

## **Montana Wild Sheep Foundation**

General Membership Meeting

Minutes- February 25, 2012

Location- Gran Tree Inn, Bozeman, MT

### **Call to Order:**

The General Membership meeting was called to order by President Mike Menke at 9:00 AM. President Menke welcomed everyone and had everyone introduce themselves and where they were from.

**Board Members Present:** Mike Menke (President), Glenn Erickson (Vice President), Doug Dreeszen (Secretary), Tom Grimes (Treasurer), Jack Chambers, Mike Colpo, Steve Kline, Bruce Sterling, Brian Solan.

**Directors Absent:** Jim Weatherly, Executive Director

**Members and Guests Present:** Timmer Reeves, Tom Powers, Scott DeMars, Monte Schnur, Mary Ellen Schnur, Gray Thornton, Kevin Hurley, Jack Atcheson Jr, Lee Hart, Deb Perry, Joe Perry, Matt Rippentop, Bill McKinney, Matt Lamb, Julie Cunningham, Carol Kline, Ward Olson, Rob Hammond, Jake Jacobi, Patty Dreeszen, Bill Mealer, Bill Brown, Brent Hill, Harry and Kathy Liss, Ben Lamb.

### **Information:**

President Menke gave an over view of some projects that the MT WSF has been involved with recently:

- MT WSF Specialty Plate, reminding the members to purchase one the next time they renew their license plates, and that we receive funds from the renewal for conservation.
- Menke reported to everyone about the Sheep Transport Trailer and the SCI Chapters who partnered up with us and Karl Tyler Chevrolet, with donations to get the trailer built and delivered to the MT FWP. Jack Chambers also gave some information about the specs of the trailer.
- Bruce Sterling, MT WSF Director and MT FWP Biologist gave a report on the Pickering property in H.D. 124, that this land consisting of 440 acres will possibly be purchased in the near future by using monies from the Montana Bighorn Sheep auction tag funds. The Pickering property will then become a Management Area called the Full Curl Wildlife Management Area. The deadline for public comment on this is March 12, 2012.
- Bruce Sterling also gave a report on the recent bighorn sheep capture at Wild Horse Island and that 49 bighorns were captured and released in the Tendoy Mountains, southwest of Dillon, MT.
- Julie Cunningham, FWP Biologist, gave a report on why the recent Madison bighorn sheep capture near Quake Lake didn't take place. Apparently, there were some issues with some of the bighorns that recently came off Wild Horse Island. They were tested positive with pathogens, as were the bighorns in the Tendoy's, as they had also exposure to bacteria. The Madison bighorns were also scheduled for release in the Tendoy's and they did not want to expose these sheep to a potential disease situation.

There was further discussion between the attendees on the genetic diversity of the bighorns on Wild Horse Island and the possibility of bringing in bighorns from another population.

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- Dr. Bill Mealer asked why the recent transplant didn't occur at the Lewis and Clark Caverns. After further discussion it was determined that there were some private property issues involved and that one landowner opposed that transplant. From this discussion, another private property issue came up in the area of Indian Creek on the Madison River. Because of opposition of a landowner, a future bighorn sheep transplant in the Indian Creek area of the Madison Range could be in jeopardy as there is an issue of private property and other access issues. Also elk management issues in the area, on these private lands, were a problem with their relationship with FWP, which could curtail any future bighorn sheep transplant in the area.
- Mary Ellen Schnur reported that we (MT WSF) had been involved in fencing projects in the past and that this might be a way to keep wildlife off of private property.
- Lee Hart reported that he would like to see H.D. 301 (Spanish Peaks Area), reopen to an unlimited bighorn sheep area. It is now open as a limited bighorn sheep area with 5 any ram licenses issued. He feels that by reopening it as an unlimited area, it will increase hunter opportunity in the area so that the working man can have a place to hunt bighorn sheep. Mary Ellen Schnur reminded everyone that in the past there was a law suit against Arizona by United States Outfitters (USO) because of lack of non-resident hunting opportunity and that USO was also looking to sue Montana, but because of our unlimited bighorn sheep hunting areas that provide hunter opportunity, they did not sue the State of Montana. Several attendees stated that they would like to keep unlimited bighorn sheep hunting areas. Doug Dreeszen informed everyone that there are currently four unlimited sheep hunting areas where hunters can hunt bighorn sheep.
- Jack Atcheson Jr. gave a report on "Increased Opportunity", regards to the concept of harvesting more wild sheep in general. Kevin Hurley handed out a data sheet he had recently prepared which showed population estimates, total ram licenses issued, and total ram harvest. This concept indicates that there could be more rams harvested and that it would not hurt the population on wild sheep or individual herds.
- Joe Perry and Ben Lamb gave a lengthy power point presentation on the update of the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Dreeszen, Secretary  
Montana Wild Sheep Foundation

