



# California Wild Sheep

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**Mac Cole**  
**White Mountains**  
**Kellogg Trophy Hunts**  
**November 2022**  
**Guides Brooks Stiltz & Hayden Oliver**



# ULTIMA THULE LODGE

CONTACT: DONALD C. MARTIN 310-766-3921



# From the Editor's Desk

Winter has arrived. I hope each of you have already enjoyed one or more hunting adventures, and that some of you have more coming up. Actually, when this is being printed and mailed I will be one of the first Americans into Sudan to hunt a Nubian Ibex.

This issue includes some great hunting stories (but not as many as I would like – hint, hint), fun pictures, an update on wild horses and burros, tasty and fun recipes, mylar balloon issues in the Mojave, important information you want to know, fun humor, legislative info, AND MORE!

Your feedback, ideas, articles, pictures & requests are always welcome. Best way to reach me is email: [mike.borel@contextnet.com](mailto:mike.borel@contextnet.com). Due date for input to the 1Q23 issue is February 20.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas and New Year celebrations. I hope to see you at the WSF and GSCO Conventions in January.



## The Ultimate Turkey Sausage Breakfast Sandwich

Reprint from Kuiu

### Ingredients

#### Turkey Sausage

- 9oz turkey leg meat, cleaned of all connective tissue and dices
- 3oz slab bacon, 3/4 diced
- 1tbsp onion powder+
- 2tsp garlic powder
- 1tbsp dried sage
- 1tsp dried mustard powder
- 2tsp salt
- 1tsp black pepper, coarse ground 1/2 cup ice cold lager

- 4 Brioche buns
- 3fl oz mayonnaise
- 1tbsp chipotle in adobo, pureed
- 4 eggs
- 4tbsp butter
- 4 Slices American cheese
- 2 Avocados
- 2 Cups alfalfa sprouts

#### Make the Turkey Sausage

1. Place the beer into the freezer to get it ice cold. Test another beer from the case to ensure quality.
2. Lay the turkey and bacon onto a bake sheet in a single layer and place into the freezer for 30 minutes or until the outside is half frozen.
3. Place the grinder assembly (chute, auger, plates, blade etc) into the freezer alongside the meat. By keeping everything very cold when grinding meat it ensures you don't get any "smearing" during the process which can lead to dry, mealy sausage.
4. Grind the meat into a chilled bowl over ice and mix in the seasoning.
5. Add the ice cold lager and mix with a spoon until the beer is fully incorporated.
6. Continue to mix the sausage aggressively until the meat becomes very tacky.
7. That should have taken some effort, finish the rest of the

beer used in the sausage, you earned it.

8. Breakfast patties are best fresh but can be frozen for future use in hunting camp.

#### Assembly

1. Mix the mayonnaise and pureed chipotle in a bowl and set aside.
2. Form the sausage into 3 oz patties slightly larger in diameter than the buns.
3. Cook the patties in a pan on or a grill until an internal temperature of 160 f.
4. Meanwhile, melt half the butter in a pan over medium low heat and toast the buns sliced side down until they are golden brown, hot all the way through and extremely hot to the touch.
5. Alongside the buns, season and cook your eggs in butter to your preferred doneness.
6. Place a slice of cheese on top of the eggs while cooking.
7. Build the sandwiches in this order starting at the bottom
  - i. Brioche bun heel
  - ii. Dollop of chipotle mayo
  - iii. Sliced avocado
  - iv. Turkey patty
  - v. Egg
  - vi. Sprouts
  - vii. Dollop of chipotle mayo (on the bun top)
  - viii. Brioche bun crown
8. Have another beer, cooking ain't easy.

**TRUTH**  
does not mind being  
questioned.

**A LIE**  
does not like being  
challenged.

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**California Wild Sheep** is published quarterly.

Please email all articles and photos to

[mike.borel@contextnet.com](mailto: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

## 2023

January 11-14	WSF Sheep Show, Reno
January 19-21	GSCO Convention, Las Vegas
February 20	Due date for articles for 1Q2023 CA WSF Newsletter
February 22-25	Safari Club Convention, Nashville
April 11-14	Desert Bighorn Council Mtg, Alpine, Texas Hosted by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
April 28	Sheep Summit XXXII Sacramento DoubleTree by Hilton
April 29	CA WSF Annual Fundraiser Sacramento DoubleTree by Hilton
May 20	Due date for articles for 2Q2023 CA WSF Newsletter
June 1	CA WSF Election Ballots to Members
June 20	Due date for articles for 4Q2022 CA WSF Newsletter
June 28	CA WSF Election Ballots returns due
August 20	Due date for articles for 3Q2023 CA WSF Newsletter
November 20	Due date for articles for 4Q2023 CA WSF Newsletter
December 1	Sheep Summit XXXIII Ontario, CA

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# President's Letter

By the time you receive this, we will all have effectively navigated the social awkwardness of the great American holiday known as Thanksgiving. I hope that heated arguments over politics or religion did not ruin what is one of our most cherished holidays, but there is always room for comedic relief when families get together. I, myself, have so much to be thankful for, as we all do, that we live in the best nation on Earth and that we, as a family, fight tooth and nail every day to maintain the quality of life that we all enjoy here. When in doubt...it's important just to laugh.

Also, by the publishing of this newsletter, we should have made tremendous progress on another water project in Southern California. The critical "Ship Creek" drinker was destroyed by a flash flood and has needed repair for a long time. This drinker is in the Chuckwalla Wilderness area, southeast of Desert Center. This drinker is a critical steppingstone in improving the water infrastructure in that area in the hopes that it may become a future hunt unit. I want to thank all the volunteers assisting our sister-affiliate, The Society For The Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS), who endeavor or have endeavored to assist in this rebuild as it will be a long trek into the wilderness to do so. I thank you and I wish you great success. For more information on volunteering for a project, go to [www.sheepsociety.com](http://www.sheepsociety.com) and join today.

The future is bright for California desert bighorns. We have positive developments on a wide front and we are continuing to make progress towards our goal of doubling the number of desert bighorns in Southern California. This newsletter is peppered with positive news about the direction of our programs and I want to thank all of you for continuing to support our efforts and the collaborative efforts of SCBS.

Our annual fundraiser is coming up April 29, 2023 at the Doubletree by Hilton in Sacramento. Once again, our event will be held in the Grand Ballroom and it is never too early to plan to attend. This event is our one fundraising event for the year, and it is a time that we "sheep enthusiasts" from all over the state and from abroad can come together as a family to celebrate, appreciate, and DONATE! Speaking of which, if you have items to donate to our fundraiser for the live or silent auctions, please reach out to me at:

[don-martin@earthlink.net](mailto:don-martin@earthlink.net)

...we would love your support.

Please also see our 2023 Banquet and Fundraiser Update, in this newsletter, for exciting hunt opportunities!

I want to extend my warmest congratulations to those successful hunters already this year that have had tremendous success in Southern California's early desert bighorn seasons, and I want to wish those of you with upcoming hunts who "wait with bated breath" the best of luck. All of us here at CA WSF wish you the best. The by-product of successful conservation is a successful regulated hunting program. The harder we work to care for the resource...the more opportunity for future generations. Thanks again for all your support and I look forward to seeing you April 29th in Sacramento!

*Good hunting! Donald C. Martin*



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## THE GREGG BELL RAM

*By Andrew Pontious, San Gorgonio Wilderness Outfitters, Member*

Gregg Bell drew the Ord/Newberry/Rodman unit in 2021. The unit (Zone 10) is one of only two units in the state which got six bighorn sheep tags in 2021. It also had the third largest pool of applicants (2034) so there was plenty of competition. It had 100% success and Gregg's story is one of personal commitment and success.

Gregg did a lot of preliminary scouting for six weeks pre-season with his brother Ed and a good friend, Ethan. Gregg, Ed, and Ethan went scouting every weekend, excited about the adventure to come. Gregg especially spent a lot of time out in the mountains, conveniently the zone was close to home for him, and found sheep in the zone. But an important question remained — were they the best sheep of the zone? Eventually, like a lot of sheep hunters, he realized he was going to need more help to be successful.

Gregg was also friends with Brad Abolton, one of the SGWO guides. He talked with Terry and myself to get some additional information about the zone and the hunt, expectations for size and the type of hunt. Then about a month before the season opening he decided to hire San Gorgonio Wilderness Outfitters for the hunt. We set up a camp area and met up before opening day of the hunt with more of the



Gregg, second from left, and the SGWO team

team coming on opening day. The team was Gregg, Gregg's friends, and Brad Bolton, Tim Carpenter, and myself for SGWO with Terry Anderson on the phone for consults. Everyone had their own trailers, brought food to share, and made a nice friendly community in the desert mountains. It doesn't get better than that!

Our first few days together on site we spent scouting. On the first day we saw 17 rams. There are a lot of sheep in the unit but not necessarily a lot of big sheep! We were going to keep looking. On the second day of scouting in a different area we again saw rams but nothing big enough. Day three of scouting and we saw a lot of animals for a very enjoyable day — but not the ram we were hoping to see. Drawing a tag in the Ord/Newberry/Rodman virtually guarantees you'll see a LOT of animals!

On opening day all of Gregg's friends turned up to help. In addition to Ed and Ethan another friend, Jason, came out. They are all good hunters, good glasses and were trying hard to get a good ram. We all split up and then found sheep and rams, but again, not what we wanted. Even the larger ones we had seen during scouting were not around. We mapped out a plan for the next day and hopes were high.

The second day of hunting Brad and I found 28 rams and got within 1000 yards of a good ram. At the same time, Gregg, Ed, and Jason also found a nice one. We had two good options for the following day.

Day three and we were all alert and hoping to find one of the rams we had seen the day before. We spanned out in the area where Gregg and friends had been the day before. Gregg, Tim, and Ethan had a nice

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mass ram in view. It meant a 4 mile hike to get to the mountain and then up another 1500 feet to get a shot. Ed, Ethan, and Jason stayed out glassing while Gregg, Brad, Tim, and I hiked over to the saddle where we saw the sheep. They had gone into a canyon, up a nasty waterfall. We got to the saddle and waited. Every hunter knows that feeling — waiting, waiting, waiting...

We had a really old ram come out to eye us. He was pretty beat up so not what Gregg wanted. After waiting for 3 to 4 hours we had to start moving back down. Then the glassing team let us know they saw the ram in 'canyon 3'. These friends (Ed, Ethan, and Jason) were tremendous spotters, VERY helpful to have such a patient and experienced team keeping eyes on the mountain where we can't see!

This 3 canyon was beyond a steep mountain drop off with another up/down to get to it. When we got there we saw 25 ewes and 6 rams. We watched them and they didn't see us. We moved on to the next ridge and we saw THE ram. He was in a group of 5 rams including the old ram who had come our way earlier and 3 younger rams. They were at 750 yards,

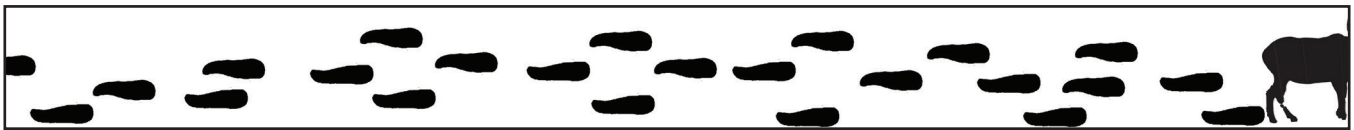
wandering down toward a group of ewes.

Gregg practiced his shot, he's very calm, patient, as he waited for the ram to get near. He is a dealer for Gunwerks so knows his firearm as well as anyone! Once the ram was within 600 yards he decided to take the shot. At 606 yard his shot was clean and the ram was down!

As we walked to the ram, up another cliff, we were super excited. The three amigos were also super excited — from 4 miles out we could hear the celebration.

Of course, the shot was right before dark so we had to rush to get photos, get the caping and field processing done and hike out before it got too dark. We weren't sure which way to walk out but we came down out of the canyon, across the desert and met up with the team.

This was a hunt we will all remember. Because he scouted on his own and invested so much personal time and effort into it, the hunt meant a lot more to Gregg and he was more excited than many hunters I've hunted with. It's a lesson we can all learn from!



You'll find these things here and there throughout the great basin, there are too many similarities for me to believe it is just a random similarity. These particular glyphs are perhaps more than 100 miles apart and who knows how far apart in time. Just speculation on my part they might be a gut pile many hunter gatherer societies use gut piles as a sort of crystal ball but will never know for sure it's just speculation.

[THEWAYOFTHINGS.ORG](http://THEWAYOFTHINGS.ORG)

Carlos Gallinger

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# THE BIGGEST BIGHORNS IN THE BOOK

*From Boone and Crockett*

*Editor's Note: As explained in many forums, hunters are citizen scientists. We provide valuable information to many groups -- from the government agencies who monitor the wildlife to organizations such as Boone and Crockett. As hunters we are perhaps one of the largest groups focused on a broad range of wildlife and wilderness areas. This makes our information among the most valuable to scientists. We encourage you to always register your hunt, not just those exceptional ones but all, to help keep the information flowing.*

During the fall rut, you will likely hear them before you see them. As two bighorn rams battle for dominance, the crack of their horns will echo through the canyons some call home. If you're lucky enough to have a tag for one, maybe you'll see one of these brutes featured below.

The Tukudika Indians (Sheep Eater) were a band of Mountain Shoshone Native Americans who lived in northwestern Wyoming, southwestern Montana, and eastern Idaho—in what we now call Yellowstone National Park. They used the horns of bighorn sheep to make bows in which they hunted bighorns, elk, and other game. Ancestors of those bighorns they hunted still exist and in many of the same places. Hunters can wait a lifetime to draw a coveted permit to hunt those rams—or they can pay an enormous amount of money. Either way, bighorn sheep have always been a coveted big game species. We present you the biggest bighorns in the records and the stories behind them.

## **Number 1—Montana Pick Up**

B&C Score: 216 3/8

Location: Lake County, Montana

Year Found: 2016

Owner: Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

In western Montana, there is a 2,200-acre island in Flathead Lake that is, quite simply, a bighorn sheep factory. In 2016, this magnificent ram, along with two other record-book rams (see the other Montana pick up below), were found on Wild Horse Island State Park. Even though these rams were not killed by hunters, but instead “picked up,” (<https://www.boone-crockett.org/stories-behind-worlds-biggest-pick-ups>) they are still eligible for the Boone and Crockett records. The Club maintains that all trophies, both harvested by hunters and those that are found, add to a data set that helps game managers adopt successful policies to benefit big game populations of

North America. In addition, sheep from Wild Horse Island are used to supplement and create new bighorn populations across Montana and the U.S.

## **Number 2—Alberta Pick Up**

B&C Score: 209 4/8 points

Location: Longview, Alberta

Year Found: 2010

Owner: Todd R. Snodgrass

Ram #706 was born in the spring of 1998. To the researchers who popped a couple of ear tags in it, the young bighorn didn't appear extraordinary. As they observed it over the years on its home turf south of Calgary, the bighorn grew into a true giant. Its massive horns repelled younger rams during numerous fall ruts. Those same horns, though, attracted the attention of poachers who took a shot at it in 2008. The bullet missed the mark and struck those horns an inch above its skull. The poachers were eventually caught and convicted. While the ram escaped bullets, it couldn't escape the lure of salt on Highway 141 just west of Longview, Alberta. There, the 12-year-old ram was struck by a vehicle in January 2010 and died. It was found by a local rancher who reported it to the authorities. In 2010, ram #706 became the new World's Record where it would reign over the records for six years.

## **Number 3—Miller Ram**

B&C Score: 209 1/8 points

Location: Pennington County, South Dakota

Year Taken: 2018

Hunter: Clayton D. Miller

The story you are about to read is how dreams are made. Clayton Miller had been putting in for a bighorn sheep tag since he was 12 years old. As the years rolled by, he was planting corn one day on the family farm when South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks called to tell him he had drawn the first-ever bighorn sheep tag issued for the Badlands. His hunting area was 60 miles from his porch. On October 27, with his compound bow in hand, he spotted the big one. “I will never forget the feeling of glassing over the rim of a Badlands formation that I had glassed at least 100 times that year and catching a glimpse of the big guy,” he wrote. “I knew the moment I saw him that he was the one.” As the cold October days rolled by, the ram and Miller played cat and mouse until it all came together. Miller watched the ram bed down



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and started his final stalk. He'd stalked mule deer and pronghorn hundreds of times before, and this was where that training was going to pay off. Miller was 19 yards away when he let his arrow fly. The ram was dead within seconds. His ram was, and still is, the largest hunter-taken bighorn ram in the book. It also happens to be the Pope and Young World's Record.

#### **Number 4—Montana Pick Up**

B&C Score: 209

Location: Lake County, Montana

Year Found: 2016

Owner: Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Like the World's Record bighorn, there is no hunt that accompanies this ram, but there is a story to be told. This ram was picked up the same year (on the same island) as the World's Record. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks labeled both rams as "winter kill." On Wild Horse Island State Park in western Montana, bighorns grow big, and they grow old. Eventually, they die. But that's not the whole story. The sheep legacy of Wild Horse Island dates back more than a century when bighorns were stocked first by private citizens. The herds did so well, that some sheep were relocated to establish and supplement herds elsewhere in Montana and in the U.S. All told, more than 500 sheep have come off of Wild Horse Island. While it is unfortunate that such amazing rams succumb to the elements, you can rest easy knowing that their genes still roam the coulees and cliffs in sheep country across the U.S.

#### **Number 5 (tie)—Sheedy Ram**

B&C Score: 208 3/8 points

Location: Choteau County, Montana

Year Taken: 2017

Hunter: Justin D. Sheedy

Montana's Missouri River Breaks are known for record-book rams and impassable gumbo mud if there is even the hint of rain or snow on the horizon. On Justin Sheedy's 2017 bighorn hunt, he got a healthy dose of both. Justin's dad had been putting his son's name into the Breaks' bighorn draw for years. With

a .5 percent chance at drawing the tag, by some miracle Justin's name was drawn. Turns out, that may have been the easy part. Justin and his dad went to the Breaks every possible chance they got in the fall of 2017. They backpacked. They used an ATV. They hiked. They got stuck in the mud. They got stuck in the snow and the mud. On their fifth trip to the Breaks, they knew their time was coming to an end. They were hunting on the eve of the general deer and elk season, and they knew that once the other hunters descended, the ram they had been chasing would become a ghost. The father-son duo enlisted the help of two trusted friends, and all four sets of eyes were trained on one bachelor group of rams. With one ram picked out, Justin waited for the bedded ram to stand. When it did, the 210-grain bullet from his Weatherby found its mark.

#### **Number 5 (tie)—Crousen Ram**

B&C Score: 208 3/8 points

Location: Luscar Mountain, Alberta

Year Taken: 2000

Hunter: Guinn D. Crousen

If you don't have the luck of the draw on your side, then you can, in some cases, buy a bighorn sheep tag. In 2000, Guinn Crousen paid six-figures for the Alberta Minister's Tag—the vast majority of those funds going back to sheep and wildlife conservation efforts. Crousen did his homework and knew he wanted to hunt Unit 438, an area between Jasper National Park and Cardinal River Mine that was known to hold colossal rams. For two weeks in November, Crousen and his guides hunted for a big ram. One ram in particular was spotted, but it was safely shielded from them as it stayed on property owned by a mining company, which was off limits. Eventually, the ram's desire for the ladies got the better of it. It wandered off of mine property, and Crousen was waiting for him. He killed this ram with his .270 Weatherby Magnum. This ram completed his Grand Slam, a feat that took him more than a dozen years.



**JACK RUSSELL SAID, AND IT HAS BEEN PROVEN MANY TIMES BY MANY HUNTERS, THAT --**

*"It may be eight or nine hours from the time [a hunter] gets his glass on a trophy ram until he gets a shot—if he gets a shot at all. And all that time he's in a high pitch of excitement, living a month in each five minutes."*

—*"How to Stalk a Ram,"* October 1962

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# IS THERE ONE MORE DIY HUNT IN ME? YOU BET!

*by Ted Schnack*

This is my second ram tag in this area. In 2004 I took a 13 YO ram (see photo below). The whole experience couldn't have been scripted any better from when I got the tag all through the hunt. The scouting...the anticipation...the ram sculpture I am working on related to the hunt (three rams just getting missed by a bolt of lightening in really dramatic positions, really interesting story how it came about)...incredibly stunning country...heavenlike.

I worked really hard at getting in the best hiking shape I could, but still its all at 12500 to 14000 and I'm no kid anymore. So did I have one more great DIY hunt in me? It is tied with my first Bighorn hunt as the best days in my life. The biologist said it will be one the top rams to ever come out of the unit.

It was an incredible area. I had scouted really stunning country and I hoped it would come down this area. There was a long super gnarly road I needed to use to get to the base of the mountain -- that I had to buy an ATV for. Then it was hours plus straight up at 12000 feet and going higher. We found them in a swale bracketed by high piles of rocks He was with 18 other rams and a couple of them were great ones but this guy just kept grabbing my eye. We watched them from 240 yards for about an hour. They were very content where they were. I wanted to get a long look at them but the wind was blowing head on at 60 so it was hard to get in a comfortable position. The wind was thumping hard and the scope bouncing too much to get a great look.



Ted with 2022 Colorado Ram

Reflecting on it, I might have been dragging my feet a bit to make the shot as I just was not ready for these incredible moments of anticipation to be over. I would never again be perched over a herd of 19 bighorn rams with some great rams in it with a rifle and a tag in my hand. The choice all mine. This was it -- the moments of all moments of truth. I knew my ram and it was time to shoot. I regrouped, set up differently, and was able to get settled in and sent one. The 7 mag barked over the ferocity of the pounding gale. I lost sight in the recoil and settled back and could see the bolting herd and the crumpled form of the best Bighorn in they bunch.

*Editor's Note: Ted is not only an accomplished hunter but also a talented artist. Many members, including Mike Borel and Rich McDrew, have his pieces and love them.*



Walking out the 2022 Colorado Ram



Ted with 2004 Colorado Ram



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

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

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

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

SCOTT GIBSON  
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CORY HIGGINS  
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## **Join as a Life Member (\$500)**

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

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

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

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

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

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# 2023 ANNUAL FUNDRAISER & ANNUAL BANQUET UPDATE

*by Donald C Martin*

I am so looking forward to seeing a lot of you at the 2023 Wild Sheep Foundation National Convention in Reno. We will be at Booth 456 this year — along the back wall directly back from the raffle bins area — easy to find! “Sheep Week” is an annual event that I always plan my year around.

In addition, I always plan my year around the California Wild Sheep Foundation’s Annual Banquet and Fundraiser, and you should too! Our event this year is April 29, 2023 and once again will be in the Grand Ballroom of the Doubletree by Hilton in Sacramento. This is such a great opportunity to get together with local sheep enthusiasts and share the passion that we all have for mountain hunting and conservation. Make plans now and don’t miss out!

Our Grand Prize random drawing this year is for a **10-day, fully guided desert bighorn hunt with Rancho La Guarida**. Rancho La Guarida is a renowned desert bighorn destination in Chihuahua Mexico with a long-standing commitment to the conservation of desert bighorns and the preservation of the Chihuahuan desert. This is a top-notch hunting destination with many of our own CA WSF members having experienced tremendous success there on B&C caliber rams. This is the desert bighorn hunt-of-a-lifetime, and you don’t want to miss out on your chance so go to: <http://cawsf.org/store.html> and buy your tickets now for this tremendous opportunity. We **will** sell out on this random drawing hunt opportunity, and you **DO NOT** need to be in the room to win it. So please, don’t wait, buy your tickets now. I could be calling your name from the stage April 29th.

For our Life members and Distinguished Life members, there will be a special random drawing for a special hunting opportunity! That hunt is in the works and is still a surprise. We will announce it in the next newsletter. This is an opportunity reserved only for Life members and Distinguished Life members. Life members in attendance will automatically receive 1 entry; this includes Junior Life members. Distinguished Life members in attendance will receive 3 entries. **You must be in the room to win!** Stay tuned, we want to make this special.

I’m thrilled to announce that the cornerstone of our live auction will be two Governor’s fundraising permits awarded to CA WSF by the CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. Once again, we have been awarded the **CA Desert Bighorn Permit for the Cady Mountains**. Historically, this has been an excellent opportunity for our members and supporters with many of them successfully harvesting Boone and Crockett caliber

rams. If you need a desert bighorn, this may be the opportunity of a lifetime, make plans to attend and bid! In addition, CA WSF has been awarded an **Open-Zone Deer Permit**. This special fundraising permit would allow the winning bidder to hunt any deer unit or special hunt when the unit is open. Method of harvest rules would still apply for those special hunts that are method specific. If you’re tired of waiting to draw a permit, this could be the opportunity you’ve been waiting for. Make plans to attend and bid on this great deer hunting opportunity.

I’m confident that our 2023 Banquet and Fundraiser will be a huge success because of all of you. Your participation in our event is why the CA WSF annual banquet is a favorite among non-resident attendees. We should take great pride in that and appreciate those WSF members that travel across state lines to support us. So, make your plans now to attend. Bring your friends! Introduce them to our “Family, the Wild Sheep Family (WSF).” Let’s make 2023 the best CA WSF conservation party ever!

If you’d like to donate items for the live or silent auction, please reach out to me at:

[don-martin@earthlink.net](mailto:don-martin@earthlink.net)

I look forward to seeing you in Reno and I look forward to seeing more of you in Sacramento on April 29th. Thank you.

Join the fun April 29, 2023!



# CALIFORNIA WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

Putting and Keeping  
Wild Sheep on the Mountains  
in California



## WIN A 2024 DESERT SHEEP HUNT WITH LA GUARIDA RANCH

10-day Fully Guided Desert Bighorn and Javalina hunt for 1 hunter and 1 observer at La Guarida Ranch

Dates: February 5 - 14, 2024

Location: Chihuahua, Mexico Includes:

- Hunting guides
  - Rifle permits, licenses, and CITES (bring your own gun or you can use one of theirs)
  - Trophy preparation for export and paperwork
  - Transportation to the ranch and back (Chihuahua City, Mexico Airport, currently there are 3 flights to CHIH from Dallas)
  - Landing strip with hangar for private aircraft.
  - Horseback riding hunt available
  - Bring one non-hunter companion for no extra cost.
- This is a free-range hunt, and you should expect to harvest a ram in the 175-185 B&C category.
- You will be staying in a luxurious Santa Fe style home with exquisite Mexican and International cuisine. Great hospitality, phone and internet service.

**YOU DO NOT  
NEED TO BE  
PRESENT TO  
WIN**

**ANNUAL  
FUNDRAISER**  
04 / 29 / 2023  
WWW.CAWSF.ORG

# 2

## GREAT OPPORTUNITIES AT ONE GREAT EVENT!

Fundraising tags, like these, from the California Department of Fish & Wildlife generate dedicated funding for wildlife management programs that benefit specific big game species. Your payment may be tax-deductible (please confer with your accountant) as 95% of funds will go to the CDFW and 5% to CA WSF, a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

Find the best looking deer anywhere in California hunt zones and then hunt it! This very special permit allows a hunter to choose to hunt in any deer zone during that zone's open season using the specific method and meeting any special conditions of the tag for that hunt.

You do not need to be a CA resident; however you do need to meet all requirements (including hunter safety certification) to be issued either a resident or non-resident hunting license. The permit is non-transferable. Any resident or non-resident including anyone who has previously purchased this permit may bid and receive this very special permit!



### Open Zone Deer Tag Available



### Cady Mountain Bighorn Sheep Special Permit Available



The late Ralph Adams with a CA Governor's Permit Cady Mountain ram

This permit represents California's premier desert bighorn hunting opportunity and provides the lucky bidder the ability to hunt zone 9 (Cady Mountains) during the 2023-2024 hunting season.



This permit is subject to all existing conditions required for the take of bighorn sheep in California, including the requisite hunter orientation program identified in Section 362, Title 14, and California Code of Regulations. The tag holder will be able to hunt the first Saturday in November 2023 through the first Sunday in February 2024. The permit is non-transferable and may be used only by the purchaser. Any resident or non-resident is eligible to bid on and receive this Special Permit. Previous purchasers are also eligible to bid on this Special Permit.

The strong support for bighorn sheep conservation that has been shown by CA WSF and those individuals that have supported sheep management in California has contributed to the addition of new hunting opportunities.

NOTE: Tags are nontransferable.

This bighorn sheep fund-raising license tag for the Cady Mountains Zone will be available contingent upon adoption of regulations authorizing such tag.

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# YUKON DOUBLEHEADER

*By Mike Torres, Distinguished Life Member, Board Member*

I had two hunts in the Yukon backed up for 2 years during the COVID shutdown, and was able to complete them this summer in 2022. The first one was a sheep hunt with Blackstone Outfitters and the second one was a moose hunt with Deuling Stone Outfitters.

## **SHEEP HUNT**

In 2019 I was the only unsuccessful sheep hunter with Blackstone and Outfitter Jim Fink invited me back. We had to wait for August this year to complete this hunt. I flew into Jim's base camp on the Blackstone River and the next day Jim trailer-ed me, guides Logan and Carson with 6 horses up the Dempster Hwy. We dropped off at an area they call First Gulch. This area is known to hold rams early in the season and hadn't been hunted in 2 years.

We loaded up the horses, crossed the Blackstone River and made spike camp in the last group of Spruce trees. The next day was opening day and we sneaked up the valley so as not to spook any sheep. We saw several at long distance and made plans to return the next day. It started raining pretty hard that afternoon and continued most of the night.

The second day the mountains were socked in with clouds and fog. Logan and I rode up canyon to check out the sheep from yesterday, while Carson hiked up a steep ridge for a different vantage point. Late in the afternoon the fog cleared some and Carson found 3 rams bedded mid slope. Two of the rams looked fairly good and the third was a small ram. The rams were in an unapproachable spot at 670 yards so we continued to glass them for a couple more hours. They finally started down to a hanging basin about half way down the mountain. We started up the extremely steep and rocky slope, hoping to catch them in the bottom of the basin. When we got to the top of a volcano like formation, we started crawling through the dwarf arctic birch for about 50 yards, expecting to catch them in the basin. Unfortunately the three rams stepped out of the brush we were crawling in at 40 yards. We had a bit of a stand off as we couldn't move and they couldn't figure out what we were. Finally it was too much for them and they blew out, running back through the steep rocky slope they came from. Logan identified the best ram, and I was tracking him from a prone shooting position, waiting for the "shoot" call. Logan baaed like a sheep to stop them. I committed a rookie error and thought he said



Mike Torres with his ninth ram

"shoot" so I did, dropping the ram at 300 yards. We found the ram to be broomed short, but legal at 9 years old. This is my ninth ram and I was fooled by his small body size making his horns look bigger. My guides said that he was a Fannin ram, but to me he looked like a Dall ram with a slight shadow coloring on his shoulders. We caped him and packed up the meat, starting down with very heavy packs. I realized I was 50 years older than my guides when they scrambled down the steep rocky mountain like ground squirrels and I labored like a crippled hippo. We trailed out the next day and Jim Fink picked us up on the Dempster Hwy, returning to base camp. It was now time to get ready for my moose hunt in September.

## **MOOSE**

My moose hunt with Deuling Stone was the last hunt of the year and supposed to be a boat hunt, out of a heated cabin, but Outfitter Jarrett Deuling called me while I was waiting in the Vancouver airport and wanted to change me to tent based horse back hunt. This was my fifth hunt with Deuling Stone and I told Jarrett that I didn't have an opinion and to send me wherever KONG lived. Jarrett told me he had just the extremely wild spot for me.

I flew 250 miles into a base camp on high elevation Cliff Lake with another hunter, Brett from Colorado.

The first hunting day I hunted above camp with Geordan and Grady, spotting one good Bull Moose late in the day way too far to pursue, along with several mountain caribou. Brett hunted a big Grizzly



Mike Torres almost hidden behind giant moose

glasses from camp. Neither one of us got a shot opportunity that day.

The second hunting day was spent trailing to spike camp about 16 miles, crossing the Big River several times in deep, swift crossings where I determined that my Zeiss rifle scope was indeed waterproof as it was under water a couple of times. We were 2 hunters, 3 guides, 1 wrangler, and 14 horses. We got into spike camp mid afternoon, hunter Brett and guide Nathan rode out to check a kill site from last week and found a grizzly on it, but in a bad spot to approach with the thick brush and wind.

The third hunting day Brett went back for the grizzly while guides Geordan, Grady and I rode up valley moose hunting in thousands of acres of willow along the river bottom. Grady spotted a bull ghosting through the trees at about 800 yards. We tied up the horses and set up on the river bank while Geordan cow called him. The bull responded immediately and began making his way to us. I was set up on the tall spotting scope tripod and it looked like we would get a shot at close range. But the bull broke off and returned to the trees, where he had 4 cows waiting. We mounted up and crossed the deep river and began sneaking through the 7 foot tall willows. We found a spot 350 yards from the bull that provided a clear shooting lane and we watched him walk around in the trees, waiting for an opportunity. After what seemed an eternity, he cleared some trees and I hit him twice with my old .338 win mag. He went down immediately but was still moving around. We couldn't move closer or we would lose our shooting lane, so we waited. His cows were looking at him and about 5 minutes later he stood up and I dropped him with a neck shot.

He turned out to be about 62", heavy with big pans, lots of points and good fronts. We broke him down and returned the next day with 4 more pack horses to bring him back to spike camp.

Brett saw a couple of good bulls but couldn't get a shot until about the 6th day, taking a mature bull behind camp at the base of the mountains.

I continued to hunt Grizzlies for the rest of the week, but never did get a shot opportunity.

Usually in spike camp it's just me and the guide, but I really enjoyed this remote spike camp with a great group of guys in some of the most remote wilderness I have ever seen. This was a fantastic adventure that I hope to repeat.





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## 2022 ANTELOPE HUNT

*By Bob Keagy, Distinguished Life Member*

I purchased this Wyoming pronghorn hunt at our 2015 California Wild Sheep fundraiser, and contacted the donor, Justin Wright of Mule Shoe Outfitters immediately after the purchase. I introduced myself and found that Mule Shoe hunted public lands from the Bridger-Teton wilderness area to around Pinedale, Wyoming, and is Wyoming pronghorn area 87. Justin seemed very cooperative, and welcoming.

It seems, however, that the “old days” when one could purchase a pronghorn or mule deer tag over-the-counter at the nearest dry-goods store are seemingly long gone, at least in Wyoming. I slowly built up antelope preference points, and discovered that, amazingly, the requisite number of preference points always was just one more than those I had. Finally, I decided to phone Wyoming Game and Fish to see what I was doing wrong. The disingenuous answer was I might consider the “special” draw. The what? Ah-ha! Whether it was the greater application fee, or my preference points, I don’t know, but I immediately drew.

To their great credit, Justin Wright and his wife Sandy never wavered in their commitment to honor the donation throughout this long process, and were very happy when I finally drew. I had a number of other events to work around and we settled upon an early October date, although I believe this may have been a bit late, as it overlapped the mule deer season. I first hunted Wyoming as a green-as-grass sixteen year-old in 1962, so this would be my sixtieth anniversary return hunt.

I was particularly delighted at booking this, as I am also a confirmed, dyed-in-the-wool gun nut, and I had a spanking new Weatherby Vanguard “Ibex” special edition, which I was chaffing to try. I mounted a 4-12X illuminated reticle Leupold scope on it, and I managed to locate about six boxes of the rip-snorting 6.5X300 ammo, which has the on-paper trajectory of a laser. The bullets looked so wicked that any self-respecting antelope, sheep or ibex should obligingly just fall over dead at the mere sight of such ammo, just like the shmoos in the Lil’ Abner comic strip! I was loaded for bear...er...ah... make that antelope.

I flew Delta from Oakland to Jackson Hole, and was very pleased by their courtesy and desire to accommodate my rifle in its worn, much be-labelled Alumnaweld case. (After being met with some



Bob Keagy, 2022 Pronghorn

unpleasantries on trying to check a gun case with airlines over sixty years, this was surely refreshing.)

Arriving in Jackson, I picked up my gear and took the Budget shuttle to pick up my rental car. Note that some rental car companies have their rental fleets on the airport proper, and some don’t, requiring a 25 minute shuttle into Jackson. (I also note that the donation did include pick-up and return to Jackson, but I wanted a day extra to drive around the beautiful Wyoming countryside at my leisure, thus the rental car.)

Mule Shoe Outfitters (and their Kendall Valley Lodge) is across the very beautiful Green River, just off Wyoming 352, and just before entrance into the Bridger-Teton forest. It is a rustic, log-cabin cluster of four guest rooms, a restaurant and a friendly bar. Guest cabins are very comfortable, with in-room coffee service, T.V., and en-suite baths.

I met Justin and thanked him for his constancy, and he introduced me in turn to John Thompson, who would be my guide. We went out and checked the 6.5-300 zero, which was spot on.

Early the next morning, John and I, after a hurried breakfast, crossed the Green River and began cruising the area, looking for a big buck antelope. There was no shortage of antelope, and we glassed probably twelve to fifteen bucks the first morning. Beside us, the Green River was flowing across the broad valley floor, with beautiful pools, and the shoulders and ridges were ablaze with golden quaking Aspen and deep green pine. We covered a lot of ground, and glassed a big area, but nothing really big designed to show up.



Wyoming landscape

I was surprised at the checkerboard effect of private lands, which we did not hunt, and the BLM, Forest Service and other public lands, which we could. John had a handy-dandy cell phone with an app to tell us where private lands ended and huntable lands began, or vice-versa. Sometimes we'd see a nice buck, deserving of closer evaluation, but it would be on private lands, so we'd just kind of shrug and roll on along.

It rather seemed to me that the antelope had figured this out, and I thought that I saw more large bucks lurking on private lands, but this could just be the "grass-is-greener" phenomena. We hunted daily quite a large area, even a mesa located on the other side of Pinedale. John was a fine guide, with an uncanny ability to spot bucks. We often saw groups, and John would examine them through his Leicas for a few moments, and roll on. We did a bit of hiking to get to overlooks off the highway, but generally this was not a physically challenging hunt.

On the third day, we had looked over many bucks, but one that we spotted early on seemed a bit bigger than others we had been seeing, so we returned to a BLM area bounded by private lands. Sure enough, the buck was still there, and we pulled off the road. The antelope did not seem terribly concerned, but got up as we got out, and John set up the sticks. It was only a 100-yard shot with my long-range rig, and the antelope went down, shot cleanly through the heart.

The antelope suffered a bit of ground-shrinkage, but he still was right at 15", a nice, respectable buck, and dressed out at precisely 49 lbs. of boned-out meat in the cooler, just squeaking under the airlines 50 pound limit.

My thanks to the Chapter for making this donated hunt available. Justin was a great host, John was a fine guide, the country was gorgeous, the game plentiful, and I enjoyed every minute.



### FLOURLESS TRAIL MIX COOKIES

#### Ingredients:

- 1 stick grass-fed butter, room temperature
- 1/3 cup sugar alternative (e.g., Swerve)
- 1/3 cup light brown sugar alternative (e.g., Swerve)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup coconut flour
- 1/4 cup pumpkin spice
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp baking powder

#### Plus 2 to 3 of the following:

- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/2 cup coconut flakes
- 1/2 cup toasted pecans or walnuts or almonds, etc.

- 1/2 cup dried cranberries or cherries or dates, etc.
- 1/2 cup sunflower seeds
- 1/2 cup pumpkin seeds
- 1/2 cup cacao nibs

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Combine first four ingredients, and whisk until fluffy.
3. Add egg and stir until combined. Set aside.
4. Combine dry ingredients until well combined.
5. Add wet ingredients to dry.
6. Select add-ins and fold them into batter.
7. Roll even-sized balls of cookie dough on baking sheet and bake until golden brown, about 10 – 12 minutes.
8. Enjoy!

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# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Don Martin (center) was able to present the 2022 California Wild Sheep Foundation's Above and Beyond award to Paul and Donna Claus. The Claus's and Ultima Thule Outfitters have supported the CA WSF Chapter for many years. A most deserving award!



Cory Smith  
Dall Sheep to complete 2nd FNAWS  
Wrangell/St. Elias Mountains, Alaska  
with Ultima Thule Outfitters



Scott Hulse  
Canadian Bighorn Ram  
October 2022, Alberta  
at 8000 feet, about 20 miles in from the trailhead

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# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Bob Keagy  
30-31" 10 year old Kri-kri  
on Sapienza Island  
with Greek Mountain Hunting



Bill Kulungian  
Dall Sheep  
NWT, Canada August 2021  
Hunting with Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters



Rick Garzoli  
Stone Sheep  
Northern BC, August 2022  
Hunting with Stone & Folding Mountain Outfitters



Edwardo Negrete  
40" Dall Sheep  
Wrangell/St. Elias Mountains, Alaska  
Hunting with Ultima Thule Outfitters

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# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Dave Rowan  
Columbia Whitetail  
Oregon, 2022  
DIY hunt



John Ware  
Columbia Blacktail  
Oregon, 2022  
DIY Hunt



Brittney Fitzgerald with dad Jim  
Antelope  
Wyoming, 2022  
DIY Hunt



Jed Fitzgerald  
Antelope  
Wyoming, 2022  
DIY Hunt

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# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Mike Borel  
Vercors Chamois  
France, 2022

Hunting with Iberhunting; Guide Phillippe Simone



John Lewton  
Antelope  
Montana, 2022  
DIY Hunt



Jordan Wolf - WSF Raffle winner  
Mountain Goat  
Wrangell/St. Elias Mountains, Alaska  
Hunting with Ultima Thule Outfitters



Logan  
California Bighorn  
Nevada, 2022  
Hunting with G&J Outdoors

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# GOVERNMENT ISSUES UPDATE

*by Don Priest, Distinguished Life Member, Board Member*

## CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE UPDATE

Late last year the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) sent out the long-awaited *Sheep Plan* (Plan) for peer review. After receiving the many comments and recommendations, CDFW has spent most of this year making changes and improvements to the Plan. Imminently CA WSF anticipates that CDFW will be again sending out for peer review the updated Plan. The updated Plan will contain the general, all-encompassing state-wide Sheep Plan, along with one of the five meta-population Unit plans. The other four Unit plans will be completed at a later date. Again, after an anticipated 60 day or so review period, we are looking forward to the Plan coming out for public review in late winter/early spring of 2023. Upon release CA WSF will be diligently reviewing the Plan on behalf of our membership to be sure it meets our expectations, and, most of all, is the best plan forward for our states Desert Bighorn Sheep.

Each December, the CDFW approaches the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) with the upcoming seasons hunt tag recommendations. Though CDFW manages tag draws and the day-to-day activities of wildlife management, it is the Commission that sets, in general, policies for the CDFW and approves the season and tag limits for game animals and sport fishing. The final season dates and tag numbers are then finalized the following April for that year.

We are anticipating that CDFW will be making a recommended reduction for sheep tags in Zone 1 – Marble/Clipper Mountains – for the upcoming 2023-2024 hunting season. CDFW's latest surveys of these mountains suggest a reduction in herd size, with conjecture that the herd has potentially become infected by disease. CA WSF very much supports any changes and harvest numbers that are determined by science and can be supported by herd size and their environment.

Currently there are six tags available for this Zone. Though we do not know what the final number of tags will be for Zone 1, tags will still be available. At this time, CA WSF does not anticipate any other changes in tag numbers and season dates for all other zones in 2023-2024 from that of the 2022-2023 season.

## BRIGHTLINE WEST HIGH SPEED RAIL LINE

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), CDFW and Brightline West (Brightline) have recently been in discussions on wildlife



overpasses as a potential part of the High-Speed Rail Line Project (Project). Though many details as to how these overpasses will be incorporated into the Brightline Project, and their financing, CA WSF finds this as a big step forward: Brightline appears to now recognize that they cannot ignore, nor anticipate that this important issue for the people of California and our pride in conserving our state's diversified wildlife, will simply evaporate away.

In cooperation with other conservation groups in our coalition, CA WSF will continue to work hard on this issue. This includes the continuation of pressing our coalitions interests with the FRA, CDFW and Caltrans so that Brightline will meet its obligation of mitigating the wildlife connectivity in the desert that this Project will disrupt, if not outright obstruct.

Beyond the work of this coalition, and many others, CA WSF would like to thank Drs. Christina Aiello, Vern Bleich, Clinton Epps and John Wehausen for their recent letter to the Federal Railroad Administration's Administrator Amit Rose pressing that these wildlife connectivity mitigation measures via their scientific based wildlife overpasses be made part of the FRA's NEPA environmental re-evaluation. These four pre-eminent biologists of California's bighorn sheep, with over a century of combined experience in studying our states desert sheep and their environment, have been essential to our understanding of migratory patterns, genetic diversity requirements between herds and disease transmission. Their pressing for these wildlife crossings brings the full weight of science and biology on their necessity.

*Editors note: See page 24 to review the letter.*

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# WILDLIFE PROFESSIONALS CONTINUE CLOSE WATCH OF DESERT BIGHORN CONNECTIVITY ALONG CALIFORNIA I-15

Over the last two years, diverse organizations have voiced their wish to see bighorn sheep and other wildlife connectivity protected as high-speed rail development moves forward in southern California. The Brightline West rail project, that is intended to connect Apple Valley, in San Bernardino Co., to the outskirts of Las Vegas via the Interstate-15 right of way, poses a substantial challenge to maintaining connected and thriving bighorn populations between habitat north and south of I-15. The project doesn't have to conflict with conservation goals, however, and could instead improve bighorn connectivity across the I-15 corridor if the design includes wildlife crossing structures to allow movement over the highway and the future rail line. Guided by field research conducted over approximately 40 years in the region, Drs. Christina Aiello, Clinton Epps, John Wehausen, and Vern Bleich submitted their professional opinion to the Federal Rail Administration recommending that the project include these needed mitigations to preserve desert bighorn sheep connectivity (full letter below). They will be keeping an eye on these and other developments in the region, and drawing from a wealth of research-driven data on bighorn sheep when needed to call for re-sponsible use of land and resources.



## Re: Adding Necessary Wildlife Overpasses to Brightline West High-Speed Rail Project

Dear Administrator Bose:

It has come to our attention that the FRA will re-evaluate the NEPA environmental review associated with Brightline West's Las Vegas to Apple Valley segment and has stated that *"the NEPA re-evaluation also includes revisions to the project's mitigation measures. In updating the re-evaluation, FRA would consider new information provided by the State of California (e.g. CDFW, Caltrans, etc.) and federal partners (e.g. NPS, BLM, etc.) regarding effects to wildlife and wildlife movement and currently proposed mitigation measures for wildlife and wildlife movement."* We are encouraged and supportive of this re-evaluation and wish to add our voices to the long list of organizations that support modifying the project to include wildlife overpasses to mitigate impacts to local wildlife.

The signees have collectively participated in multiple decades of collaborative research with California Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service, Caltrans and Bureau of Land Management to assist in managing wildlife populations for long-term persistence. These efforts have produced extensive



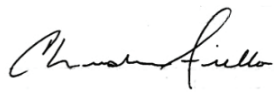
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evidence that the high speed rail (HSR) would prevent at-grade crossings by desert bighorn sheep and stands to directly conflict with state and federal-level initiatives to preserve wildlife connectivity. Much of the now-available research and data did not exist at the time of the initial NEPA evaluation. Existing underpass structures do not facilitate bighorn sheep movement under I-15; at-grade crossings maintain the last links of crucial connectivity between populations across the highway. It is our strongest recommendation that overpasses are included in the HSR mitigation to facilitate movements by wildlife.

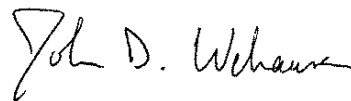
The permanence and scale of the HSR would create lasting impacts to bighorn sheep populations, and these impacts will extend well beyond the right of way. On the basis of decades of research that we have conducted on populations of desert bighorn sheep likely to be affected by the HSR, we anticipate the project will reduce current levels of gene flow between populations, which will have negative implications for genetic diversity. The HSR will eliminate access to habitat, which will impact the ability of bighorn sheep to respond to the effects of environmental stressors such as climate change, drought, or continued habitat loss and degradation from other human activities. Moreover, the HSR will limit the ability of bighorn sheep to recolonize vacant habitat, or to rescue declining populations with new migrants—both of which are key processes for maintaining functional desert bighorn sheep populations on this landscape. California is home to the largest collection of naturally-persisting desert bighorn populations in North America. The loss of any of these populations as a result of anthropogenic activities carried out in the absence of appropriate mitigation would substantially impact the natural history and local adaptations of this species in desert environments.

The good news is that research also shows that these adverse effects can be avoided. Indeed, overpass structures have proven to be effective mitigation tools. Our colleagues in Arizona and Nevada have demonstrated that overpasses allow for safe movement of bighorn sheep and other wildlife. These states also benefit from safer roadways for human travelers, which should also be a concern with traffic volumes predicted to increase along the I-15 corridor. We therefore encourage the FRA to take into account the large body of existing science on the issue and ensure that wildlife overpasses are included in the project's mitigation plan. Thank you for your time, and please reach out if you need further details regarding the available research supporting our evaluation and recommendations.

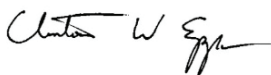
Sincerely,



Christina Aiello, Ph.D.  
Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife,  
and Conservation Sciences Oregon State University



John D. Wehausen, Ph.D.  
Retired, University of California, White  
Mountain Research Center



Clinton W. Epps, Ph.D.  
Professor, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and  
Conservation Sciences Oregon State University



Vernon C. Bleich, Ph.D.  
Senior Environmental Scientist (retired), California  
Department of Fish and Game  
Research Professor, University of Nevada Reno

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# CALIFORNIA FISH AND WILDLIFE UPDATE

*by Danielle Glass*

Co-Lead for CDFW Desert Sheep Program

As I write these words, I am sitting in a truck at a basecamp near Death Valley's Panamint Mountains. Following other successful operations in the Sierra Nevada, Peninsular, and San Gorgonio ranges, the California Department of Fish & Wildlife is conducting its annual desert bighorn sheep capture effort, stretching from the southern border to the mountains of Death Valley National Park.

Though we are now in Death Valley, we started in the Orocochia Mountains just south of I-10. The Orocochias comprise Zone 4, where the late Jason Hairston harvested a record-breaking California desert bighorn ram in 2017. We planned to collar five rams and five ewes, but exceeded our expectations by collaring six rams and five ewes. Those collared sheep will later be identified on game cameras and used to create a mark-resight population estimate. The six collared rams will also provide valuable information on habitat use and population connectivity with nearby ranges such as the Chocolate Mountains.

Next, we moved to the Castle Mountains, where we successfully collared the twelve ewes that we had hoped to capture. Collars will help generate a mark-resight population estimate in this currently-unhunted area. We are working with collaborators at Oregon State University to evaluate genetic and immunological characteristics of the population. With collaborators from the Colorado School of Mines, we are also examining bighorn habitat selection relative to the Equinox Gold Group's Castle Mine.



Like other mines in San Bernardino County, the Castle Mine appears to provide artificial "escape" terrain, encouraging bighorn sheep to exploit quality forage in the area. Mine operations may also reduce



predator activity, further increasing the chance of survival for sheep utilizing mining environments.

In the past few days, we have moved on to Death Valley. Captures previously occurred in this area in 2017 and 2018 but were limited in scope and size. This year's capture represents the first concerted effort to collar bighorn sheep across the southeastern half of Death Valley, where mountain ranges are four or five times larger than most ranges in the central Mojave. As such, finding the sheep has proved challenging given their unknown habitat use in this area as well as the extremely large area where they might be found. We have had some luck at higher elevations where the heavy summer monsoons produced fall forage. So far, we have caught two rams and three ewes in the Black Mountains, as well as five rams and six ewes in the Panamint Range.

We have five more days of captures planned for Death Valley's Funeral, Cottonwood, and Grapevine ranges. CDFW's desert bighorn program is also set up for an exciting winter. We are interviewing for three new Scientific Aides, who will assist with our extensive fieldwork operations. We are also gearing up for hunter checkouts during the upcoming hunt season. Lastly, we look forward to attending the Sheep Show come January. Stay tuned!

**JOIN US AT SHEEP WEEK 2023!**  
**Plan your trip today and see us in booth 456!**



# CA WSF SPONSORED BREAKFAST FOR D14 ZONE CLEAN-UP

*By Scott Gibson, Life Member, Board Member*

A big thank you to all 22 of the volunteers and the US Forest Service personnel that braved the heat and helped remove several tons of trash from the D14 Zone in the San Bernardino Mountains on July 30th.

Burrtec Waste Management donated the roll-off, Redlands Home Depot donated supplies, Mayes Construction generously donated door prizes, the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation donated a 3-year membership and fed the volunteers Breakfast. The "D14 Zone" is a Facebook group, with nearly 4,000 members, dedicated to hunting in the San Bernardino Mountains. Group founder, George F Willoughby, regularly organizes clean-up events and habitat projects to benefit the zones area. The San Bernardino Mountains home to the San Gorgonio Sheep hunt unit and several distinct bighorn sheep herds.



Volunteers from the July 30th "D14 Zone" Clean-up in the San Bernardino Mountains



Scott Gibson cooking breakfast



Volunteers hauled out tons of trash from the San Bernardino Forest area.



Just about everyone took a picture with the Desert Bighorn Skull



Table set up with custom "D14 Zone" hats, CA WSF Newsletters and the Ka-Bar Knife.

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# SOME THOUGHTS ON FERAL EQUIDS, AND A FEW ASSES

*by Vernon C. Bleich, Ph.D.*

Following my nomination and many letters voicing strong support from groups ranging from national conservation powerhouses to local grass-roots organizations, I was appointed to the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board (Board) in October 2019. My 3-year term ended on 9 October 2022, following the Board's most recent public meeting. During my tenure, I represented wildlife management issues, and participated in four public meetings of the Board. I had the privilege of serving with outstanding individuals that are dedicated to the mission of the Board, as established by the Wild Free-Roaming Horses And Burros Act of 1971 (Act). I have the utmost respect and appreciation for every one of those individuals, from personal, professional, and ethical perspectives, and for their efforts to provide meaningful input regarding the management of feral equids to the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service. I also extend my respect and appreciation to the administrators and staff members of the agencies involved in the Wild Horse and Burro Program (Program), all of whom are burdened each day with a task so fraught with emotional outcry and political meddling that their frustration must, at times, be almost unbearable. I thank both the Board members and Program staff for their dedication to the worthy, albeit largely thankless, tasks with which they are faced. During the recent public meeting held in Phoenix, Arizona, I learned that congressional staffers likely were in attendance; I will return to that a bit later in this narrative.



More than 50 years ago, Congress passed Public Law 92-195 (i.e., the Act), and declared “wild” horses and burros to be an “integral part of the natural system of the public lands.” Congress also directed that wild free-roaming horses and burros “[shall be managed] in a manner that is designed to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance on the public lands.” That legislation also established the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board.

Although the Act was well-intended, some members of Congress either did not consider, or perhaps intentionally ignored, some basic scientific principles when crafting the legislation; if that were not the case, feral equids would not have been identified as “an integral part of the natural system.” In defense of the Act, it was clear that the distribution of feral equids is to be restricted to those areas in which they occurred when the legislation was passed, and that the responsible agencies were to manage for appropriate population densities.

Increasing complexity resulting from laws or amendments have further affected the management of feral equids, and resulted in unrealistic rules, regulations, or policies that have compounded a task that was, at best, difficult from the start. These actions have occurred because those that are emotionally involved, or otherwise enamored, with feral horses or donkeys, continue to deny the current dire situation facing wildlife and feral equids, and do their best to ensure that Congress does not take



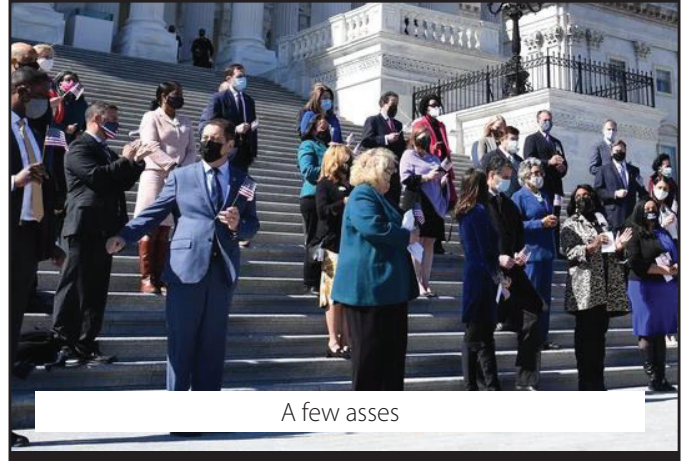
Photo from natgeo.com

corrective action. Current constraints on management virtually ensure endless litigation or protests that complicates, or even prevents, compliance with the Act as originally intended. Collectively, these factors have severely limited efforts to maintain populations of feral equids at appropriate management levels, and further exacerbate the decline in habitat quality that is detrimental to native wildlife and feral equids. Simultaneously, the cost to taxpayers continues to rise, but without any meaningful benefit of those expenditures in terms of solving an increasingly serious problem.

Throughout my career, but especially during my service on the Board, I have welcomed opportunities to contribute in a positive way to the management of native wildlife occupying the nation's public lands, while at the same time ensuring the persistence of feral horses and donkeys, *as specified by the Act*. What became clear over the years, however, is that pandering for votes and political expediency (i.e., getting re-elected) are nearly ubiquitous activities among elected officials, and appear to be the primary forces constraining the management of feral horses and donkeys. It will take Congressional action, and a willingness among elected 'public servants' to achieve successful and proper conservation of native wildlife and feral equids, and the habitat upon which they depend. The late Jack Ward Thomas, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service under Bill Clinton, said, "Taken one at a time, it is difficult to argue against ... environmental laws. Taken in interactive total, they have produced a worsening impasse in federal land management—an impasse that Congress created with the best of intentions. It is an impasse that only Congress, with the best of intentions, can remedy." To paraphrase Jack's statement in the context of this essay, 'The constraints placed on the management of feral equids have resulted in a mess that Congress created, and it is a mess that only Congress can fix.'

Based on experience gained during my tenure on the Board, it is essential that appointees be allowed to offer a correction, or even a rebuttal, to misinformation conveyed during public testimony. In almost all cases, information presented to the Board was misleading, and in other examples it was absolutely incorrect. Because members of the Board are not afforded the opportunity to offer responses, the presentation of disinformation has a pervasive effect and encourages the proliferation of similar statements by subsequent speakers: as a result, the cycle is repeated *ad infinitum*. Additionally, the Board was not fully functional for at least 50% of the past 3 years because reappointments, or new appointments, were not acted on in a timely manner; this situation must be corrected. When the term of any member of the Board ends, the remaining appointees cannot function in an advisory role as intended by the Act, because the Board remains at only 2/3 of its chartered composition until reappointments occur or replacements are named. During my third year on the

Board, it was more than a year before three vacancies — wild horse and burro advocacy, equine medicine, and rangeland science — were named. For the Board to function in a meaningful way, it is essential that any members whose terms expire are allowed to remain actively involved in Board matters until either reappointed or are replaced. In the absence of such a change, the Board cannot operate as intended and its effectiveness is compromised severely.



Despite my commitment to the conservation and proper management of wildlife and feral equids—both of which are dependent on the health of our public lands — I will not be seeking a second term on the Board. Although the Board exists to serve a worthy purpose, and it has the direction to provide thoughtful and meaningful recommendations to the agencies, the constraints that elected 'public servants' have placed on the management of feral horses and feral donkeys outweigh my ability to contribute in an effective manner. As a scientist, my efforts on behalf of habitat conservation, wildlife populations, ecological integrity, and the well-being of feral equids all have the potential to be far more meaningful in the absence of the bureaucratic trivia, policies, and political expediency. Those factors have a clear and present influence on management options because of the emotional arguments that are a clear and present danger to necessary and prudent actions. To that end, I look forward to sharing additional thoughts with any congressional staffers present at the October meeting, or that otherwise heard my parting comments.

I personally thank each member of the Board with whom I had the privilege of serving, all of whom were consummate professionals and worked diligently to bring current issues and needed actions to the attention of agency leadership, and did so collaboratively and efficiently. Further, the agency personnel that demonstrate their dedication to the proper management and conservation of our public lands, and the wildlife and feral equids dependent on those lands and who willingly face unfettered challenges on a daily basis, warrant the appreciation of everyone concerned with those issues. It is essential that the dedication of all of these individuals, whether

Board appointees, agency administrators, or rank-and-file personnel doing their utmost to work within constraints that are beyond their control, be brought to the attention of elected officials. It also is essential that the management of feral equids receive greater consideration in the context of rangeland health than in the political ramifications for elected officials, as it is only the legislative branch of government that can ensure the effective management and conservation of our public lands. I close this narrative with a commitment that the ecological health of the public lands, and the conservation of all of the creatures that depend on that invaluable resource, will remain my top priority.

—Dr. Vern Bleich served as a wildlife biologist with the California Department of Fish and Game for 34 years, during which he worked extensively with large mammals occupying the Great Basin, Mojave, and Sonoran

deserts of California. He was fortunate to have joined the Department shortly after completion of a thorough inventory of bighorn sheep in California, and has been active in the conservation and management of that species since 1973. Among his early responsibilities were the direction and supervision of habitat enhancement projects specifically for bighorn sheep, a position he held for 8 years before it was eliminated during a ‘budget crunch’ (but was the best job he ever held). In his final position with the Department (2001—2008) he was the project leader for the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep restoration program. Vern currently is Research Professor at the University of Nevada Reno, serves on the Advisory Board of the Texas Bighorn Society, is Science Advisor for the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, serves on two committees of the California Wild Sheep Foundation, and is a member of the Wild Sheep Foundation’s Professional Resource Advisory Board. Interested parties can contact Vern directly with any questions ([vcbleich@gmail.com](mailto:vcbleich@gmail.com)).



## CA WSF UTILIZES NEW LEGISLATURE TRACKING TOOL

We all know how difficult it is to keep up with every issue that is important to us. It is overwhelming trying to keep up on our own and try to cut through the noise to focus on what really matters to us. At CA WSF we have partnered with **Gaines and Associates** to bring your attention to important information, as it happens, as well as the important wrap-ups we provide every quarter like that on these pages.

During the next legislative session you will be seeing special emails a state-of-the-art legislative tracking tool called “VoterVoice.” The messages will be coming to you under the “CA WSF” logo. These emails will include links to a page where you can easily make your opinion known. And we do mean it will be easy!

The page will have a pre-written message either in support or opposition to a bill or other issue being debated. After your first time use, your information will be pre-filled and you will be able to log in, hit that “SEND” button and you’re done! You will also be able to edit the information in the message. Either way, it should take just a moment and a couple clicks to contact your elected representative and make sure your voice is heard.

We will advise you shortly on how to set up your account and become active. Then, when you receive a message with more information from CA WSF, please take the few minutes to respond immediately! We have made great strides in getting our voice heard sending you the Action Alert emails of the past few years, but this will be much easier, more timely and more effective for us all.



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## ROCKY MOUNTAIN BULL ELK HUNT DRAWING

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Due to California Law credit card information may not be written down or stored anymore. To pay by card over the phone please call:

**Mike Torres 530-410-8856**

**Ken Morefield 530-335-0135**

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**Orders must be received by Feb 3, 2023**

**HUNT INFO:** Trophy Rocky Mountain 6 Day Elk Hunt on the Wine Cup Gamble Ranch, NE Nevada. Private ranch in Nevada Units 076, 077, 079, and 081 on 30,000 acres of private (locked off); and access to areas inaccessible by the public. Total ranch is 1.25 million acres.

#### DETAILS:

- 6 day hunt with two guides from Western Wildlife Adventures
- Food and transportation included
- Lodging accommodations in 6,500 sq ft luxury lodge
- Animal field dressed & ready for butcher upon departure.
- Hunt includes Landowner Elk Voucher (\$18,500) to exchange for an elk tag (winner is responsible for the \$1,200 tag and license).
- Winner may choose archery, muzzle loader, or rifle and will be hunting for 340-370+ BC bulls.

**This is an exceptional hunting opportunity for a Trophy Bull Elk.**

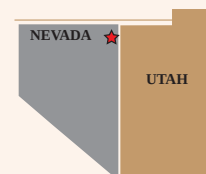
Drawing takes place February 4, 2023 at the Redding CDA Banquet.

Do not need to be present to win.

For tickets or information please contact:

**Mike Torres 530 410 8856 or Ken Morefield 530 355 0135**

or go to [www.caldeer.org/events](http://www.caldeer.org/events)



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## MYLAR MENACE

by Debra Miller Marschke  
*Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep*

As an avid desert enthusiast and wildlife volunteer I roam the roads less traveled and cross country hike through wilderness zones frequently. My “wilderness experience” continues to be negatively impacted by the sight of the countless mylar balloons that I encounter tangled up within the desert vegetation.

They are easy to spot because of their bright colors and reflective materials. I am sure that their journey had innocuous beginnings, an accent of happiness at a past celebration much farther away. In fact, many of them are purposely released for the simple joy of watching them float skyward until the balloon disappears from view – never to be seen (or thought of) again. However, balloons released into the atmosphere quickly transform from a source of pleasure into a source of death. What goes up, will come down - once the helium dissipates and gravity pulls them back to the earth. Once earthbound, they quickly become entangled in brush. An attention grabber, with a pop of bright color to entice animals to investigate a potential source of nourishment, balloons can be mistaken for high quality forage.

For years, biologists have made the grim discovery revealed during necropsies of this silent menace populating the desertscapes. Mylar and latex balloons are quiet killers; once ingested, they can become a blockage in the digestive tract which will eventually contribute to the cause of death of the animal. The brightly colored ribbons secured to the balloons become serrated knives, lacerating delicate tissues and the esophagus. The animals suffer from injuries caused by the ingestion of balloons and ribbons, which ultimately can cause starvation, choking, blockage, stress, and ultimately, death. Latex balloons are touted to be “biodegradable” but they really are not as far as the wildlife is concerned. Depending on the manufacturer, studies demonstrate that it can take between 4 to 16 years for the material to begin breakdown in the environment. Once it breaks down, it is still a form of microplastic. Additionally, latex is laced with harmful chemicals like ammonia and tetramethyl thiuram disulfide (used as a fungicide and preservative). CDFW wildlife biologist Jeff Villepique is intimately aware that this is negatively impacting the desert bighorn sheep populations because he’s discovered the evidence first hand in the field. It is not an anomaly, and it has been repeated during bighorn mortality investigations for decades. During a single necropsy, he’s removed enough balloons from one of the chambers of a bighorn’s stomach to fill a plastic bag. Obviously, free floating balloons are silently wreaking havoc and causing unnecessary suffering.

They are killing both lambs, ewes, and full curl bighorn rams indiscriminately. They arrive with the prevailing winds like the seeds of dandelions, possibly from hundreds of miles away, raining down as a single “Happy Birthday” declaration or a Mother’s Day death cloud.



6 pack balloons found on the 29 Palms Marine base



Stork balloon found in Afton Canyon, near Cady Mountains guzzlers

On May 11, 2017, the California legislature first introduced Assembly bill AB – 1091, addressing the willful release of any balloon that is constructed of electrically conductive material. Violation of this penal code 653.1 is considered an infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed \$100.00, with repeated offenses considered a misdemeanor. In 1990 the California State Legislature passed SB 1990, also known as “The Balloon Law,” enacted in an effort to reduce power

All Photos taken by Steve and Debbie Marschke





Giant Saguaro found in the Bristol Mountains

outages due to mylar or foil balloons. There will be no more public events where mylar balloons are released en masse. Albeit a nice effort, this toothless law looks good on paper but it has done nothing to discourage the general public from buying and ultimately releasing the mylar menaces. Latex balloons, the more lethal of the two, are not even addressed in the California legislature. The harm that a latex balloon causes to marine and bird life has been more widely publicized than the harm caused to terrestrial creatures. Furthermore, the focus of publicity is more broad scope, generalized as “pollution.” Perhaps it’s easier for the public to wrap their heads around the problem when they learn about harm caused to sea turtles or dolphins because those species command more broadcast time and wildlife coverage than the Bighorns do. The Bighorns don’t have a high profile champion like Steve Irwin or Jacques Cousteau, and it’s unlikely that Disney has a Southwestern desert tale in the hopper. The key solution for this issue is continuing to educate the public. There is

a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Balloons Blow Inc. ([balloonsblow.org](http://balloonsblow.org)), whose singular focus is to educate on the topic; however, unless one is actually searching the Internet for information about balloons and the impact on wildlife, it’s not high profile. The environmentalist organizations are battling the multi-million dollar balloon industry. There are organizations out there that specifically address the issue periodically in their publications. The most accurate and pertinent publication was published by CFG biologist Rebecca Barboza, which was first posted in Outdoor California magazine January – February 2010. California Wild Sheep Foundation has that article archived and accessible on the Internet: [http://cawsf.org/Floating\\_Menace.pdf](http://cawsf.org/Floating_Menace.pdf). It’s an important read and deserves your time.

So it is up to us, as stewards of the desert, to take a stand. More than twenty years ago, I stepped up my game. Anytime I see trash, garbage, or discarded beverage cans littering the deserts, I am repulsed and offended. I pick up what I can, but I simply can’t pick up everything I encounter due to the sheer volume. However, I can promise to recover every single balloon (and ribbons) I see. I made a vow to collect every balloon I can safely harvest, and it’s become personal with me. It’s an attainable goal that I can continue for my lifetime. I’ve found up to thirteen separate and individual balloons in a day, and the most prized recovery was a human-sized mylar stork. It just takes a minute to grab them up, and they stuff easily in a daypack. I also seek to educate those who travel with me about the environmental damage these party favors cause to our beloved wildlife. Please consider integrating this cause into your next desert adventures, whether it involves casual recreation or a structured hunt; start harvesting balloons. It’s a small puzzle piece in the big picture to keep sheep on the mountain.



## NEW FAVORITE GEAR

*by Steve Hunter, Member*



Here is a relatively new gear addition, the Kuiu glassing pad. It is hard to believe that a 2 ounce pad could be much use, but it makes a huge difference in protecting your bottom from rocks, wet, and snow. It also slips between my pack and frame and stays there. I had a piece of paracord and a carabiner to keep it in place, but it never moved.

It is so light that it disappeared out of sight in a flash once when I stood up on a windy ridge while glassing sheep!

# SIGNIFICANT MAJORITY OF AMERICANS SUPPORT THE RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT

Mark Damian Duda, *Responsive Management*  
Second Line

A new survey conducted by Responsive Management finds that 70 percent of Americans support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, pending federal legislation that would allocate an additional \$1.4 billion in annual funding to state agencies and tribal land managers for wildlife conservation.

State-level wildlife conservation efforts in the United States have historically been funded largely by hunters and recreational shooters through an excise tax on their purchases of firearms, pistols, and ammunition. This funding mechanism was created in 1937 through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (often referred to as the "Pittman-Robertson Act" for the legislators who sponsored it). Because Pittman-Robertson funding comes mostly from sportsmen and women, it has generally been used by state fish and wildlife agencies to manage game species. For instance, Pittman-Robertson excise tax revenues have helped to fund the recovery of white-tailed deer, Rocky Mountain elk, wild turkey, and many other iconic North American game animals.

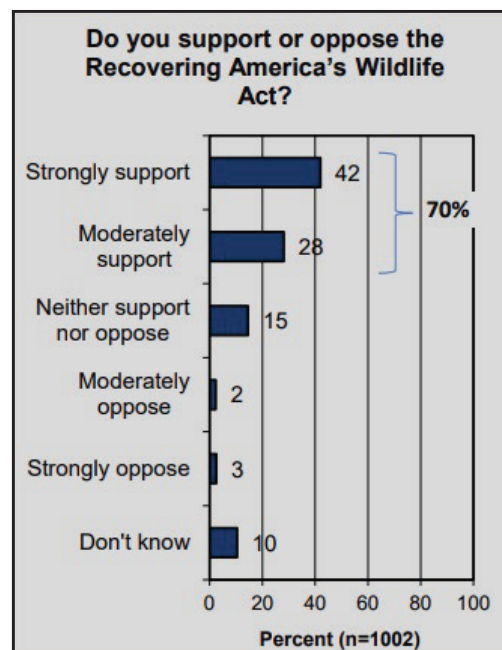
While the Pittman-Robertson system has been a major success for almost a century, more than 12,000 wildlife species—including threatened and endangered species and other animals—remain in need of conservation and restoration. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (commonly known as "RAWA") is designed to address these needs and strengthen the current wildlife conservation funding model by redirecting \$1.4 billion to state fish and wildlife agencies and tribal wildlife managers for the conservation and restoration of wildlife and plant species of greatest conservation need.

In a time of stark political polarization, RAWA appears to be one of the few causes able to unite both Democrats and Republicans: the bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives with bipartisan support in June and has been introduced in the U.S. Senate, where it is expected to be voted on this month.

The survey conducted by Responsive Management marks one of the first major assessments of public opinion on RAWA. In the survey, respondents were first read a description of the legislation that explained the purpose of the bill and the funding source; they were then asked whether they supported or opposed the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. A total of 70 percent of adult U.S. residents expressed support for

RAWA (including 42 percent who indicated strong support), compared to only 5 percent who oppose the measure.

Reflecting the bipartisan support for the bill in the House, the survey found strong support for RAWA across the political spectrum, with majorities of Democrats (82 percent), Republicans (64 percent), and independents (64 percent) supporting the legislation.



Furthermore, the survey identified majority support for RAWA among every major demographic group examined in the research, including males and females; younger, middle-aged, and older residents; those of higher and lower education levels; those in urban, suburban, and rural areas; and numerous categories of outdoor recreationists. It also was supported by diverse outdoor recreationists including 80% of wildlife viewers, 78% of anglers, 77% of birdwatchers, and 70% of hunters.

"I was initially surprised at how high the support for RAWA was in the survey," said Responsive Management Executive Director Mark Damian Duda. "But the truth is that, over three decades of survey research, we've seen that Americans consistently back conservation issues. In fact, in the last several elections, upwards of 75 percent of the ballot measures on wildlife, habitat, and green issues around the

country pass. When these issues are presented directly to the people, Americans tend to vote consistently in favor of conservation.”

“Something we understand well as wildlife managers and representatives of state agencies is that wildlife conservation transcends party politics, and this polling demonstrates that,” said Ron Regan, Executive Director of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies. “The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act is the single most impactful wildlife conservation bill in a generation.”

The scientific, probability-based survey was conducted August 25-28 and entailed a random sample of 1,002 United States residents ages 18 and older. The survey

was fielded through a combination of telephone (including landline and cellular numbers) and online interviews. (The use of supplemental online interviews allowed for greater representation of younger residents, as research indicates that younger people are less likely to complete a telephone survey than they are to complete a survey online.) For the entire sample of adult U.S. residents, the sampling error is at most plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

*Editor’s Note:* For questions about the survey results, please contact Responsive Management Executive Director Mark Damian Duda at [mark@responsivemanagement.com](mailto:mark@responsivemanagement.com).



## SUCCESS STORY FROM OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!



John Lewton posted:

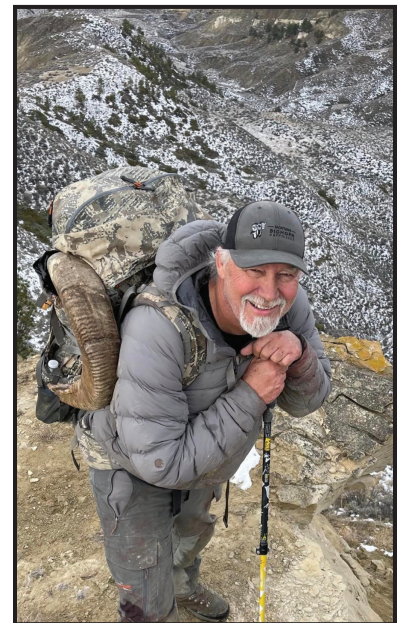
Congratulations Chris !

2 Old school guys get it done! Shooting his one and only rifle, a 40 year old 280 with a 6x Leupold scope a 40 year old lucky Celtics tee shirt, no camo but a lot of go. We put on a lot of miles looking for this 42” bighorn in the Missouri River breaks, cold temps, snow, high winds and mud, we had it all. The river was locked up so we had to do all of the hunting off the couple roads going through the Breaks. That definitely made it a more physical hunt

Thanksgiving was his last day to hunt and he had to

be back to work today. The season is over on Sunday. We had a lot to be thankful for, both being able to do this type of hunt and having luck on our side -- should this ram have kicked one more time he would of fallen into a deep crevice and even with crampons on we could not of retrieved it. Getting off the side of the hill before the sun hit it as it was very steep and would of become to slippery to get out.

I am also thankful I have a very supportive, and loving wife who supports all my passions. #wsf #wildsheep



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# 2021/2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION NEARS CONCLUSION

By Bill Gaines, Gaines and Associates

Early in the morning of Thursday, September 1st, 2022, a long and especially challenging 2021/2022 Session of the California State Legislature finally gaveled to a close. Then, following far too short of a break, the November 2022 statewide election took place – setting the stage for the challenges we may face in the halls of our State Capitol during the 2023/2024 Legislative Session.

Before we dive into California's November 2022 election results and what we may expect in the coming Session, let's look at the final outcome of three bills of serious concern to the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF) that were still in play in the 2022 Session as of our last report in late August.

## 2021/2022 STATE LEGISLATURE – FINAL WRAP

### AB 1227 – FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION: EXCISE TAX - DEAD

In the past several issues of *California Wild Sheep*, we covered two separate bills by Assembly Member Mark Levine (D-Marin) that proposed an additional 10% to 11% excise tax on the price of firearms, firearm parts and ammunition. Both coined the “Gun Violence Prevention, Healing, and Recovery Act,” the bills proposed to earmark the revenues to fund illegal gun violence prevention efforts.

In January 2022, after a hard-fought, year-long battle, we defeated his first effort – AB 1223 – on the Assembly Floor. Down, but certainly not out, in early May, Levine gave it another shot by gutting the existing text out of a bill that dealt with solar panel energy standards and replacing it with language verbatim of AB 1223. Having already passed out of the Assembly and to the Senate in its previous form, AB 1227, as amended, quickly passed through two Senate policy committees in June, regardless of the stiff opposition provided by CA WSF and our conservation partners. Maintaining its momentum, AB 1227 easily passed out of Senate fiscal committee in mid-August and headed to the Senate Floor – where it remained as of our last report.

Aware that AB 1227 could be brought up for a Floor vote at any time prior to the close of Session on August 31st, CA WSF partnered with our conservation coalition to blanket the Senate with our opposition to the measure – successfully securing just enough votes necessary to kill the bill. With only a few days left in Session – and feeling the pressure of our opposition – the author amended the bill to exempt long guns and



ammunition purchased by licensed hunters and promptly reached out to us, asking that we go neutral. We thanked him for reaching out but held firm.

Although we remained opposed, it was critical that the Senate opposition we lined up also held firm. As the last few days of Session ticked down, we went full-court press on the Senate to ensure they also held the line. Knowing that if AB 1227 should pass out of the Senate, it would have to go back to the Assembly Floor for concurrence – we also worked the votes necessary in that chamber to kill the bill, should need be.

Late in the afternoon of August 31st – the last day of Session – AB 1227 was brought up for a vote on the Senate Floor. Needing twenty-seven of the 40 Senate votes to pass – and knowing we had done all we could – we nervously watched as they called the Senate roll. When the bill stalled at 20 “aye” votes Senate proponents pulled the call to work the votes and try again later that evening. We also went back to work to ensure our Senate opposition stayed intact.

Several hours later, just minutes before the stroke of midnight, the bill was brought up for a second vote – failing by the same seven vote margin. AB 1227 was finally dead.

### AB 2571/AB 160 – FIREARMS: ADVERTISING TO MINORS – CLEAN-UP BILL SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

In our Fall 2022 Issue we also covered AB 2571 – legislation by Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D-San Ramon) that prohibited a “firearm industry member” from advertising or marketing any “firearm-related product” in a manner that is “designed, intended, or reasonably appears to

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be attractive to minors.” AB 2571 imposed a civil penalty of up to \$25,000 for each violation and authorized a person “harmed” by a violation to bring suit to recover any damages suffered. The bill also made each copy or republication of marketing or advertising prohibited by these provisions a separate violation. Amended in June to include an “urgency clause,” AB 2571 took effect immediately upon being signed by the Governor on June 30th.

Although intended to go after true firearm manufacturers and their promotional outreach to youth, the loose way AB 2571 defined “firearm industry member” and “firearm-related product” cast a sweeping net which also captured the important youth-related activities of California’s conservation organizations. As a result, the late June signing of AB 2571 immediately brought youth outreach and events by CA WSF and our conservation partners to a halt.

In our Fall 2022 Issue, we noted that we had met several times with the Governor’s office over the summer regarding the language of AB 2751, and that our perseverance appeared to have finally paid off when he agreed to support “urgency” legislation in August to address our concerns. But when our last issue went to print in late August – with the 2022 Session hourglass rapidly running out of sand – we were still nervously waiting for the promised clean-up bill to surface. On August 26th, with only five days left in Session, language we had carefully collaborated on was included in AB 160, a public safety trailer bill. With the Governor’s backing, AB 160 quickly hammered its way through the Legislature – passing off the Senate Floor and to the Governor’s desk the final day of Session. Four anxious weeks later, on September 29th, the Governor signed AB 160 into law. Because AB 160 was also an “urgency” measure, it took effect immediately upon receiving the Governor’s signature – finally allowing CA WSF and other conservation interests to reignite efforts to encourage youth to get involved in wildlife conservation and our hunting and shooting sports.

#### **AB 2344 (FRIEDMAN) – WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY: TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS– SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**

In our Fall 2022 Issue, we also reported on AB 2344 – legislation that would require Caltrans to coordinate with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and other appropriate agencies on establishing an inventory of locations where the implementation of wildlife passage features could reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and/or enhance wildlife habitat connectivity. Authored by Assembly Member Laura Friedman (D-Burbank) and strongly supported by CA WSF, AB 2344 also would require Caltrans

to publish the inventory and a list of funded transportation projects by no later than July 1, 2024, and require Caltrans to update the inventory and the project list at least once every two years.

In our last issue we reported that AB 2344 had passed through the Assembly, over to the Senate and to the Senate Floor, where it remained at press time.

On August 29th, AB 2344 passed off the Senate Floor via a unanimous vote and was sent back to the Assembly for concurrence of amendments taken on the Senate side. The Assembly promptly overwhelmingly ratified the Senate amendments and AB 2344 was on its way to Governor’s desk. AB 2344 was signed into law on September 30th – the final day he could sign legislation placed on his desk during the 2022 Legislative Session.

#### **WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN 2023?**

To begin, when it comes to issues of importance regarding the management and health of wild sheep and our ability to hunt them, does it really matter which political party is in control in Sacramento? It certainly does. To begin, there are many Democrats who are active hunters and shooters and who strongly support these outdoor traditions. But the Democratic Party has historically been the party least supportive of these traditions and our Second Amendment rights. Why? Because, in most cases, it is the Democratic Party that represents California’s urban legislative districts – constituencies that largely do not hunt or shoot, have had little exposure to our hunting and shooting sports, or knowledge of the critical role they play in wildlife conservation. Residents of these urban areas elect representatives that reflect their values and often share their misunderstandings of our outdoor traditions.

With that being said, what can we expect with the 2023/2024 edition of the California State Legislature? At the time of this writing – although the November 2022 California General election is two weeks behind us, and both chambers of our new State Legislature are scheduled to reconvene for organizational sessions two weeks from now – over one million votes have yet to be counted and several state races are still very much in doubt. But one thing is certainly not in doubt – the overall partisan make-up of our Legislature will remain largely the same. Democrats will maintain super-majorities in both the State Senate and Assembly that give them complete control over all legislation, as well as state budget, tax related proposals and spending.

Digging a little deeper, let us first look at the State Assembly where 54 seats are needed to hold a two-thirds super-majority, and all 80 seats were up for grabs. During the 2021/2022 State Legislative

Session, Democrats enjoyed a super-majority with 60 Assembly seats, while Republicans held only 19, and Independents held one. Although the dust is still settling on the November 8, 2022 election, the Democrat super-majority will only get more “super.” As of press time, Democrats have already secured 56 seats for the 2023/2024 Session, with Republicans only nabbing 13. Of the eleven seats still in play, seven are leaning Democrat and four Republican. By all accounts, it appears that when the California Secretary of State finally certifies the election results on December 16, 2022, Democrats will hold a whopping 63 seats to the Republicans paltry 17.

On the Senate side, twenty of the 40 seats were up for grabs, with 27 seats needed to hold a super-majority. Leading up to the November 2022 election, the Democratic Party handily held a super-majority by holding 31 of the State Senate’s 40 seats, with the Republican Party holding only nine. This November’s election did not appear to change much, other than names, as Democrats have already locked-up 31 seats, Republicans eight, with the remaining seat also leaning Republican.

So, what does all this mean? Securing an even stronger super-majority at our State Capitol, while also maintaining all statewide elected offices, will keep the Democratic Party in complete control of defining California policy for the next two years. But will it make a notable difference on policy associated with wildlife conservation, hunting and/or sporting arms?

Although the partisan balance of control of California does not appear to have changed much,

that doesn’t mean that we will not see any change at the State Capitol – for better or for worse. A total of thirty-three Senators and Assembly Members did not seek re-election due to term limits, changes in district boundaries, seeking other political opportunities, and/or other reasons.

Said differently, we will have a lot of fresh faces at our State Capitol. As noted above – although an indicator – one’s choice in party does not necessarily mandate their opinion on wildlife management, hunting or the Second Amendment. As such, it is up to us to reach out to both new and old Legislators and their staff to establish, or re-establish, working relationships and discuss topics, issues, and concerns of importance to us. We must also build upon the strong and effective partnership we have formed with our fellow conservation organizations and coordinate closely with them on taking advantage of additional opportunities to educate these decision-makers.

CA WSF must also continue to canvas every corner of the State Capitol and all other political venues to reveal and actively fight every proposal which threatens the health of California’s wildlife or our ability to hunt them. We must also work harder to provide you – our members – with the information you need to have your voice also heard to help make a difference.

Regardless of the challenges to our wildlife and outdoor traditions heritage may face in the coming year, CA WSF will do all possible to ensure policy decisions which promote healthy sheep populations on the hill, and which keep you on the mountain.



Heavy hitter! Photo from Cliff St Martin  
Dry Creek Outfitters



# California Chapter Wild Sheep Foundation

1630 Williams Hwy #151 Grants Pass, OR 97527  
650-605-4009 PH / FX  
cawssf@cawssf.org www.cawssf.org



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Primary: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of communication (check one): Phone  eMail  Fax

*Yes, I would like to volunteer to help the California Chapter with its' events and/or projects! Please contact me about volunteer opportunities! (check here)*

*Yes, I am already a member of Wild Sheep Foundation! My member number is:* \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a FNAWS (Four North American Wild Sheep)? Yes No

Do you have GSCO Slam®: 1/2 Slam 3/4 Slam Grand Slam Triple Slam Ovis World Capra World

Have you hunted Sheep? Yes No

Do you hunt with a: Rifle Bow Muzzleloader Handgun Don't Hunt:

Which sheep have you harvested? (Please list and note year) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **CA WSF Membership:**

Annual Membership (\$40) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

3-Year Membership (\$100) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Life Membership (\$500) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Distinguished Life Membership (\$1,500) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Distinguished Life Membership (\$1,000) (Life upgrade) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Youth Annual Membership (\$25) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Youth Life Membership (\$400) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### **Wild Sheep Foundation Membership:**

Annual (\$45) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

3-Year (\$120) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Family (\$80) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Life Membership Under age 59 - \$1,000 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Age 59-64 - \$750 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Age 65+ - \$500 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form to CA WSF, 1630 Williams Hwy #151, Grants Pass, OR 97527 or email to [forthesheep@gmail.com](mailto:forthesheep@gmail.com).

**Don't forget to share this form to your hunting friends and relatives!**



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

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

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## **CALIFORNIA CHAPTER WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION**

**DON'T MISS**

**the next**

**ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**

**APRIL 29, 2023**

**DOUBLETREE SACRAMENTO**

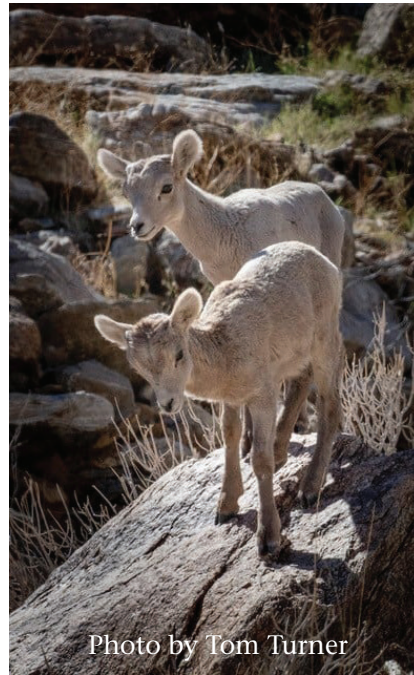
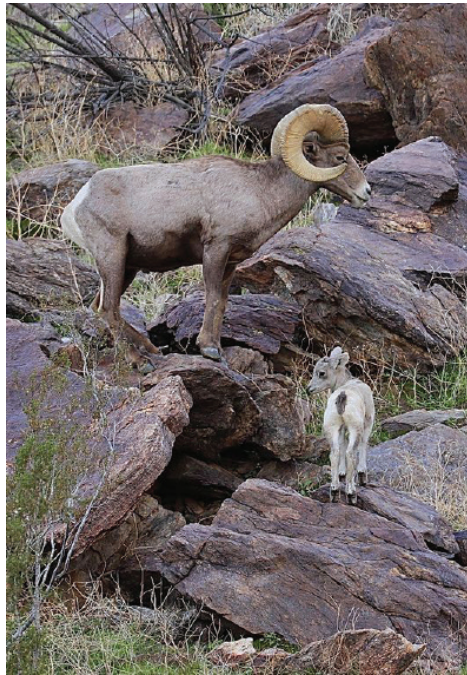




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# Give a lamb a drink

**Project to Double the Carrying Capacity for DBH in CA**  
*Expanding desert bighorn sheep habitat in California*



## **MILESTONE OF \$600K ACHIEVED!**

**The GALAD Payoff** - 90 new drinkers can enable the Desert Bighorn population to more than double. And with the added population more tags for residents and non-residents!

We received donations of \$36,750 for GALAD during our Virtual Fundraiser in April 2021. This took us to a total of \$614,500 to date!

We plan to put much of that to good use in this coming “drought” year as the CDFW plans to make it easier for EA studies to be completed.

Thanks to all donors:

Pamela Atwood

Stan Atwood

Mike Borel

John Brelsford

David Combs

Don Callahan

Iowa FNAWS

Bob Keagy

Brad Peters

Rich Pierce

Dan Smith III

Renee Snider

Bill Tittle

John Ware

And, 50% of all the **“Give Hollywood a Haircut”** donations too – Thanks to those donors too!

