



California Wild Sheep

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Jeff Doty
Marble / Clipper Mountains
Hunting with Dry Creek Outfitters
"Old Warrior"
January 2023



ULTIMA THULE LODGE

CONTACT: DONALD C. MARTIN 310-766-3921



From the Editor's Desk

2023 is marching on. The green hills I love so much have lasted longer this year than ever, but are fading now. Several state drawings are out. I hope you have a coveted sheep tag, or other premium tag, in your pocket (I don't, but remain hopeful).

This issue includes your ballot for the Director election (please, please vote!), lots of pictures from our recent 21st fundraiser, hunting stories, update on the recent Wild Sheep Summit, great game recipes, fun humor, AND MUCH MORE!

Your feedback, ideas, articles & requests are always welcome. Best way to reach me is email: mike.borel@contextnet.com. Due date for input to the 3Q23 issue is August 20. Stay fit, healthy, safe and looking forward to hunting season!



Hunters Harvest Chili Recipe from Tammy Scott

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- ½ green bell pepper, diced
- ½ red bell pepper, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 pounds ground venison (I use Italian sausage)
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 8 ounce can tomato sauce
- 1 15 ounce can diced tomatoes with roasted garlic, undrained
- 1 15 ounce can pinto beans, undrained
- 1 15 ounce can kidney beans, undrained
- 3 Tablespoons chili powder
- 1 Tablespoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon coriander
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne

PREPARE

Add the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion, bell peppers and garlic. Sauté until almost tender. Add in the ground venison and cook and crumble until brown. Add in the remaining ingredients. Stir well. Bring to a boil and reduce to simmer until it starts to thicken and flavors combine, about 30 minutes.

**AND THIS
ONE WON AN
AWARD!**



**CONGRATULATIONS TAMMY!
for winning the Chili Cook Off
to raise money for local fire fighters**

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California Wild Sheep is published quarterly.

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

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

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

Events

2023

June 15-17	Chapter and Affiliates meeting Rapid City, SD
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

2024

January 17-20	WSF Sheep Show, Reno
January 25-27	GSCO Convention, Irvine, TX Convention Center
January 31- February 3	SCI Convention, Nashville
February 20	Due date for articles for 1Q2024
April 26	Sheep Summit XXXIV Sacramento DoubleTree
April 27	CA WSF Fundraising Banquet Sacramento DoubleTree

President's Letter

It was good to see so many of you at this year's annual fundraising dinner. I really enjoyed sharing the evening with you. It turned out to be one of our best. Please be sure to read my fundraiser recap in this issue that includes some exciting announcements regarding next year's event. You won't want to miss it.

I hope many of you are having better luck in the draws than me, but at the very least I'm running 100% on bonus/preference points! By the publishing of this newsletter, I imagine the deadline for California's annual application period will have come and gone. I hope all of you took advantage of the rare opportunity to apply for one of California's precious few desert bighorn tags and I wish all of you luck in this year's draw.



For the last 4 years, I have proudly served as your President. I appreciate the opportunity to have represented you and this chapter and helped contribute to our collaborative efforts to double the number of desert bighorns here in the state of California. I'm proud of what you and your chapter has accomplished in my tenure as President.

We have completed many new drinkers and repaired many others in conjunction with our affiliate organization, The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep(SCBS). We have funded and aided in emergency water hauls and temporary drinkers in times of extreme need. We followed through with our affiliates and State and Federal agencies to lay the groundwork for many future drinker projects all across the Southern California landscape. We have fostered and maintained constructive collaborative working relationships with Cal-Fire, the United States Marine Corps, the U.S. Army and others to benefit California's wildlife. We have stood steadfast in our efforts to open new hunt units, such as the Newberry/Rodman/Ords and increase public hunting opportunity and participation. And finally, we have always stood behind the State Fish and Wildlife agency's efforts to help our threatened Sierra Nevada Bighorns recover and expand.

All of these things we have done together. And, as I step down as your President, I'm more confident than ever that the future of California's wild sheep is bright because of the hard work and dedication of all of you, our volunteers, our affiliates, and your Board of Directors. So, with this issue, please read through it carefully and be sure to vote in this year's Board of Directors election.

Thank you. It has been an honor.

Donald C. Martin

Save the date!

April 27, 2024 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Sacramento, California

FIRST LOSER

By Elgin (Bob) Bowers

I started applying for a California desert bighorn sheep permit in 1987, the first time hunting was again permitted since closing in 1887. Fast forward to June of 2022: 35 years later and again I was unsuccessful in the drawing. In July 2022, I received a letter from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The letter advised I was first alternate (AKA: FIRST LOSER) for Zone 1 the Marble / Clipper Mountains unit, if someone who drew the tag did not claim it. Knowing only 6 tags were issued, how hard they are to draw, I thought no one would not take their tag and forgot all about being an alternate.

The first week of September 2022 Regina Vu from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife telephoned me. Regina told me, someone had not taken their tag and I could have it if I wanted it. I could hardly believe what she had just told me. I told Regina yes, thanked her and took the tag.

Then reality hit me. I am 67 years old, have never hunted Desert Sheep, did not know the Marble / Clipper Mountains, and did not know any sheep guides. After one of my hunting friends heard about me getting the tag, he telephoned me. My friend told me of a sheep guide name Brooks Stiltz he had met and gave me his telephone number. I telephoned Brooks and he recommended booking with Kellogg Trophy Hunts, as he guides for them. I contacted Jonnie Kellogg owner of Kellogg Trophy Hunts and booked the hunt for January 9, 2023. Jonnie said, they had trail camera photographs of a big ram (the "One") in the unit and wanted me to harvest this ram.

On Christmas Eve 2022, I received a telephone call from Jonnie. Jonnie said one of his guides, Brooks, had spotted the big ram that day and asked if I could start my hunt early. I told him absolutely, that I would leave the next morning. I left by myself Christmas Day morning, from my home in Northern California and drove the 8.5 hours trip to Needles, California. Jonnie had rented a house for our hunt and I stayed there.

The next morning, Brooks, Hayden (another guide) and I began the hunt. We spotted a big ram with three smaller rams, but could not get within shooting distance before dark. The next day we located the



Bob Bowers with the Kellogg Trophy Hunts team

same rams again, but this time earlier in the day. We hiked in the three miles and got within shooting distance of the rams. We looked at the largest, but could not confirm it was the same ram, (the "One") as they had on the trail cameras. I decided being only day two of the hunt to pass on the ram, although it was a really big ram. We then began hiking and glassing the entire mountain range for the next few days, seeing several rams, but not the "One".

On day four or five of the hunt Jonnie Kellogg arrived, after guiding a successful Governor's Tag deer hunt. We continued to hike and glass the mountain covering many miles. We saw many rams, but not the "One".

On day nine, after hiking approximately 60 to 70 miles during the hunt, and not finding the "One" or the big ram we had passed on day two, Jonnie telephoned the rest of his guides for help. The evening of day 10, guides Mason, Jake, Hayden, Kevin, and Brooks were there.

The morning of day 11, Jonnie and I stayed together glassing and the other five guides went to different areas of the mountain looking for the "One" ram. Around 8:30 a.m., the "One" big ram was located with two smaller rams. Jonnie and I hiked in approximately 2.5 miles to the rams, but due to the terrain we had to belly crawl the last couple of hundred yards. We got to within 200 yards, but the "One" big ram was lying down at the edge of a drop

off. I wanted to wait for the ram to stand for the shot, but after watching him for about 10 minutes, the wind started to change directions and I did not want the rams to wind us. I shot the ram lying down through the point of his left shoulder. The ram stood up and the second shot put him down for good. As we approached the ram, there was no ground shrinkage, he was everything I could have dreamed of and more.

The whole guide crew hiked in the 2.5 miles to celebrate and take photographs. We then packed the

ram out to our vehicles and drove back to Needles. Jonnie and Brooks caped the head out and the horns green scored 173 3/8.

I want to thank Jonnie Kellogg (AKA Kellogg Trophy Hunts 209-352-5055) and all the guides Brooks, Mason, Hayden, Jake, and Kevin for going above and beyond in their outfitting to make this a hunt of a life time, even though I was just the "FIRST LOSER."



CARPE DIEM = SEIZE THE CARP!

by Tammy Scott, Life Member, Board Member

While fishing for walleye, I unexpectedly hooked into something big – much bigger than the walleye we had caught so far. Reeling and reeling, I could feel the weight of the fish and his fighting me along the way. As he got near the boat, we saw a flash of his white belly and knew it wasn't a walleye. I kept silently repeating in my head, "Don't lose him, don't lose him!"

Nate had the net ready and scooped up my first Common Carp.



Nate Zelinsky of Tightline Outdoors holding Tammy Scott's Common Carp in Colorado.

MY DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP HUNT

By John MacLatchie

Everyone looks forward to the third week in June to see the draw results for California big game tags. The sight of a “Y” on sheep draw results is a moment that many eagerly anticipate, but only a fortunate handful get to witness. After 25 years of chasing a sheep tag, I finally drew the White Mountains.

The first step was enlisting the help of lifelong hunting partners, Dan Demers and Mark Duarte. After a few phone calls, a scouting trip was scheduled, and upon our arrival to the White Mountains, we began to realize the harsh reality of the terrain.

Twisted and gnarled branches of the ancient Bristlecone Pines formed a surreal backdrop against the stark and rocky landscape. For big game hunting, this creates an otherworldly atmosphere that is both humbling and awe-inspiring.

Before we knew it, opening day was two days away and we began to position ourselves for the hunt. In that time, we spotted 6 rams about 4 miles in from the trailhead. Given the time of year, we knew deer archery season was at its peak, and we would have our work cut out for us due to the high traffic from other hunters. On opening day, we started our hike about two hours before sunrise and worked our way inwards towards the group of rams we had spotted earlier. After a 1700 ft climb in the rocky hills, we closed in on the group. A missed shot at the biggest ram marked the point I really began to feel the pressure of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Prior to the shot, we estimated the lead ram to be around 170. I’ll admit it, sheep fever is real.

The following 18 days were marked by the chase of this extraordinary animal. The unruly terrain and close grouping of the sheep made it difficult to get the line of sight needed to take a clean shot. To make matters worse, our 4-wheeler had broken down midway through the trip and two new hunters began to close in on the area we were hunting. With the weight of an unfilled tag on my mind, I was forced to return home.

With all that had led up to this point, I was beginning to question the reality of being able to fill this tag. By this point, there were only 4 days left in the hunt. I knew that if I wanted to make this happen, it was time to get to work. To make sure I didn’t leave



John MacLatchie with the “One” from White Mtns

empty handed, I got a hold of Josh Schulgen with Sierra Crest Outfitters in hopes of getting this lifelong dream accomplished.

We returned to the White Mountains optimistic and ready to give it a final shot. The first day back, we hunted the entire day with no sheep in sight. Saturday morning before the close came around and time was running out. We started the day with a long hike inward towards some promising country I had yet been in. As the morning sun began to illuminate the peaks and canyons, we trekked up the rugged terrain in hopes of seeing a sheep.

As we topped out, we immediately started putting the glass to work. Not long in I glassed up a group of rams several miles out. With how bad the heat waves were, Josh and I had a hard time sizing them up but we both confirmed that one was worth taking. Being the second to last day I couldn’t be too overly picky. Mark and I decided that he should hang back and keep eyes on the rams while we made our move.

Hiking over to the ram with Josh all I could think was I hope this happens. All those years of applying would be a waste and I didn’t want to be unsuccessful, especially on a desert sheep tag! The hike took us close to 6 hours and as we were getting close, we noticed the wind started to change. It was still blowing parallel but every so often it would hit our backs and we started to get nervous. We sat on a rock for a little while, just out of range, hoping the wind would change but after a while we started to notice it was not



John (L) and Josh Schulgen

going to change and if it were to get worse, we would blow our only chance. So, we decided to get aggressive and make a move.

We started slowly creeping over the hill. With each step taken, we would scan the horizon. Just as we were almost over the top Josh stopped mid-step and slowly

sat down. He said, "Get ready." I slowly took off my pack and eased up to Josh. He said, "The shooter ram is on the right and on alert." As I eased up and over it was enough for the sheep to spook and they were off! If you have never been to the Whites, it is steep reckless country. Sheep can disappear or be out of sight in a blink of an eye! As the sheep took off, Josh said "We have to move now!" Josh was a few steps ahead of me trying to locate the rams. I watched him all-in-one motion sling his pack off and drop to the ground. He said "Use this as a rest." No later than I got set up, the ram was topped out on a little knoll below us and Josh said "150 yards." That's all I needed to hear so I squeezed the trigger.

Seeing that ram pile up at 13,000 feet will be burned in my mind forever. I had a lot of emotions and after Josh and I celebrated, I called Mark to tell him the good news. I was so happy to finally say I had harvested a desert sheep. The White Mountains is an amazing place and if you don't know what you are doing, you could get yourself into a world of hurt fast. We arrived at camp just after midnight and we had hiked nearly 14 brutal miles that day. We were all extremely tired the next morning, but it was a relief knowing it was all over! I would like to thank all my friends who help me during my hunt. Without their help and friendship this hunt would have not been the same. I would also like to thank Josh Schulgen of Sierra Crest Outfitters and his crew. They are an outstanding group of guys, and I would recommend them to anyone looking to hunt sheep in the state!



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- Jarrett Deuling, Deuling Stone Outfitters

THE OLD WARRIOR

by Jeff Doty, Member

With retirement and a move to Oregon in the spring of 2022, I thought I was finished with hunting in California. I had one last chance to put in as a resident and I figured why not, even though the odds of drawing a sheep tag in California are worse than winning the lottery. In the middle of June, I decided to look at the draw results, though I had no hope of drawing a tag. It took several hours and many visits to the draw results page for it to really sink in. I drew a tag for the Marble/Clipper Mountains.

Now the panic set in - was I physically ready, did I have the right gear, I needed a guide!!

After talking to Cliff with Dry Creek Outfitters, there was no question that he was the guide I wanted to hunt with. I have been on several guided hunts previously, but from the moment we arrived at camp, we could tell this was much more than we had experienced before. My son, and hunting partner, was fortunately able to join me on the hunt. Cliff and Casey were a joy to be with in camp, a couple of real jokers, but in the field completely professional and 100% focused on getting me the best ram possible.

Day one - Rain, wind and low clouds. We spent the majority of the day glassing. We spotted a few groups of ewes and lambs, but it wasn't until the late afternoon that we located a group of five rams, which included a large tan ram, the "Old Warrior". Unfortunately, they were in and out of the clouds and it was too late to do a stalk. Back to camp for dinner, more laughs and making plans for the next day.

Day two - Cliff stayed in the valley to glass while Casey, my son and I headed up the hill, hoping to find the group of five rams. Cliff and Casey have a glassing ability that is truly amazing. They could not only spot rams at 5 to 6 miles away, but they were able to tell the size and which animal was a possible "shooter". Hunting in this terrain was one of the most strenuous hunts I have done. Steep hills and large loose boulders. My son and I watched our two guides move easily up the hill, then have to stop and wait for us to catch up. We realized that we were not in as good of shape as we had thought. We spotted several rams throughout the day, but not the one we were looking for. It was getting late in the day and there was about a 6-mile hike back to the truck, almost time to head out. At that point, Casey spotted



Jeff Doty with the Old Warrior

a ram about a mile uphill, then another and then all five, including the "Old Warrior". "Game on."

Casey looked at me and said "gun, ammo, move." He told my son to stay. I think it was very hard for him to be watching the hunt unfold from a distance and not be able to help. From his location, he could see the rams and us, but couldn't understand why I did not take the shot. Cliff was feeling the same. From his location, about 6 miles away in the Mojave Desert, I appeared to have a shot. Unfortunately, Casey and I could not see the rams. For almost an hour, the rams were only about 150 yards away on the other side of a small hill. When we decided to take a look over the hill, they were on us. At that point, the adrenaline definitely kicked in. As they headed up the hill, Casey very calmly said "take the shot".

"Which one?" "The 2rd one". "From the front or the back". At this point, we were both getting amped up as we watched the rams quickly moving out of range. It wasn't until Casey told me the "tan one," that was when I got my focus back, and at 330 yards had my ram down. A few pictures just before dark, prepped the ram for a night on the hill and we headed back to camp. We had a celebration drink, a great dinner and a good night's sleep. The next morning back up the hill for many pictures, skinning and packing my ram back to camp.

This was not only a great hunt, but also

an incredible adventure. As we headed back to Oregon, on our 14-hour drive, my son and I talked continuously recounting all the highlights of the trip. This hunt would not have been the same if he had not been able to share it with me! In addition to an amazing hunt, my son and I learned some new hunting techniques that we are excited to use in future hunts.

I am extremely grateful for the skill and professionalism of our guides. Cliff made sure that every aspect of the trip was as good as it possibly could be. The camp, the home cooked meals, weeks of pre-scouting and careful planning and posing for great pictures. This is an incredible memory for my son and me.



THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 HUNTS / TRIPS DONORS!

You have donated generously! Our thanks and sincere appreciation for helping us in our goal of
PUTTING AND KEEPING WILD SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAINS.

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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.

2023 ANNUAL FUNDRAISER & ANNUAL BANQUET

WOW — WHAT A NIGHT!

by Donald C Martin

WHAT A GREAT EVENT! I want to thank everyone that turned out for our event on April 29th. It was one of our biggest and most successful events ever and all of that is thanks to you and your hard-working Board of Directors!

Attendance was at a near record high with about 270 people in attendance and we hope to grow our event to 300 by next year. Please help us help sheep and tell your friends to make plans to attend next year with you. I'll give you a sneak peak at next year's event at the end of this article and you won't want to miss it!

Thanks to your dedication and generosity, we were able to raise nearly \$155,000 for California's desert bighorns and wildlife. Nearly \$39,000 of those funds go directly to "Give a Lamb a Drink" (GALAD) for water projects for wildlife and \$25,000 in funds were raised for the life member long-term account to safeguard the future of CA WSF and provide additional benefits and hunting opportunities for our chapter's Youth Life, Life, and Distinguished Life Members. That leaves over \$90,000 for additional water projects, habitat enhancement, legislative efforts and conservation efforts such as supporting the recovery and protection of our threatened Sierra Nevada Bighorns.

All of this is thanks to you! Our members are what make the CA WSF annual fundraising dinner the best wildlife conservation party in California. And I want to personally thank our entire Board of Directors, Beverly Valdez, John Ware, Our WSF Youth Coordinator Dr. Ryan Brock, and our all-star lineup

that included: Craig Boddington, Auctioneer John Bair, Mandi Costa and Mandi's Models, Scott Jensen of Jensen/Hall Creative and Onlinehuntingauctions.com. Thank you to all who helped make this event possible.

We had a tremendous youth turnout and I'm proud to say that we had the most youth ever in attendance. We are already planning for additional youth opportunities and prizes for next year so please keep your kids involved with CA Wild Sheep Foundation!!!

It's never too early to start planning for next year. Our event is scheduled for April 27, 2024 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Sacramento and hopefully the remodel of the hotel will finally be over so that we can all stay at the host location next year.

We are proud to announce that our 2024 grand prize winner will be headed to **British Columbia on a 14 day 1x1 STONE SHEEP HUNT with Sikanni River Outfitters**. Hunt dates are Aug 1-14, 2025 Tickets are already on sale at: cawsf.org/store.html and there will only be 600 tickets sold. Tickets will be \$100 each and 100 tickets will be reserved for sale the night of the event. There will be a 25 ticket maximum purchase limit per person. This hunt is transferable only to individuals within the winner's first-degree of kinship.

In addition, we are even more proud to announce that our 2024 Life member random drawing will be for a **10 day 1x1 Dall Sheep hunt in the Northwest Territories with Harold Grinde's Gana River Outfitters**. There will be some necessary modifications to the life member drawing next year to help mitigate the high costs of these sheep hunting opportunities and I will outline those changes in a separate article in our next newsletter. Nevertheless, this will be your best odds ever to draw a sheep hunt anywhere in North America so stay tuned for additional information and make plans to attend our event next year!

If you have any suggestions or feedback on the event, please reach out to me at: don-martin@earthlink.net I am especially interested in what items or hunts you would like to see in our general raffle and our live auction. Please reach out to me with your suggestions so that our fundraising dinner committee can start looking for those items and hunts right now! Again, email me at: don-martin@earthlink.net

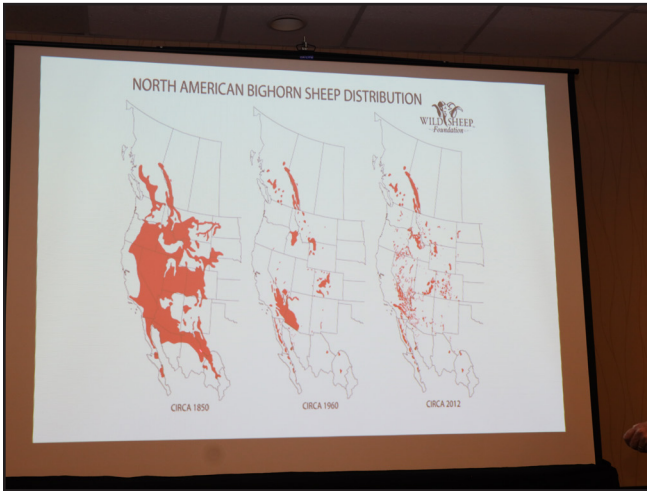
Thank you for your continued dedication and support and I look forward to seeing you again next year.



Craig Boddington discusses
The Future of Mountain Hunting

FUNDRAISER FUN

All photos courtesy of Pamela Keagy



Showing us the extent of bighorn sheep population decline in North America



Craig Boddington answered many questions about all kinds of hunting



Craig Boddington with President Donald C Martin



The kids are always the cutest



All right, who's ready to win tonight? Especially the kids get excited about winning something!



An original herd! They were at the very start of CA Wild Sheep Foundation!
Missing: Mike Borel - busy on stage!



Don Martin - just getting warmed up for the evening!



Winners all!



This is a party for all ages -- and we love seeing the future of hunting show up!



Ok, we had to check his ID -- yep, he's under 16!



Oldest Ram Award was a 12 year old ram taken by Mike Dixon. Cliff St Martin of Dry Creek Outfitters accepted for Mike.



Largest Ram Award was a 173 5/8" ram taken by Gary R. Schenone hunting with Jonnie Kellogg of Troiphy Hunts



The Above and Beyond Award was given to John Brelsford in recognition of his leadership and generosity in matching funds for more than 10 years in support of GALAD. The award was received by Jeff Perachi for John.



Speaking of GALAD — Mike Borel let us know that we have raised more than \$750M for GALAD and have installed 16 new drinkers along with repairs of older systems. This year we added another \$37,100.



Winning and bidding — it's all part of the fun!



Board member Tammy Scott knows how to read the room!



Family Friendly! Three generations of hunters!



The winner of the night was Paul Schulthesis -- he's going to Rancho La Guarida for a desert sheep hunt!

CALIFORNIA WILD SHEEP SUMMIT XXXII (32)

APRIL 28, 2023 “IN PERSON AND VIRTUAL”

By Mike J. Borel, Distinguished Life Member, Board Member

CA WSF hosted Sheep Summit XXXII as a combined “in person” and “virtual” event. The purpose of these summits is “to accomplish more collectively for Bighorn sheep in CA through sharing and collaboration, than the sum of what each organization can accomplish individually.” Following is a summary of Summit XXXII (yes, 32!).

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: CDFW, USFS, USBLM, USNPS, CAWSE, SCBS, Twentynine Palms Marine Base, China Lake Naval Base, Fort Irwin base, WSF, CA mining interests, key independents, and others). 44 persons participated (22 virtual).

Information reviewed:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Welcome, Review Meeting Purpose & Agenda, Introduction of new persons | Mike Borel |
| 2. CDFW Statewide Update, including Personnel additions and changes, Budget and budget outlook, BGMA Grant Plans, Helicopter contracts, etc. | Chad Dibble and Scott Gardner |
| 3. US BLM - Update on the Big Picture, and the Programmatic EA | Jeremiah Karuzas |
| 4. CDFW Status of the Comprehensive Sheep Plan & Unit Plans | Jeff Villepique and Regina Vu |
| 5. CDFW Desert Bighorn Sheep Update from Region 6 | Danielle Glass |
| 6. Update on Brightline and Overpasses for Mitigation with Cal Trans and other State Issues Impacting DBH | Scott Gibson and Don Priest |
| 7. Observations on Bighorn Sheep and Minerals | Carlos Gallinger |
| 8. State Lands Leases Progress, SCBS Guzzler (BGG) Repairs and New Drinkers (RWWS) Update | Steve Marschke |
| 9. GALAD (Give a Lamb a Drink) progress, funding | Mike Borel |
| 10. Sierra Nevada Bighorn Update | Lacey Greene |
| 11. Report on Recent Activities that are of value and interest for CA wild sheep -- e.g. WAFWA, Wild Sheep & Goat Council, Desert Bighorn Council, Boone & Crockett Club, WHBAB, etc. | Vern Bleich |

Our previously committed COLLECTIVE VISION FOR WILD SHEEP IN CALIFORNIA:

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

Summit XXXIII is scheduled for December 8, 2023. Its format is not yet finalized.

WYOMING BIGHORN HUNT

By Tammy Scott, Life Member, Board Member

While deciding where to put in for the Wyoming Rocky Mountain Bighorn draw, I decided to run the numbers. It was my 20th year entering the draw and I had 19 non-resident preference points. As the big game draw worked in 2021, hunters would need a minimum of 22 preference points to draw the unit that I was looking at – Hunt Area 5. With the amount of people that had more preference points than I did, it meant that it would be many years before I would draw a bighorn tag in the preference point drawing. .

From the 2021 Wyoming Game and Fish website: *For those unfamiliar with Wyoming's Big Game Drawing: In the draw, 75 percent of available licenses in each hunt area and license type will be allocated to the preference point drawing. In Wyoming, preference points rank applicants' pools. The remaining 25 percent of available licenses will be allocated in a random drawing, regardless of preference points. The random drawing is intended to provide everyone who applies a chance of drawing a license, regardless of their preference point total.*

I spoke with Josh Martoglio of Shoshone Lodge Outfitters, about me entering the non-resident random draw. We agreed that it was my best chance at drawing a tag.

Months went by and finally the draw results were ready. Going online to check, your heart beats a little faster and you hope that you were drawn. When you see “successful” you don’t believe it. You look at the screen, look away, and look back. It still shows “successful”! Woohoo! Now your heart is really beating fast. There were 14 hunt areas, with a total of 6 random tags available (some hunt areas didn’t have random tags available) for the 3120 people that applied. For Hunt Area 5 there were 2 tags in the random draw and 1370 people applied for those tags. I was one of the lucky 2 to have drawn a coveted random tag for Hunt Area 5 Rocky Mountain Bighorn tag.

My first phone call was to Josh. I very excitedly told him that I had drawn a tag and that I was sending him my deposit check!

In some ways the next few months flew by and in other ways they seemed to drag on. Because I live only 9 hours away from Cody (near the hunt area) and I would be driving, Josh and I decided that I would be



on a “on-call basis”. I had all my gear packed before the beginning of the season and was waiting for THE call. When it came, I couldn’t stop smiling.

The drive to Cody went smoothly (including getting pulled over by the highway patrol!). I checked into my hotel, had some dinner, enjoyed relaxing in the hot tub and went to sleep. The next morning, I met Josh, and again, I couldn’t stop smiling. He checked my tag and signed the back of it, then off to the trailhead.

A couple of hours later we made it to the trailhead. Josh and one of his guides got the mules ready while I brought my gear over to the staging area (and stayed out of the way).

After a 4 ½ hour mule ride, we made it to camp, where I met my other two guides, Tyler and Paul. They had already spotted sheep and were wondering if I wanted to go after them. Since I was sore from the mule ride and knowing that I couldn’t give the hunt my best, I decided that it was best to wait and go after the sheep in the morning. So, we had a relaxing afternoon, dinner and early bedtime.

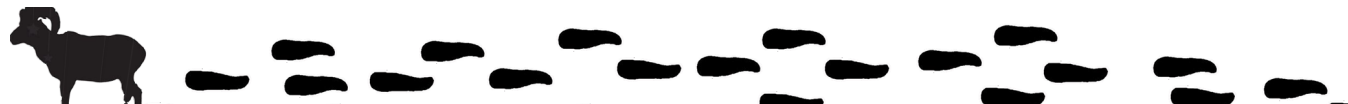
Josh and team spotted a nice bighorn across the canyon but knew it was in a difficult area to get to (too me it looked like sheer cliff!). But Tyler and Paul had seen sheep in a different area and we headed that way, down a trail, across the river and up, up, up the steep mountainside. We stopped at a flat spot, got off the mules and looked at the two sheep across the canyon. The sheep had no idea that we were there! The guides were talking while I was glassing the sheep. Josh asked what I thought about the rams. I told them that they weren't what I was looking for. After 20 years of applying, I really wanted a "typical looking Wyoming Bighorn", heavy and broomed. Josh was glad that I knew what I wanted and said that the guys had spotted my desire further up the mountain the day before. We got back on the mules and headed higher up the mountain and deeper into the trees.

Unbeknownst to us at the time, as Josh was in the lead and going around a bend, a bear appeared on the trail. Luckily the bear didn't like the looks of us and took off.

A little further up the trail we got off the mules, tied them up and gathered our gear. We then headed up the steep mountain on foot through very thick

downed trees and underbrush. The guides were looking up and glassing as we went. Tyler and Paul knew where the sheep would be. At one point, Josh put his backpack down, looked at me and said "Do you want to see your ram?" I used my binocs to get a look and the sheep was beautiful, and asleep! Since the ram had "the look" that I wanted, we proceeded to get settled in and set up the rifle. Even though we were all ready, rifle laying over a backpack, me behind the rifle, waiting for the ram to get up, I kept sliding down the steep terrain. I would scoot back up to where I needed to be and wait a little longer. Then we saw the ram starting to move – he was waking up, and then he stood up. We were ready, the crosshairs were right behind his shoulder and I slowly squeezed the trigger. At the sound of the shot the ram flinched and went out of my sight but Josh was still able to see him and within seconds the ram went down and then started tumbling down the mountainside towards us!

I was so excited to get my hands on this beautiful ram, two decades in the making. Heavy broomed horns and a roman nose never looked so good as they did in my hands.



CA WSF COMMITTEE CHAIRS – EARLY JULY IS THE BEST TIME TO SHOW YOUR INTEREST

By Mike J. Borel

Each year, in July, the President of CA WSF appoints the Chair for each standing committee:

Membership	Fundraiser
Newsletter	Government and CDFW Affairs
GALAD and Water projects	Projects beyond Water

The Chairs of each committee then request members The resulting committees continue for 1 year, and often are renewed.

In 2023, because we have a 2 term limit (2 years/term) on the President role, we will be electing a new President of CA WSF. The first order of business for the new President will be appointing the chairs of the committees.

We are a volunteer organization. Letting the CAWSF leaders know your interests and capabilities will help assure you are involved where you can help the most.

COLTY THE BILLY GOAT

By Dan O'Connell, Member

In early spring 2022, I was starting to get a little bummed out about my fall hunting prospects after being unsuccessful on a few out of state draws, and finding out there wasn't any room for me on another land owner hunt I thought I might get to go on. That all changed in June when I got an email from Ca. Fish & Wildlife saying I was successful on a Cady Mountain bighorn sheep hunt! What?!?! I only had 10 points! After checking it over and over the next couple days the reality of drawing a once-in-a-lifetime tag finally started to sink in. Unbelievable!

Shortly thereafter I started getting calls from outfitters and felt like the belle of the ball with everyone vying to take me on this hunt. Although this was such a hard tag to get, I happened to know 3 different people that had done it. Each of them used a different outfitter and they were all telling how wonderful their experiences were. After a lot of deliberation, I chose to go with Cliff St. Martin with Dry Creek Outfitters and go right after New Year's so I could take my 10-year-old son Colton while he was on Christmas break.

Then we got to work. I think I only missed 6 days of working out between June and November and had my gear all packed up by September! The closer we got the more nervous I became, running all the worst-case scenarios of taking a 10-year-old on a rugged sheep hunt. Would he be able to make it up some of the hills we would need to scale? Would I be unsuccessful by not being able to get where we needed to be? But the prospects of experiencing this amazing opportunity with my son was well worth the risk. We were both so excited and the anticipation we got to experience leading up to January was unlike anything I've experienced in adult life with the exception of the births of my children. Then the next challenge was finding a gun with non-lead bullets that I could get shooting consistently. I have a nail puncher out-of-state lead gun but all my California deer hunting is on our farm or thick forests in Plumas County where shots are never more than a couple hundred yards. I started working with four different rifles and about seven different factory loads and could not seem to get very consistent groups with any of them. Finally, after my friend Barry Morrell made me some custom hand loads, I had my set up. I can't thank Barry, Sherman Dunlap, Mark Haywood and Alex Garlock at Kittles for helping me get my gun dialed in enough.



Daniel O'Connell and Cady Mtn bighorn

After a wonderful Christmas season with our family and a few goose and duck hunts the day was almost upon us. Two days before we were to leave, I got a call from Cliff asking if we could postpone the hunt due to the wind blowing 60mph. I told him I really didn't want to as I wanted to go when Colty was on Christmas break. After hanging up I down loaded every weather app I could find and saw that we had a short break in the wind two days later. I called Cliff back and said how about I come a day early as it looked like the wind would subside for a couple days and he agreed. So, we quickly packed up the truck and hit the road. We finally arrived in the beautiful Mojave Desert and got unpacked under a gorgeous sunset. After a quick dinner and meeting one of our guides Casey Nick (Lost Valley Outfitters), we tucked into the tent for a sleepless night of anticipation. After watching the minutes tick off the clock all night, the moment had finally arrived! We were waking up to a California bighorn sheep hunt!!!

That morning we headed up to a place called the Graveyard to witness a majestic sunrise reflecting off of the multi-colored cliffs and were able to spot three smaller rams which really got us excited. It was amazing how well they blended in with the rocky bluffs. After a few more glassing sessions we decided to head to the other side of the unit. After an hour-long drive, we got to a high vantage point where we could glass the entire mountain range. After a couple



Daniel O'Connell and Colty with the bighorn

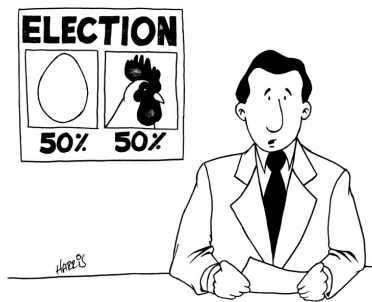
hours, eagle-eye Cliff spotted a group of mature rams eight miles away on what Colty named Boob Mountain. How he found them I'll never know. We then headed back to camp for another sleepless night.

The next morning our other guide, Clay, joined us and we headed out to two different locations to see if we could find the rams. As we ascended the first rocky mountain, I thought to myself, here we go, let's see how my little buddy does with this hike. I was quickly relieved to see he not only wasn't struggling with it but we were slowing him down! A couple hours later Casey spotted a group of three rams across the valley below some very steep rim rocks. We packed up and headed out. After a mile or so, we got to the base of the mountain and boy this one was straight up. Again, my concerns were quickly subdued as Colty methodically picked his way up the rocks without hardly taking a break. When we finally got to the top, Casey peeked over the edge and the sheep had gone through a hidden valley and over the next ridge. Casey decided it was too risky to go straight at them so we backed out and went back down the hill, got in the side by side, picked up Cliff and Clay and headed 30 miles all the way around the mountain range to try to find them on the other side. We crept around a little nob and found a spot to glass the hill side. After

30 minutes or so, we were able to pick up the group of three rams. Some of the group stayed back to keep an eye on them and then we started sneaking through some drainages until we could cross the valley and get behind a mountain to hide our ascent. We went up and down a number of steep canyons and finally crept up a rocky cliff we thought would put us in a good spot to see them. When we got there, it was a little farther than I was comfortable shooting from so we went back down the hill and up another mountain to get a little closer. As we slowly inched over the top our quarry presented themselves looking regal in the very top of a rocky out cropping. As I got the gun set up on a rock, they laid down and were staring right at us but rocks were covering everything but their horns. For the next hour or so, I didn't realize how slow time could become as I stared continuously through the scope at these incredible animals just waiting for them to stand up. Finally, it happened!

As they stood up, I thought I had a rock-solid shot but after pulling the trigger Casey thought I had missed. Then the bigger ram was partially covered and I tried to thread the needle with a second shot and they disappeared behind the rocks. Luckily Cliff and Clay could see them and said that he was hit but still standing. Finally, one of them popped up out of the blind spot but the one I was shooting at stayed behind the rocks so we scrambled to a different knob and I was able to get one into his heart and finally close the deal. The mix of emotion, elation and relief were overwhelming as Cliff called and said "welcome to the more than one club!" After a few quick pictures, we field dressed, tagged, covered him with a jacket and headed down the cliffs in the moonlight. The next morning, we hiked back up the hill to cape, quarter and haul him off the mountain. Just like before, Colty the Billy goat was leading the charge and didn't let anyone get in front of him, even jogging at times if it looked like we might over take him.

I am so grateful to have been able to have this experience with my son and want to thank God, my family, Cliff, Casey, Clay, Barry, Sherman, Marc and Alex and Colty for making this dream a reality!



"This race is simply too close to call."



CA WSF DIRECTOR CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHIES FOR THE 2023 ELECTION SLATE

Listing is Alphabetical by Last Name



VINCE BLOOM — Galt, CA

Conservation has been in my life from an early age. Growing up I lived on the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge, my Dad was the refuge manager. I helped him band ducks and spent countless hours in the field.

Being raised in that environment was life changing. Hunting has always been in my life and makes me feel grounded. Hunting is family.

I have been on 3 sheep hunts, and have taken a Dall sheep in the Wrangles AK. I have a BC Stone sheep hunt booked for this September.

I met my wife at a Sacramento Safari Club Banquet and my entire family supports hunting and conservation. I am a member of many organizations: Life Member of WSF, RMEF, GSCO, SCI, Arizona Antelope Foundation, Arizona Wildlife Federation, Idaho WSF, Montana WSF, Wyoming WSF, Oregon WSF, Eastern WSF.

Doubling the number of desert bighorn sheep in California is a worthy ideal I'd like to be a part of! Thank you for your consideration.

MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member



MATTHEW BURKE — San Jose, CA

Matthew (Matt) Burke was born and raised in Southern California. His educational experience includes a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Business Management from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, as well as a Masters of Business Administration from Santa Clara University. Matt retired in 2021 following a 25-year career with Wells Fargo where he managed credit portfolios comprised of businesses ranging from family-owned farming enterprises to fortune 500 corporations.

In his capacity as a California WSF board member/current Secretary, Matt has been active in the chapter's administration and fundraising activities. He was Auction Chair for the 2006 banquet and Raffle Chair for the 2007 banquet. A passionate bowhunter, Matt has hunted a number of western states and Canadian provinces, and Alaska. Matt has a great interest in wildlife conservation and the defense of the rights of hunters, evidenced by his life membership of the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation, the Wild Sheep Foundation, the Rocky

Mountain Elk Foundation, and the National Rifle Association (NRA).

MEMBERSHIP – Life Member



KEN CROTHER — Yuba City, CA

I am one of the few that have had the opportunity in California to reap the benefits of CA WSF's hard work and determination to keep these sheep on the mountain as well as fight for our rights to pursue them. In 2008 I was fortunate enough to draw a coveted tag in our state and began a turn in my hunting life. I am interested in continuing on the Board so that I can give back and help do the same for others, including my children. After attending college in San Luis Obispo at California Polytechnic I moved back to Yuba City to begin my family and work career.

Waterfowl was my love growing up and upon returning from college I began hunting large game in the Western States. The sheep tag I drew was a bonus that was never planned on and then I drew a tag the following year in Idaho for a Rocky Mountain Bighorn. After drawing the tags, I began meeting people in many different ways that all seem to start to tie together with the sheep community.

I have been on the Board for the last 10 years and currently hold the position of Northern California Vice President. I am involved with the Legislative Affairs Committee where I attend

various Fish and Wildlife meetings and got involved in the Hunting Conservation Coalition as well. My current goals on this board is to increase involvement in our state through growing our membership, continue to stay involved with fish and wildlife to hold them accountable for their responsibilities for the benefit of our wild sheep in California.

There is a lot to work still to do in our state to not only preserve but continue to help grow the population of the species but also to protect our rights as hunters and conservationists.

MEMBERSHIP – Life Member



TONY GIGLIOTTI — Davis, CA

Tony has worked in land rights, environmental permitting, and is currently a project manager for hydroelectric facilities ensuring projects have beneficial use for a variety of environmental and recreation stakeholders. Tony is a life member with California Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF), Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF), Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, National Rifle Association, California Rifle and Pistol Association, Muley Fanatic Foundation, and California Waterfowl Association.

Tony grew up hunting waterfowl alongside his father and grandfather who each instilled a love of the outdoors, and appreciation for wildlife in him at an early age. With many fond memories of enjoying, not just the hunt, but also the time spent outdoors with friends and family, he would like to volunteer to be a CA WSF board member. As a strong proponent of wildlife conservation, he recognizes the importance of the CA WSF organization in supporting the

success of the sheep population in California. He looks forward to serving on the board and ensuring opportunities for the next generation of outdoorsmen and hunters.

MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member



BOB KEAGY — Lafayette, CA

Bob, aged 78, is completing his sixth term as CA WSF Director. He is still an avid hunter, recently earning both the SCI World Hunting Award Ring together with the GSC/OvisTriple Slam/“Super Twenty” in Capra. Bob was both surprised and honored at our 2022 Fundraiser to receive our Chapter’s “Above and Beyond Award” for his efforts.

Bob actually grew up in a non-hunting family, but was a great reader of the works of Roy Chapman Andrews, James Corbett, Elgin Gates and Jack O’Connor. His love for the writings of Jack O’Connor led him to his first sheep hunt in British Columbia in 1979, a second Stone ram in 1981, followed by Dall, Nepalese Blue, four of the wonderful Asian Argali, and others, ultimately totalling 15 free-range wild sheep. Bob’s love of mountain hunting extends to a wide variety of mountain game. In addition to sheep, he has also collected ibex, chamois and the rare Golden Takin.

Bob is very dedicated to the hunting cause, is an active member of several SCI national committees, Vice-President of his SCI local Chapter, and immediate past President of the Mzuri Safari Club of San Francisco, as well as a Chadwick Ram Society Member. He is an active supporter of GALAD, and would like to continue to assist in California Wild Sheep’s many great efforts.

MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member



DONALD C. MARTIN — Elk Grove, CA

Originally from Madera and a graduate of Humboldt State University, Don has been a Guide/ Outfitter in Alaska for over 27 years. He is currently the Director of Hunting Operations for Ultima Thule Outfitters and is a Guide/Outfitter in California for Tule Elk. In the off-season, Don is a bass fishing guide on the CA Delta, and resides in Elk Grove with his wife, Katie.

Having guided over 330 successful hunts for 13 different species of North American big game, Don recognizes the need for sound science-based wildlife management and is dedicated to “putting and keeping sheep on the mountain.” He has participated in drinker builds in Southern CA and is dedicated to supporting CA WSF’s “GALAD” program to provide the water necessary to double the number of desert bighorns in CA and fulfill our original goal to expand public hunting opportunity in our original “Drive to 35” public hunting permits campaign.

Don has been on the Board of Directors for over 14 years. He has served as the President of CA WSF 2020-2023; Vice President, both as Southern and Northern CA VP, for an additional 6 years; and the Fundraising Co-Chair since 2017. Don has hosted the annual fundraiser for CA WSF since 2017. In addition, He has hosted or been the keynote speaker at events for WSF, and its Chapters or Affiliates nationwide and in Canada. He was awarded the CA WSF “Above and Beyond Award” in 2015 and the Wild Sheep Foundation’s “G.C.F. Dalziel Outstanding Guide Award” in 2018. Don is a Summit Life Member of WSF, a Chadwick Society Member, and a life member of 10 WSF Chapters & Affiliates. He also maintains memberships in the NRA, SCI, GSC/OVIS, and the P&Y Club.

Donald C. Martin is standing for reelection to the Board and would appreciate your vote to continue his conservation efforts.

MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member



John Oldenkamp — Bakersfield, CA

I was born and raised in the Chino, CA area. I moved to Bakersfield, CA in 2005 following my father's business expansion into the Central Valley. He started a trucking company picking up raw milk from the dairies in Southern California and then in Kern and Tulare counties. My brother and I now own and operate these logistic companies after my father's passing in 2014. I give credit to him for sparking the flame that will burn a lifetime.

At an early age, my first hobby was hunting birds and small game on my grandfather's dairy farm, but after my first big game hunting trip at the age of 10 with my father Butch, it turned into my PASSION. Now, if you ask my wife if western big game hunting is my passion, she will reply "yes" but she will then tell you, that wild sheep are my obsession! Coming from a non-hunting family, she's been a great sport and supports me in all my hunting journeys. She even lets me drag her to the annual sheep week in Reno! So, I thank her for the love and support in pursuing this passion.

Memberships: WSF Summit Life Member, CA WSF Distinguished Life Member, Idaho WSF Life Member, RMEF Life Member. John invites your call (951) 453-0646 or email john@oldenkamptrucking.com for any questions.

MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member



GLEN PYNE — Yorba Linda, CA

Glen Pyne was born and raised in Southern California. He received his BS in Animal Science from Cal Poly, Pomona and his DVM degree from Ross University. Although primarily a small animal surgeon today, Glen began his career as a mixed animal practitioner in Ohio and currently donates his services to the Fullerton High School Districts FFA program.

Glen is active in Rotary Club International as a former Vocational Chairperson and Paul Farris Fellow. An avid hunter, Glen has hunted most of the western states as well as Canada, Europe, and Africa. Glen has been a supporter of CA WSF and the Wild Sheep Foundation for many years, in particular helping support and grow the youth programs, and hopes to continue his conservation efforts in his third term as a member of the CA WSF Board of Directors.

MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member



Matt St. Martin — Three Rivers, CA.

Hunter, Fisherman, Conservationist.

I was born and raised in the foothills of California at the base of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, where I have been employed for 16 years. My current position in the park is project lead for historic buildings preservation in the front country and the backcountry.

I am a fourth-generation hunter, outdoorsman, and the owner of Dry Creek Outfitters, permitted and operating in California and Arizona. I spend every chance I get hunting, glassing and guiding bighorn sheep hunts along with deer, elk, and antelope hunts in the Western States. Sheep hunting has always been my passion and with my 25 years of experience guiding sheep hunts in the California desert, it gives me firsthand knowledge of the challenge that desert sheep face today.

I would like the opportunity to be considered as a director and to work with CA WSF and Ca Fish & Wildlife to improve our resources for sportsmen in California.

MEMBERSHIP – Life Member



Mike Torres — Redding, CA

I am a retired Division Chief with Cal Fire and spent my 35 year career in Fire Control and Law Enforcement statewide. I have been with the California Deer Association (CDA) for 25 years and have served on the Statewide Project Committee, additionally I am the Coordinator for hunts, firearms, and projects for the Redding CDA Chapter. The Redding CDA Chapter is the largest and most successful CDA Chapter in California and we focus on Youth Outdoor Opportunities as a local Chapter Project.

I have been fortunate to have hunted extensively in the Western United States, Africa, Mexico, Alaska, and the Canadian Provinces. To date I have taken 9 rams in North America and look forward to more adventures in search of big rams. As we all know, Mountain Sheep live in the most spectacular county on earth and I cherish every moment spent with them. I am committed to doing everything possible to help these fantastic animals and the mountains they call home.

In addition to belonging to the National Rifle Association, Safari Club International, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, I am a lifetime member of the California Deer Association, the Wild Sheep

Foundation, and the California Chapter of the WSF. I would like to apply my career experience and background in conservation and hunting to benefit our wild sheep.

MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member

CA WSF 2023-2024 DIRECTORS BALLOT

The California Wild Sheep Foundation Nominating Committee is pleased to present ten candidates for Board of Director positions. These positions are for two-year terms beginning July 1, 2023. We believe the candidate biographies on the prior pages will provide you with the input needed to vote; however, should you have additional questions feel free to contact me. You may also contact Beverly at the office (forthesheep@gmail.com or 650-409-6005 phone) and she will forward information.

Don Priest
Nominating Committee Chair 2023
donpriest@primanagers.com

Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountains

VOTING FORM

This is the voting form in the newsletter (you may also receive this via email; please vote only by email or by using this form). You may vote for a total of eight candidates, including write-in votes.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR VOTE

Your ballot must be received no later than 5 p.m. on June 30, 2023.
You may mail your ballot to the CA WSF office at:

CA WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION
1620 Williams Hwy #151
Grants Pass, OR 97527

You may also fax to 650-409-6005. Or reply to the email sent to you to place your vote.

Remember: Vote no more than ONCE for each candidate (no cumulative voting). Vote for up to EIGHT candidates. Vote must be received no later than 5 p.m. on June 30, 2023.

CANDIDATES (Listed randomly)

_____ Donald C. Martin
_____ John Oldenkamp
_____ Mike Torres
_____ Glen Pyne
_____ Matt Burke
_____ Matt St Martin
_____ Vince Bloom
_____ Bob Keagy
_____ Tony Gigliotti
_____ Ken Crother

_____ Your Write-in Candidate

Your Name: _____ optional

Email or Phone: _____ required

CA FNAWS dba Ca Wild Sheep Foundation is a not-for-profit organization with the goal of KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN through conservation, education, and promotion of professional management to ensure generations to come are able to experience the phenomenal beauty of wild sheep. CAWSF tax identification number is 68-0481140.

2025 STONE SHEEP HUNT Special Drawing



ONLY 600 TICKETS AVAILABLE

\$100 PER TICKET



Name

Address

City State Post Code

Day Phone

Email

Payment Methods

Check

Make check payable to:

CA Wild Sheep Foundation

MasterCard

Visa

Credit Card Number

Expire Date

CCV Code

Billing Postal Code

Signature

Sikanni River Outfitters

Hunt Information

14 day 1x1 hunt with Sikanni River
Outfitters

Dates: August 1 - August 14, 2025

Location: Sikanni River Valley, BC,
Canada

Get Tickets by Mail, Fax, or ON LINE

Mail order form to:

CA WSF

1630 Williams Hwy 151

Grants Pass, OR 97527

FAX order form to:

650-409-6005

ONLINE ORDERS:
www.cawsf.org/store

Orders must be received by April 6, 2024. Drawing held April 27, 2024.

Do not need to be present to win.

RECOGNIZING OUR PARTNERS AT USMC

By Scott Gibson, Distinguished Life Member, Board Member

Through many years we have had a strong partnership with the USMC, in particular the helicopter support they have provided in bringing equipment in when it could have been impossible in other way and to bring water in for new wildlife water systems and emergency filling of any systems monitored by our sister organization, the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS).

Recently our Board of Directors of CA WSF, along with SCBS, CA DFW, and other conservation organizations, planned to commemorate this extraordinary support with a Recognition of Service award to several of the service members who have been so instrumental in helping to plan and approve these activities. I was proud to be able to make the CA WSF presentations at the USMC base.

Without partners such as these we would not be able to provide the life-giving water necessary for all wildlife and bighorn sheep in particular.



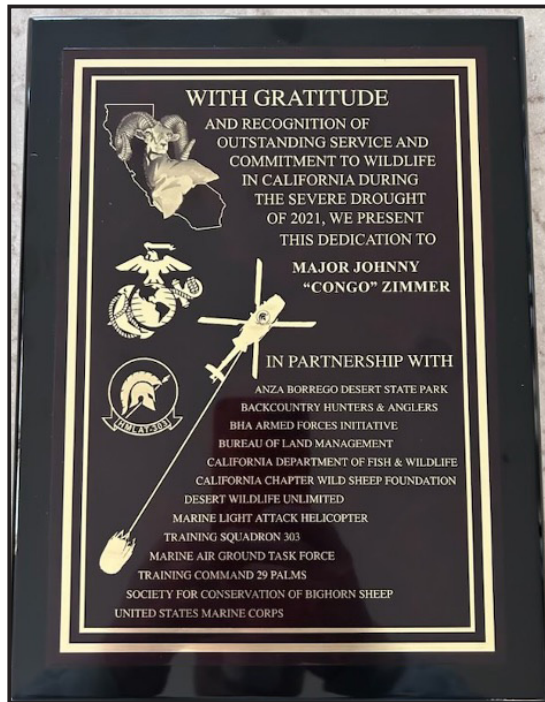
"Atlas on parade" with the USMC Squadron HMLAT-303 at Camp Pendleton looking on



USMC Pilot, Captain Nicole "Alley Cat" Castro, checking out "Atlas"

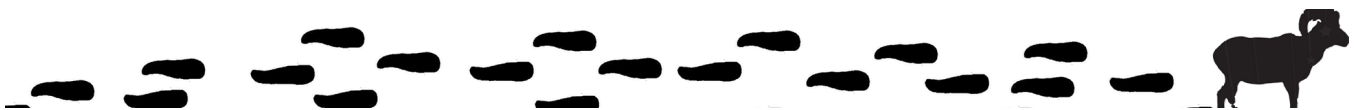


Presenting "Atlas" to Major Johnny "Congo" Zimmer



ABOVE LEFT: Plaque presented to Major Johnny "Congo" Zimmer

ABOVE RIGHT: Capt. "Alley Cat" Castro, pilots her UH-1Y helicopter, delivers a new water tank to the Pinyon Wash bighorn sheep guzzler in Anza-Borrego



This young ram is at one of the Society for the Conservation for bighorn Sheep (SCBS) water projects built with funding from CA WSF. This is a relatively new design known as the Raincatcher Wildlife Water System (RWWS). It is usually installed in pairs with large water catchment mats. SCBS with help from CA WSF and others has installed many these throughout Southern California and other organizations have purchased them from SCBS to install them throughout the south western United States.

thewayofthings.org



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Bryson Roles
Clark Kingston Ram
January 2023
Sierra Crest Outfitters



One of the multiple walleye doubles that Brenton and Tammy Scott caught in Colorado this spring



Photo by Josh Schulgen
Sierra Crest Outfitters



On a beautiful spring day in Colorado, we caught our limit of walleyes and had a great time doing it, Thanks to Nate Zelinsky of Tightline Outdoors!
Left to right: Peggy Carrell, Tammy and Brenton Scott.

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO OLD SYSTEMS: GUZZLER REPAIRS

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

The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep had great news last December with the approval of the State Lands Leases for new guzzler development. However, this does not mean that any of the older existing wildlife drinker systems are of lesser importance; these systems take a beating and need periodic maintenance and/or upgrading to keep them providing life sustaining water.

Over two weekends last December, SCBS reinstalled the R5 Chuckwalla system that had been washed out in a catastrophic flood in 2020. This system, located in the Chuckwalla Mountains (east of Desert Center, CA) had proven to be a valuable and reliable source of water for 48 years. After much deliberation between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the California DFW, and SCBS, it was determined that this guzzler was still important and needed to be replaced. However, this task would prove to be much more challenging than the original install because the area is now within Wilderness boundaries. In spring of 2021, SCBS attempted to rebuild the guzzler using “minimal tools” by trailering the replacement tanks up the braided wash beds and backpacking the tools. It was a valiant effort but as time advanced during the two subsequent weekends, it became increasingly obvious that manual transport of the tanks was not achievable. It was difficult to admit defeat; the project managers decided that a helicopter was needed. After a trip “back to the drawing board”, the BLM granted permission to use a helicopter. CA DFW partnered with SCBS to use their budgeted department helicopter time during December of 2022 concurrently with the DFW sheep census work. Schedules were synced in order to have the helicopter available for two separate days. A load of 1200 pounds of tools was airlifted the first weekend, and the volunteers spent 2 ½ days preparing the new footprint. It was a grueling task, as bedrock had to be removed and the landscape manipulated using hand tools and strong backs. Weekend two saw the three Raincatcher tanks flown into position, and the guzzler was built with painstaking detail. This system is now equipped with a satellite monitor; the area has received a few light storms but not enough to collect measurable water. SCBS may be able to coordinate a



water haul with the U.S. Marines at Camp Pendleton later this summer.

January 2023 found SCBS volunteers in the Mesquite Wilderness repairing the Bob Campbell Drinker System. This system had been dry for many seasons, so when last year’s monsoons came through and the system did not collect water, SCBS knew something was wrong. Part of the challenge of a project in January are the short daylight hours and the cold temperatures. Our volunteers woke up to an eighteen degree morning with frost on everything and frozen coffee water. Fortunately, we had enough volunteers to make this a one-day job. As soon as the crew arrived at the guzzler, things started happening fast. Two collection dams were dug out, pipes were replaced, and the system was brought back to life again.

May 6, 2023 found the SCBS volunteers in the Sacramento Mountains. The SB02 Red Cave Rocks system is one of the oldest. For many years it has been dry during the summertime and until recently no one was sure if the collection system was underperforming or if the area simply did not have rain. Last year during an inspection, Steve Marschke lowered himself into the cylindrical tanks to clean out some debris and he discovered the latent issue. Tiny cracks had formed all along the injection mold lines, so small that from the exterior they could not be detected. Steve saw daylight shining through! Essentially these old tanks

were weeping out all the water they collected a little at a time, leaving the tanks less than 1/3 full. Due to the system design to fit within the contours of the canyon, an upgrade to a Raincatcher system was ruled out and the tanks were replaced with the same upright style. This was assumed to be an easy job, but extracting the old tanks was an inelegant abortion. There was a lot of sediment in the bottoms, making them heavy. A winch was used to pluck them out, but the brittle plastic folded, sliced like cheese, and shattered. Despite other frustrations, the tank replacement was achieved in one day and the volunteers had a hot spaghetti dinner waiting for them in camp.

The summer will be soon upon us and no one can guess if mother nature will have an encore performance of substantial monsoons. Remember that the Sierra snowpack was a godsend, but the deserts

really did not benefit from that. The California deserts are still in a critical drought; these guzzlers we build and maintain are crucial to the future survival of the majestic Bighorn. SCBS is continually grateful to the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation for their faithful support in providing funding to repair and build wildlife guzzler systems as mitigation to battle the increasing deficit of naturally occurring water. Whether it's because of changing climate, human manipulation of the environment, or any combination of factors too numerous to list, we have the luxury of choice to make a difference. Please consider joining a SCBS volunteer crew on upcoming project opportunities. If you would like to be included on our volunteer notification email list, please contact Debbie Miller Marschke at debmillermars@gmail.com.





GOVERNMENT ISSUES UPDATE

by Don Priest, Distinguished Life Member, Board Member

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE UPDATE

As expected, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recommended Sheep Tag numbers presented to the California Fish and Game Commission meeting in mid-April 2023 were accepted. This included the reduction in sheep tags for Zone 1 – Marble/Clipper Mountains for the 2023-2024 hunting season to two tags from six tags last hunting season. One of these will be an auction fundraising tag.

Revenue for the Big Game Management Account (BGMA), which is funded through hunter licensing and tag fees, for the 2022-2023 fiscal year was in the range of \$10M. A number of programs are funded by the BGMA, including wildlife law enforcement costs, as well as helicopter contract costs for both wildlife population surveys and capture/collar/release programs. In addition, CA WSF does not anticipate that CDFW will be accepting applications in 2023 for BGMA funds by any third party and/or Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) project grant funding given the financial stresses on CDFW programs requiring funding by the BGMA.

Currently the contracts between CDFW and two separate helicopter companies are in process of going out for bid. The two contracts are separately for (i) the statewide wildlife surveys and (ii) for the capture/collar/release (Capture) of wildlife, including desert bighorn sheep, deer and elk. CA WSF is hopeful that by this fall both will be completed. Currently, the statewide survey contract has already expired, and the capture contract is set to expire on June 30, 2023. A failure by CDFW to secure a Capture contract by early fall will interfere with the work of CDFW's desert bighorn sheep biologists and other staff from completing their annual captures work in multiple mountain ranges, setting back this important management efforts. Regards survey helicopter work, due to the drought in California prior to this winter, funding specifically for surveying desert bighorn sheep has been secured via the availability of California drought relief funding sources. This should ensure that surveys will be executed for desert bighorn sheep in the next year or two should there be a delay in the statewide contract being finalized.

The CDFW Sheep Plan (Plan) has completed its second round of Peer Review. After taking into account these thorough evaluations, CDFW will complete the Plan. We anticipate that the Plan will then go out for Public Review mid-summer 2023 for a 30 to 45-day period. The Plan will also be made available for Tribal review by all interested Federal and State recognized



California Tribes concurrently with the Public Review. CA WSF looks forward to thoroughly reviewing the Plan when made available.

BRIGHTLINE WEST HIGH-SPEED RAIL LINE WILDLIFE OVERCROSSINGS

CA WSF would like to thank two Nevada wild sheep organizations, Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn and Nevada Bighorns Unlimited – Fallon, for reaching out to their Senators. These two organizations have sent a letter to Senators Catherine Cortez Masto and Jackie Rosen asking for their involvement in pressing the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to make the three wildlife connectivity mitigation overcrossings mandatory as a part of the FRA's NEPA re-review.

With Brightline West's (Brightline) rail-lines terminus being Las Vegas, Nevada, this project within the median of I-15 within the region of the Mojave Desert shall affect the natural, common movements of sheep within California and potentially between Nevada and California. A number of mountain ranges cross state line. These necessary overcrossings will allow for the continued connectivity for herds to share genes via individual sheep movements, along with searching for food and water across the Mojave Desert region in California and Nevada.

Brightline has completed their biology and cultural surveys, and anticipates breaking ground on this project in early 2024. Additionally, Brightline, in their agreement with CDFW and Caltrans, are to design the three agreed upon wildlife overpasses. In order to expedite and for the ease of construction, along with cost savings to Caltrans, Brightline is looking into a pre-fabricated arch design, as has been utilized by other states, including over Highway 93 in Arizona.



CALIFORNIA FISH AND WILDLIFE UPDATE

*by Ana Solberg, CDFW
Desert Sheep Scientific Aide*

I joined the Desert Bighorn program with CDFW in March as a Scientific Aide. This is my first position working with a game species, and my first position doing direct wildlife management work. I've spent the last several years doing conservation work and wildlife research on several different species (lemurs, ferrets, Gilas, and monkeys) across the US and a few other countries. I am really keen on this opportunity to directly support bighorn sheep through science and boots-on-the-ground management.



Immediately upon starting with CDFW in March, I went on a two-day survey of the San Gorgonio mountains where we spotted a herd of 39 sheep on day one and another group of 11 rams on day two! It was great to get right into it, meeting lots of WSF, SCBS, and BHA members and volunteers. A week or so later I went solo to the Nopah Range where I camped by a hot spring and did some guzzler maintenance, right as the wildflowers were about to bloom. Talk about a great job! I investigated a mortality in the Providence Range in the Mojave National Preserve with a volunteer before returning to Bishop where the Sierra Nevada Bighorn program recruited me to assist with their sheep and deer captures and collaring for the next week. It was great hands on work, and great preparation for our desert sheep captures that will hopefully be happening this fall.

After returning from the captures, I went right back to desert sheep work, spending a week in Death Valley investigating water sources and deploying game cameras at springs that were wet and accessible to sheep. As we all know, sheep are a bit nimbler than humans when it comes to rocky cliffs and canyons, so some of these water sources required technical rappelling to access. Canyoneering was great, and we



deployed several cameras at those spots, which means we'll have to rappel again in the fall to retrieve the cameras!

Unfortunately, a knee injury has kept me in the office more recently, but I've been put to work learning the ins and outs of our massive database, creating maps outlining disease and population estimates, taking some online trainings in preparation for helicopter surveys, and doing what I can to contribute. The desert bighorn sheep program is currently focused obtaining population estimates in the hunt zones and Death Valley mountain ranges where sheep were collared last November. Shortly, I'll be back in the field, helping with water hauls, deploying more cameras at water sources, and conducting ground surveys.



As nimble as a sheep.

A BULLET TRAIN, A SOLAR PLANT, AND BIGHORN SHEEP

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

As readers of California Wild Sheep are aware, there has been much interest in the Brightline High Speed Rail, which will be constructed within the median of Interstate Highway 15 between Las Vegas and Victorville. Following an extensive amount of research and additional input, an agreement finally was reached regarding locations of three overcrossings that (hopefully) will provide some level of connectivity between the metapopulations of bighorn sheep occurring on either side of the highway, and across which some movement currently is possible but that would not be possible in the absence of the overcrossings. Equal concern exists about the location of the Solar Mountain Solar Project, which will be located proximate to one of the overcrossings, and has the potential to infringe upon the mitigatory effect of that overcrossing for potentially reconnecting metapopulations of bighorn sheep but will affect other species as well. A net gain in cross-highway connectivity requires that the solar project does not impair existing movements, or deter wildlife from using the overcrossing..

To address that issue, several colleagues and I prepared a letter to a highly respected international journal that is read widely across many disciplines. In that letter we addressed some of the problems that have resulted from poorly conceived legislation that previously established dozens of disjunct 'protected areas' in the Mojave and Sonoran deserts, led to numerous planning snafus, and has impacted many conservation projects; that legislation has had numerous consequences for wildlife, but specifically for bighorn sheep. As coauthors we waded through 12 iterations of the letter, which was a very time-consuming process. The severe restriction on the number of words (300) and references (12), combined with novel and specific formatting requirements for the journal required a combined total of 11 revisions, almost all of each were nearly complete rewrites.

As the corresponding author, that project took many unplanned days of effort. Preparation of the letter and the numerous revisions and correspondence with the editor, when combined with additional pressing commitments, prevented me from completing a 'regular' contribution to this issue of California Wild Sheep. It is my hope, and that of the coauthors, however, that the letter will have a positive influence on any decisions regarding construction of the solar plant. My personal hope is that it also will encourage politicians, agency leadership, and other decision makers to reconsider the simplistic logic



used to justify designation of protected areas in the past. It is essential that landscape-level ecological processes be elevated to a much higher level of consideration than previously occurred.

I plan to get back to writing an article centered on the biology, history, or philosophy of bighorn sheep conservation for the upcoming Fall issue of this magazine. I am hopeful, however, that the effort that three highly respected scientists and I put into our letter will open some eyes and have a positive impact on the conservation of bighorn sheep not only now, but even more in the future.

Dr. Vern Bleich was employed by the California Department of Fish and Game for 34 years, during which time he worked extensively with large mammals occupying the Great Basin, Mojave, and Sonoran deserts of California. He currently is Research Professor at the University of Nevada Reno, and remains actively involved in conservation and research activities. He serves on the Advisory Board of the Texas Bighorn Society and is the Science Advisor for the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep. He is a member of the Wild Sheep Foundation's Professional Resource Advisory Board, and recently completed a 3-year appointment to the Bureau of Land Management's Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, on which he represented wildlife conservation issues. Interested parties can contact Vern directly (vcbleich@gmail.com).

HOW PREPARED ARE YOU?

By Josh Schulgen

With backcountry hunting becoming more popular these days, there is a great percentage of hunters out there that are truly not prepared for the journey that lies ahead of them. Without first-hand experience, it is hard to know how prepared you actually are. A great technique I have learned throughout my life is to think of every project you plan on doing, no matter the task at hand, and always strategize a plan that sets you up to execute your main goal. Preparing for a backcountry adventure is no different. Since my first backpacking trip years ago, I have learned that these five strategies help me reach my goal of having a successful and fun backcountry hunt.



1. Physical Fitness

Before committing to a backcountry hunt, you need to ask yourself if you are physically ready for it. You can't assume your body is ready; you need to KNOW it's ready. By assuming, you can put yourself and others in harm's way. It would be a very expensive emergency medical bill to be flown out 10 miles because you were simply out of shape! Take the time to prepare your body. A couple of hours a week hitting the stair climber or taking 30-minute walks is really all the exercise your body needs to stay active and fit. Understanding how your body reacts to different types of situations is a big factor in your physical fitness.

A few questions to ask yourself: Are you in shape enough to handle multiple tough miles daily? Can you carry extreme amounts of weight on your back? Can your body handle extreme elevation gain in high altitudes? Questions like these are where your physical fitness can play an important role. Know your body and its limitations. If you hesitate to answer any of these questions with a resounding "YES," then you still have more work ahead of you.

2. Mental Preparation

When mentally preparing for an adventure, I have found it most beneficial to train like I was about to hit the trailhead. By doing this you can get a mental and physical image of what to expect. Training with the same weight you plan on taking will get you mentally ready and get your body acclimated for the long journey ahead. A key factor to consider while training with a weighted pack is not only training with the weight you plan on packing IN but also with the weight you plan on packing OUT!

Most people underestimate how heavy meat can be. Adding another 60+ pounds to your already 50 or 60-pound pack, can be excruciating if one hasn't prepared for it. Most people really don't know what a

100 to 120-pound pack feels like, so it wouldn't be a bad idea to get a couple of workouts in with it to see how your body reacts. With that kind of weight in mind, you might think twice about killing a bull elk in a tough-to-pack-out location. It would be silly if your first time carrying that weight was in a real-life situation and you came to find out it was too heavy.

A great way to practice your weighed pack training is with the Outdoorsmans Atlas Trainer Frame System. If you own one of their packs, or even if you don't, this training is a must. It will help you get to where you need to be.

3. Staying Ahead

A great way to stay ahead is to plan on taking several overnight trips in the months leading up to your hunt. By doing this, you can be ahead of the game in several ways. First, you can see where you are weak with your physical fitness. If you are having a hard time, you know you still have some work to do. Maybe add another workout to your schedule to get you where you need to be. Second, you can see what gear you may or may not actually need in your pack. Getting rid of unnecessary items will help you drop some weight. Third, if you plan on hunting above the timberline and you have never hunted at that elevation before, it would be a great idea to make a trip or two to see how you react.

Knowing whether your body can handle those high elevations will save time and allow more opportunities to find the trophy you are searching for. Going in blind is never a good idea, especially for your first time. Altitude sickness is no joke and can put your life in danger. By staying ahead and taking these overnight trips, you will be ahead before even starting!

4. The Right Gear for Your Adventure

With today's innovations, gear is getting lighter

and better. It may cost a little more, but shedding the extra weight can be well worth the extra money. A good lightweight pack, pair of boots, and lightweight necessities can make all the difference on your hunt. It has taken me years to figure what is comfortable for me, but by doing your research you can get a good start on some good high-quality gear.

If you have the opportunity to touch, feel, and test the gear before buying, do it. The options available today are endless, but sometimes lightweight may not work for a backcountry hunt due to durability. Always make sure it's the right gear for you, not just the lightest option.

5. Emergency Action Plan

Imagine walking up a steep rocky ridge when suddenly, a rock slips out from underneath you and you go tumbling down several feet. When you finally stop you notice your ankle is no longer facing forward. What do you do?

A story like this always crosses my mind while out in the mountains – the “what if” scenarios. With today's advancements in GPS communications,

there is no reason not to be carrying some sort of communication device. For the last three years, I have used the Garmin In-reach Explorer on my hunts. It allows you to send text messages, use GPS maps, and check the local weather updates. It would be safe to say it is a must-have piece of gear.

Another great source to rely on is a detailed physical map of the area you will be hunting. Make sure it has landmarks and water locations just in case you were to get lost. I would recommend always keeping a detailed map with you. That way if your electronic equipment loses battery life, you have a reliable alternate source to fall back on.

Conclusion

I have learned over the years that you will never be 100% ready, but if you prioritize your physical and mental preparation, have the right gear, and prepare for the unexpected, you can achieve your goal of having a successful and fun backcountry trip.

There are many ways to get yourself prepared for a backcountry hunt, but these are just a few important topics that have helped me along the way and should



Lone Desert Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) ram atop a cliff in the Marble Mountains. CDFW photo by Regina Abella.

PROVIDENCE AND GRANITE MOUNTAINS

By Scott Gibson, Distinguished Life Member, Board Member

The young man in this photo, Hudson, was at our fundraiser this year. He, and his dad, recovered a GPS and VHF collar from a ewe mortality in the Providence Mountains in March.

In addition to the ewe, they also recovered a GPS collar from a deceased ram. They found the collar, which appeared to have been cut, but no carcass. It's possible the animal was poached due to proximity of a nearby road.

While searching for other collars in the Granites, Hudson's dad found two dead heads.



Hudson with ewe head.



Recovered Satellite Collar.s from ewe



One of two heads found in Granites



One of two heads found in Granites

SLOW COOKER ELK STEW

(Substitute other Wild Game: venison meat or antelope meat)

From: <https://nevadafoodies.com/slow-cooker-elk-stew/>.

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs elk round roast, cut into 3/4" - 1" cubes	2 bay leaves
2 cups carrots, halved and chopped into 1" or 2" pieces	2 sprigs fresh thyme
2 cups parsnips, peeled and finely chopped	1 tsp kosher salt
1 cup celery, finely chopped	1 tsp black pepper
1 yellow onion, chopped	2 tbsp cornstarch
2 cloves garlic, minced	Italian parsley, finely chopped (optional)
3 cups low sodium beef broth	grated Parmesan cheese (optional)
2 tbsp tomato paste	
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil	



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add 1 tablespoon olive oil, chopped celery and onion.
2. Fry until softened about 5 minutes. Add the carrots, garlic, thyme and bay leaves frying for an additional 5 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste and beef broth and pour into a crock pot. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Add the remaining olive oil to the skillet and fry the elk meat until browned – you may have to do this in batches. Add the meat and chopped parsnips to the crock pot and stir everything together. Cover and cook on high for 4 hours or on low for 6-8 hours.
4. In a small bowl, dissolve the cornstarch in 2 tablespoons of cold water. Stir the cornstarch mixture into the liquid in the crockpot and cook for 30 minutes until slightly thickened. Season to taste if needed.
5. Serve over mashed potatoes and garnish with chopped parsley and a pinch of Parmesan cheese.

ELK CORNBREAD CASSEROLE

INGREDIENTS

1 pound ground elk	2 tablespoon cumin powder
2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil	1 teaspoon chile powder
1 yellow onion, chopped	½ teaspoon kosher salt
1 yellow bell pepper, chopped	1 lb cornbread mix (ex: Marie Callender's just add water)
1-2 garlic cloves, minced	Garnishments: salsa, pickled jalapenos and cilantro
25 oz can yellow corn, drained	
14.75 oz can yellow creamed corn	
2 cups Colby jack cheese, shredded	

PREPARATION

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Heat skillet over medium heat and add oil. When the oil is warm, add the onions, yellow bell pepper and garlic cooking for about 5 minutes or until onions become translucent and soft. Add ground elk meat and cook until browned. Season the meat mixture with cumin powder, chili powder and salt. Pour in the corn and stir to ensure all ingredients are combined. Remove from heat.
3. In a bowl, add cornbread mix and 1 ½ cups water. Mix until lumps disappear. Note: If you prefer to use another cornbread mix, you will need 2 cups of prepared cornbread batter for this recipe.
4. Using a 9x13 inch baking pan, pour about ¼ cup of the cornbread batter on the bottom of the baking pan. Add the ground elk mixture to the pan and top with 1 cup shredded cheese. Pour the remaining cornbread batter over the top and bake uncovered for 20 minutes. Add the remainder of the cheese to the top of the cornbread and continue to bake for an additional 10 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool before serving.
5. Garnish with salsa, pickled jalapenos and cilantro.

DON'T WAIT

By Brad Aboltin, Life Member

I think sheep hunting was always in my blood, ever since I was a child there was something that drew my attention to sheep hunting. I remember after starting to big game hunt at the age of 12, I always had this magnetic pull to sheep hunting and wanting to do it. Being naïve I thought hunting exotic sheep would be something similar, or fill the need while I was young, so I would save my money just to go hunt exotic sheep on a ranch. I quickly figured out that it was not even close to what I wanted to experience. .

As I grew older and had more experience in big game hunting, I realized that those childhood dreams of chasing sheep weren't going to be easy or cheap. I applied in my home state of California as soon as I could for desert bighorn sheep, but knowing that the odds of ever drawing a permit in the state of California for a desert bighorn were few and far between, I knew I needed to figure something out. I allowed the logistics and cost of one of these hunts to hinder me thinking it would never happen for me, creating doubt in my mind, but always knowing that for me a dall sheep was one that stood out from the rest.

Fast forward to 2019, I had an opportunity to hunt alongside an older gentleman that I had known for several years. He had drawn a California desert bighorn sheep tag, in a new unit after applying for over 30 years, but now he was the age of 82, and had some health issues that would make the hunt more difficult than we would want. We ultimately were able to get him a ram-and it was difficult-but one thing that set in deeply with me was the words he spoke to me, "I wish I would have made a point to go sheep hunting when I was younger." Those words sunk in and made me think about how long I have waited to hunt dall sheep and if this was going to be me when I turned 82. After that successful hunt I went to the Wild Sheep Foundation convention held in Reno, Nevada with the mindset of talking to and booking a hunt with an outfitter. I left there without doing so. Maybe it was the doubt, the cost of the hunt, the logistics or the fact I just didn't feel like I connected with any of the outfitters that provided a dall sheep hunting experience in Alaska. But none the less, I left the convention without booking a hunt. I went home and thought to myself that I would wait a year while



Brad admiring his Alaska Dall sheep

researching for an outfitter, but then while looking through Instagram one day, Kokanee Guide Service popped up, so I started looking into and talking with the owner Justin Dubay. It didn't take long for me to really connect with him. A few of the things that were important to me for this hunt was that I could know who my guide was going to be so I could connect with him while waiting for my hunt as well as someone that lived and had experience in Alaska, and I really wanted to hunt the Alaska range.

After talking with Justin and asking questions, I decided to book a hunt for dall sheep in the Alaska range with Kokanee Guide Service, for August of 2023. This would provide the time to save my money in order to go on this hunt. As the months rolled by and I got closer to the year that my hunt would come up, I was offered to move my hunt forward to 2022. I declined and decided I needed the time to prepare and save the money. After a few more months I was offered yet again the opportunity to go in 2022 with the same season dates, it felt like it was meant to be and a calling to go in 2022 instead of 2023, which turned out to be a blessing, that I will expand on more later. Going forward I had heard of the harsh winters and the extreme die off in the area of Alaska that I was going to be hunting, which was a concern, so I trained harder to make sure I could go harder to increase the percentage of me being successful. About five months before I was scheduled to leave for my hunt, I had trained so extremely that I over trained and caused an injury to my knee. Coming home from work one day to see my knee swollen, had me thinking my hunt was over before it started. After going through all the

necessary steps in the medical field to get an MRI and see a specialist at UCLA, I was told that I had over trained to the point that I had a patellar contusion so severe that I had fractured my patella. The doctor put me on the couch for 6-8 weeks. This would allow me very little time to physically prepare for my hunt, but I was still able to ride a stationary bike and work my upper body, it was that or cancel my hunt, which wasn't an option for me. As time moved forward, I did everything I could do to increase the healing of my knee as well as prepare for my hunt.

After all the setbacks Aug. 5 came and I was boarding a flight to Alaska for my dall sheep hunt, I couldn't believe it was happening. Even though my knee wasn't 100 percent, I knew I would just deal with whatever setback would come from it. After flying into Alaska, I was picked up by my guide and outfitter Justin Dubay. From there we went and had one more real food meal before leaving and living off freeze-dried meals. We boarded a Cessna 206 that took us to a holding area for the evening to be transported from a Piper cub plane in order to be even more remote. The next morning, Aug. 7, I woke up to beautiful Alaska, and we were hopeful to get a ride in the cub in order to start hiking into our hunting area. But the weather-in Alaska fashion-didn't cooperate and we were held up until the later part of the day when we heard off in the distance a plane, it was our ride. You quickly learn to listen for planes and are always looking up at the sky while in Alaska. While it was much later than we expected we were able to get to our destination that day and set up camp and get some water. The next day was going to be a long hike in to just start scouting and glassing before the season. August 8, we hiked most of the way and set up a camp for the evening with the plan of moving closer to where we wanted to be the next day. The hike was long, but amazing with seeing a huge bull moose and caribou. On Aug. 9, we woke up to fog and decided it was best to wait it out and to be safe to not spook anything we couldn't see. In the afternoon, the fog



Brad heading home with the Alaska Dall sheep

lifted and we packed up and were moving into the drainage. Luckily, we waited because we didn't go very far before running into some sheep. We back tracked and made sure they wouldn't wind us, set up camp for the night with the hopeful mindset that tomorrow being opening day and there would be a legal ram in the group that we saw very briefly off in the distance.

Opening day: the day that so many sheep hunters look forward to! We started our morning with a very steep hike to the top where we could run ridges to cover the area quickly, and once we got to the top, we spotted the first group of sheep. These were all ewes and a couple lambs. A little while later after that we spotted a ram off in the distance too far to even make a play on that day, so we continued to cover the area and make sure there wasn't anything more where we were. After sitting down and having a snack we quickly spotted a band of three very small young rams, which were enjoyable to watch while we ate our lunch. After watching those rams for a while, and looking over the area, we went back to where we saw the ram off in the distance and watched him to see what he would do for the evening. Now with a game plan for the next day, we headed back to the tents to get a good night's rest. The next morning, I woke up even more excited thinking this was going to be the ram that I would get the green light to pull the trigger on. We went up the drainage and about mid-morning were able to put our eyes on him. Unfortunately, Justin didn't give me the green light and said he was about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch shy of being a legal ram. With the ram being a barely sub-legal ram, the decision was made to have a long day and hike in one day what took us two days to hike in, so we would not lose a day of hunting. After getting back to the airstrip, we set up camp for the evening and called to get picked up the next day. The next morning, Aug. 12, we woke up to rain. It rained most of all day, to the point we doubted we were going to see the cub picking us up. But about the time we started to doubt, here comes the cub! We had to move quickly, each of us, one at a time, with a small window in the weather. Calvin Conner was on the trip recording and taking photos of the hunt and was almost left behind because of the weather, but luckily, we had an amazing pilot that was able to get him to the new hunting area.

With the excitement of this new hunting area, and the gut feeling that this area held a legal ram to call mine, we started up the drainage on Aug. 13, covering the area and having to hike up and around a waterfall. Trying to be as quiet as we could be, but having shale falling from the waterfall and rocks slipping out from under our feet it was difficult. As we crested over and side-hilled an area, a ram came out of nowhere. He was 250 yards away and I thought I would have some time to get ready, but as soon as Justin put eyes on him he knew he was a legal big ram and told me to shoot, not having the time to prepare for my shot

and trying to get a rear support on my rifle the ram was now at 450 yards. I tried to get set up on him and took a shot, but I missed, then the ram ran up the shale mountain side towards the peak which put him at over 700 yards, too far for me to take a shot. Morale dropped, not only in me, but in the group. It was a tough shot and at least it was a clean miss, but I couldn't help but feel like that was my one and only opportunity to kill my first sheep. We spent the rest of the day trying to relocate the ram and search the areas we could access that day. The next morning, Aug. 14, we had good weather and decided that we would continue our search for this ram so we hiked up and around the mountain searching for the ram, but we still couldn't turn him up. We went back to camp and thought of what our options could be and where could have he gone possibly. After thinking it over, we had one more area that he could have gone into which would have meant hiking over a glacier. So that was our plan for the next morning to get up early and start the long hike over the glacier and clear that area of him.

The next morning, Aug. 15, we woke up, but we were fogged in and couldn't take the risk of hiking blind, so we took the opportunity to relax for a moment and have a cup of coffee. Around mid-morning the fog burned off enough and we were ready to go so we took off and covered ground, crossing multiple rivers and streams. As we were working up the drainage towards the glacier that we would have to traverse, Justin spotted sheep and told us to get back, he peeked around the corner and said that it was a band of five rams and that they were feeding up towards the peak. We quickly backtracked and went up a cut where we could peak over at them. As we watched them feeding, Justin was able to put eyes on them and said that two of them were legal rams, but about that time they all bedded down with the largest ram in the middle of the smaller ones. We were 450 yards away from them at this point but couldn't get closer to them and were pinned down, so we had to wait. We ended up waiting more than three hours while it started to get foggy, and it looked like it was going to rain. We knew when we had the opportunity, we were going to have to take it quickly! So, this time while we waited, I got prepared. After waiting for more than three hours, the rams stood up and started to move around. The target ram disappeared and had gone behind a little cut in the mountain side, once he showed Justin quickly ranged him as I got into the rifle, he called out the range of 522 yards. I adjusted my turret and got situated behind the rifle and told him I was ready as we verified that I was aiming at the correct ram. As soon as I squeezed off the shot, I heard Justin say "He is hit!" What a relief it was to hear those words. Even though he was hit and later we determined he was hit well and would have died-I believe that if an animal is still standing you should shoot again to not let it suffer. So, I did and hit him again as he was wobbling.

Then to hear Justin and Calvin say he is down the emotion that I had just killed my first ram flowed over my body, I couldn't believe that I achieved something I had dreamed about for so many years. We all sat for a second and took in the success and worked ourselves over to my ram, it was an amazing feeling to be able to pick him up. We enjoyed the moment and Calvin took some amazing photos that I will get to share and relieve for the rest of my life. Then the hard work started packing him out and back to base camp. We enjoyed the evening and celebrated, but in Alaska fashion that wouldn't be the end of the story.

The next morning, we called to get picked up. With about a five-minute notice that we were getting picked up from the cub, camp was a yard sale with gear and stuff getting broken down and thrown everywhere but we were able to go to the lodge and clean and regroup. After getting back to the lodge we ate and organized everything and were picked up from a Cessna 206, but as I mentioned, Alaska had another plan for the end of this hunt. During our flight back, the pilot, Rob, said over the headset "I hope you boys brought your tents, we may be sleeping alongside an air strip." I knew something wasn't good and about that time we had to do an emergency landing on an old mining strip where a black bear ran across the runway as we were landing; luckily, we didn't hit it and stayed there for a couple hours hoping that the weather would clear. Then Rob said, "Hop in, I have an idea." So, we went around to see if there was another option to get around the storm, but there wasn't, and it seemed like the storm was closing in around us. He knew of another outfitters cabin that we could hold up for the night. We landed at their airstrip and were greeted by the guide, client and packer from their successful hunt. We stayed there for the night, which turned out to be an amazing experience. We ate dall sheep steaks, potatoes and bacon, and even celebrated with some beer and whiskey while we all told stories. The next morning the weather cleared up and we were able to get back. What would normally be a couple-hour flight ended up taking us 30 hours, but I wouldn't have it any other way. After getting back the next day we got the meat, hide, horns and flights back all scheduled, as well as checked in my ram. It was a great experience and the only regret I have is why did I wait? I am very fortunate to have taken a ram in Alaska with the previous winters being so harsh on the herd to the point that they closed the unit I hunted down this year to all non-resident hunters. My success is largely due to Justin and the added effort he put in to assure my success so I have to thank Justin Dubay at Kokanee Guide Service for being an amazing guide and outfitter; as well as Calvin Connor for doing an amazing job capturing the whole experience, and my wife Sydney Aboltin for always being supportive and helpful through the ups and down of this hunt as well as taking care of our son Bennett while I was away. So, I leave you with DON'T WAIT!

F&G COMMISSION ADOPTS 2023/2024 WILD SHEEP REGS

2023/2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION OFF & RUNNING
THE POLITICS BEHIND KEEPING YOU IN THE FIELD
By Bill Gaines, Gaines and Associates

2023/2024 WILD SHEEP REGULATIONS SET

In the Spring 2023 Issue of California Wild Sheep we took a deep look into the political wrangling behind the setting of California's annual wild sheep hunting regulations using the 2023/2024 rulemaking process as our case study. To recap, in play was the 2023/2024 tag allocation for the Marble and Clipper Mountains hunt zone where a tag reduction was anticipated due to populations being stressed because of extreme drought, low recruitment, and respiratory disease. We followed that process beginning in the early fall of 2022 with initial discussions between California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF) and Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) regarding the latest data from the area and their initial recommendation to reduce the Marble/Clipper Mountains hunt zone quota from five general tags to one tag, and to eliminate the Marble, Clipper, and South Bristol Mountains fundraising tag.

Aware of the population concerns in the Marble/Clippers, and with the health of bighorn sheep as our top priority, CA WSF supported a reduction in bighorn sheep tags in the Marble and Clipper Mountains but took issue with DFW's extreme recommended reduction of tags. Following meetings with DFW leadership, Commissioners and Commission staff, and the testimony of CA WSF at the December 2022 Commission meeting, DFW agreed to change their recommendation from one single general tag to a range of zero to five general tags and zero to one fundraising tag.

With dialogue between CA WSF and DFW continuing in the interim, our article in the Spring 2023 Issue concluded with the February 2023 Commission meeting where DFW stated that, although it was too early to provide their final tag recommendations, they did believe offering two tags was within sustainable limits. We were making progress, but with the final adoption of 2023/2024 sheep hunting regulations at the April 2023 Commission meeting still two months away, the efforts of CA WSF to secure maximum acceptable wild sheep hunting opportunity in 2023/2024 were not yet done.

Following the February 2023 meeting of the



Commission, and leading up to their April 2023 adoption hearing, CA WSF stayed in close contact with DFW – standing firm on our position that the data supported an additional tag in the Marble/Clippers in 2023/2024. When the April 2023 Commission meeting arrived, DFW's final proposal was to embrace CA WSF's recommendation of one general tag for the Marble/Clipper Mountains hunt zone and to restore the Marble/Clipper/South Bristol Mountains fundraising tag. Following CA WSF's testimony in strong support of the Department's revised proposal, the Commission unanimously adopted the 2023/2024 wild sheep hunting regulations, as recommended –providing maximum justifiable wild sheep hunting opportunity in the upcoming season.

With the 2023/2024 regulation setting process just freshly complete, CA WSF is already preparing to roll up our sleeves on the 2024/2025 regulatory process, which will begin this summer.

2023/2024 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION UP & RUNNING

AB 28 (Gabriel) – Firearms and Ammunition: Excise Tax. If you think you have seen this one before, you have... twice.

During the 2021/2022 Session, two bills – AB 1223 and AB 1227, both by Assembly Member Marc Levine – were introduced that proposed an additional excise tax on the sale of guns and ammunition and to earmark the revenue generated for gun violence prevention, research, and education programs. Fortunately, we were able to

defeat AB 1223 in late January 2022, and AB 1227 on the final evening of the 2022 Session. With 2022 being Levine’s last Session in the Legislature, we hoped to get a break from efforts to tax law-abiding citizens out of buying guns and ammunition. Not so.

As amended May 18, 2023, AB 28 by Assembly Member Jesse Gabriel (D/46-Woodland Hills) would impose an excise tax in the amount of 11% on the retail sale of all firearms, firearm parts, and ammunition. Coined the “Gun Violence Prevention, Healing, and Recovery Act,” this bill would require that the revenues collected be deposited in the “Gun Violence Prevention, Healing, and Recovery Fund” and used to fund various gun violence prevention, education, research, response, and investigation programs.

Implementing successful programs for addressing criminal gun violence is something which benefits all Californians. As such, all Californians should equally help fund their implementation. However, under AB 28 these programs would be fully funded only by citizens who legally purchase and lawfully use firearms, firearm parts, and ammunition. As such, AB 28 can only be viewed as simply another attempt to price law-abiding Californians out of the firearms and ammunition market.

If enacted, AB 28 would double the excise tax currently assessed on the sales of firearms and ammunition. Law-abiding hunters and shooters already pay an 11% excise tax on long guns, ammunition, archery, and other hunting equipment and a 10% excise tax on handguns pursuant to federal Pittman-Robertson Act. But those dollars are appropriately allocated back to the states to fund positive programs – including wildlife habitat projects, hunter safety classes and shooting/target ranges. DFW currently receives \$30+ million annually in federal Pittman-Robertson Act funding for these purposes. Because AB 28 would significantly raise the cost of firearms and ammunition, it would also decrease their sales and, as a result, the federal funding allocated to California each year for wildlife habitat programs and projects and other important uses.

Double-referred, AB 28 was heard and passed out of the Assembly Public Safety Committee and the Assembly Revenue & Tax Committee in April. CA WSF was pleased to testify in strong opposition to the bill in both committees on behalf of our clients.

AB 28 was heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee on May 18th. After being amended to add language which would exempt any active or retired peace officer from the excise tax, the bill was passed out of committee and to the Assembly Floor on a party-line vote. Because AB 28 proposes a tax, the bill will require approval of 2/3rds vote of the membership of the Assembly to pass

off the Floor. AB 28 must pass off the Assembly Floor and over to the Senate by June 2nd to meet legislative deadline.

AB 293 (Alanis) – Lifetime Hunting & Fishing Licenses: Gold Star Families. As revised March 14, 2023, AB 293 by Assembly Member Juan Alanis (R/22-Modesto) would require DFW to issue lifetime hunting licenses and lifetime sport fishing licenses at no cost to “Gold Star Family” members. Lifetime licenses issued pursuant to this bill would not include any special tags, stamps, fees, validations, or other entitlements.

The bill defines an eligible “Gold Star Family” member as a resident of California who is eligible to receive a gold star lapel button pursuant to §1126 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which reads as follows:

- . 10 U.S. Code §1126. Gold star lapel button: eligibility and distribution
 - . a) A lapel button, to be known as the gold star lapel button, shall be designed, as approved by the Secretary of Defense, to identify next of kin of members of the armed forces-
 - . (1) who lost their lives during World War I, World War II, or during any subsequent period of armed hostilities in which the United States was engaged before July 1, 1958;
 - . (2) who lost or lose their lives after June 30, 1958-
 - . (A) while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States;
 - . (B) while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
 - . (C) while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict in which the United States is not a belligerent party against an opposing armed force; or
 - . (3) who lost or lose their lives after March 28, 1973, as a result of-
 - . (A) an international terrorist attack against the United States or a foreign nation friendly to the United States, recognized as such an attack by the Secretary of Defense; or
 - . (B) military operations while serving outside the United States (including the commonwealths, territories, and possessions of the United States) as part of a peacekeeping force

AB 293 was heard in the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee on March 14th, passing out and to the Assembly Appropriations Committee on a unanimous vote.

Once in the Assembly Appropriations Committee, AB 293 was promptly placed in the suspense file. Failing to be pulled from suspense and passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee to the Senate Floor by the May 19th deadline, AB 293 is now a “two-year” bill and cannot receive any further consideration until the 2024 Session.

AB 574 (Jones-Sawyer) – Firearms: Dealer Records of Sale. Existing law requires any sale, loan, or transfer of a firearm to be conducted through a licensed firearm dealer. Further, current law requires firearm dealers to

keep a record of each firearm transaction and requires that record to include information about the purchaser, the firearm, and answers to certain questions by the purchaser or transferee relating to their eligibility to own or possess a firearm.

As amended March 9, 2023, AB 574 by Assembly Member Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer (D/57-Los Angeles) would additionally require the dealer record to include the acknowledgment by the purchaser or transferee that they have, within the past 30 days, confirmed possession of every firearm that they own or possess.

AB 574 passed out of the Assembly Public Safety Committee via party-line vote on April 11th.

AB 574 was heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee on May 18th passing out and to the Assembly Floor on another party-line vote. AB 574 must pass off the Assembly Floor and over to the Senate by June 2nd to meet legislative deadline.

AB 1507 (Gallagher) – Firearms: State Property. As a result of the passing of SB 915 (Min) into law last year, the sale of firearms, firearm parts, and/or ammunition is now prohibited on any state or county property as of January 1, 2023. As introduced, AB 1507 by Assembly Member James Gallagher (R/03-Yuba City) would exempt events hosted by a youth sport shooting organization, a youth hunting organization, or a nonprofit conservation organization from the provisions of SB 915.

AB 1507 was referred to the Assembly Public Safety Committee and was set to be heard on April 11th. However, after discussion with the committee it was decided to make AB 1507 a “two-year” bill to allow time to build more bipartisan support for the proposal.

Recognizing the urgency of addressing the concerns AB 1507 is intended to address, in coordination with the author’s office, Gaines & Associates is currently investigating the possibility of inserting the critical language of AB 1507 into another piece of legislation during the 2023 Session.

SB 8 (Blakespear/Skinner) – Civil Law: Firearms Liability and Insurance. As amended March 23, 2023, SB 8 – co-authored by Senator Catherine Blakespear (D/38-Laguna Hills) and Senator Nancy Skinner (D/9-Oakland) – would require gun owners to obtain and maintain a gun liability insurance policy which specifically would cover losses or damages resulting from any negligent or accidental use of that firearm, including death, injury, or property damage. The bill would also require written evidence of coverage in the place where a firearm is stored. SB 8 would require the Insurance Commissioner to set the minimum coverage for a policy required by the bill and to develop a standardized form of evidence of liability coverage. SB 8 would take effect on January 1, 2025.

As previously written, as amended on March 7th, SB 8 also proposed make a person who owns a firearm civilly liable for each incidence of property damage, bodily injury, or death resulting from the use of their firearm. That language was deleted in the bill, as amended on March 23rd.

Similar to AB 28 (above), SB 8 can only be viewed as yet another attempt to price law-abiding Californians out of the firearms market.

SB 8 was heard in the Senate Committee on Insurance on April 26th with testimony taken but no vote held. CA WSF was pleased to provide testimony in strong opposition to the bill in that hearing. Having missed the April 28th deadline for policy committees to hear and report to fiscal committees fiscal bills introduced in their house, SB 8 is now a “two-year” bill and cannot be heard until January 2024.

SB 243 (Seyarto) – Sales and Use Tax Law: Exemption: Gun Safety Systems. As introduced, SB 243 by Senator Kelly Seyarto (R/32-Murrieta) would have, until January 1, 2028, exempted the purchase of gun safes and other firearm safety devices from sales tax.

SB 243 was heard in the Senate Governance and Finance Committee on May 3rd but failed to pass out of committee on a 2-2 vote with four members not voting. SB 243 is dead.

SB 637 (Min) – Financial Institutions Doing Business with Firearms Manufacturers: Ban on Doing Business with the State.

As amended March 22, 2023, SB 637 by Senator Dave Min (D/37-Irvine) would prohibit a state agency from entering into a contract with, depositing state funds with, or receiving a loan from a financial institution that invests in or makes loans to a company that manufactures firearms or ammunition.

SB 637 was double-referred to the Senate Governmental Organization Committee and the Senate Committee on Banking and Financial Institutions but has yet to be heard in either committee. Having missed the April 28th deadline for policy committees to hear and report to fiscal committees fiscal bills introduced in their house, SB 587 is now a “two-year” bill and cannot be heard until January 2024.

SB 772 (Dahle) – Junior Hunting Licenses: Age of Eligibility.

California law currently requires that residents be 15 years of age and under to be eligible for a junior hunting license. As amended April 18, 2023, SB 772 by Senator Brian Dahle (D/1-Redding) would extend the age eligibility for a California junior hunting license from 15 and under to 17 and under commencing July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2029. SB 772 would require DFW, by October 1, 2027, to provide the Legislature with a written report evaluating the effect of this change in junior hunting license age eligibility on participation in hunting. Should the DFW report document, as we expect, that the increase in eligibility age from 15 and under to 17 and under resulted in an increase in the number of future adult licenses and permits sold, we would pursue future legislation to make the change permanent.

The price of a 2023 resident adult hunting license is set at \$55.58, while the cost of a 2023 junior hunting license is set at only \$15.38. Additionally, junior license

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

There has been a 65% decrease in the number of hunting licenses purchased in California since 1970. This decrease, combined with associated declines in the sale of stamps and related permits, has resulted in serious reductions in annual funding made available to DFW to fulfill their public trust wildlife management responsibilities. To address this serious revenue shortfall, DFW is collaborating with stakeholders to increase public interest and involvement in hunting related activities. SB 772 would mark a big step forward in this effort by allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to continue to have access to high quality special youth hunting activities at an affordable price and increasing the likelihood that they will become life-long hunters and conservationists.

During the 2021/2022 Session, CA WSF sponsored SB 865 (Dodd), similar legislation which also proposed to extend the age eligibility to purchase a California junior hunting license to 17 years of age and under. SB 865 passed through the Senate and out of Assembly policy committee but died in Assembly fiscal committee late in the 2022 Session.

SB 772 was heard in the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee on April 11th passing out on a unanimous vote.

Once in the Senate Appropriations Committee, SB 772 was promptly placed in the suspense file. Failing to be pulled from suspense and passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee and to the Senate Floor by the May 19th deadline, SB 772 is now a "two-year" bill and cannot receive any further consideration until the 2024 Session.





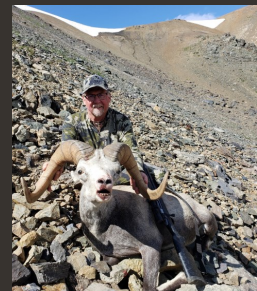
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