalion to land in Vietnam in 1965, and was awarded the Bronze Star and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for heroism under fire. Despite stepping on a landmine and many months convalescing, Steve returned to active duty and then defied the odds by completing flight school and piloting F4 Phantoms until retiring from the military, after which he joined the California Department of Fish and Game. Major Kimple's role in reestablishing bighorn sheep in the San Rafael Mountains was pivotal, although he received little recognition for his efforts. As the Santa Barbara and Ventura County Unit Manager, he advocated strongly for those translocations, worked closely with the U.S. Forest Service to ensure they occurred, and conducted the essential follow-up activities, telemetry monitoring, and field investigations involved in that successful effort. Steve also was a good guy, and his service to our country and his contributions to the conservation of bighorn sheep must always be remembered.



Fred Wohl (1953–2024) chaired the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board for two of the three years during which CA WSF and SCBS Life Member Vern Bleich served on that Board. Fred was a strong advocate of the proper management of native wildlife and free-roaming equids and recognized the impacts that overpopulations of those exotic animals have on native wildlife, including bighorn sheep. He provided opportunities for all of the members to speak freely and express their views on every topic that came before the Advisory Board. As such, Fred had a tremendous ability as a leader and was highly regarded and respected by all members of the Advisory Board. He was a husband, father, and grandfather, a Vietnam Veteran, a Hunter Education Instructor for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission for 30 years, and volunteered his services for many other organizations. Fred was killed in an accident on 27 May 2024 while helping his neighbors clear debris from the devastating effects of tornadoes that had wreaked

havoc near his home in Harrison, Arkansas. He, too, was a good guy and supported the proper management of feral equids in the context of wildlife conservation.



Explore ^{AND} **HUNT**
NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA



www.goldenbearoutfitting.com + 250-794-8350



STONE SHEEP
MOUNTAIN GOAT
CANADIAN MOOSE
MOUNTAIN CARIBOU
WOLVES
BLACK BEAR





CA Wild Sheep Foundation
1630 Williams Hwy #151
Grants Pass, OR 97527

www.cawsf.org

**Join or
renew
today!**



WWW.CAWSF.ORG
CAWSF@CAWSF.ORG