



KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN

Wildsheep

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2016 Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Hunt page 9

THIS ISSUE

President's Message	3
Call for Volunteers/Board Members	4
2018 Life Member Raffle	5
"Something Special" My CA Bighorn Sheep Hui	nt in
Washington State	6
2016 Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Hunt	9
25 Years of Sheep Hunters Gathering to Put and K	Сеер
Wild Sheep on the Mountain	12
Photo Gallery	14

All contributed material will be published at the discretion of the Editorial Board of the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation (MTWSF). The Editorial Board consists of the editor of the newsletter, the executive director of the chapter, and the president of the chapter.



Cover photo courtesy of Richard Horst Photography.

Photo on page 3 and 4 is courtesy of Steve Kline of Superior, Montana.

CONNECT with Montana WSF

Visit us online at www.montanawsf.org!

While there, visit the **Photo Gallery** page. If you would like to have a picture posted, email (photos@montanawsf.org) your name, the photo (jpeg format preferred) along with a brief one to two sentence description of the hunt.

You can also visit us on Facebook!



The Montana Wild Sheep Foundation will give a reward of up to \$1000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of cases involving the illegal taking of bighorn sheep in the State of Montana. If you have information of any illegal act, contact 1-800-TIP-MONT (1-800-847-6668).

Board of Directors

Brian Solan, President

855 Wolf Road, Helena, MT 59602 (406) 461-7432 bsolan.bs@gmail.com

Shane Clouse, Vice President

5779 US Highway 93 North, Florence, MT 59833 (406) 370-4487 <u>s clouse@yahoo.com</u>

Max Bauer Jr., Treasurer

5074 Gardner Lane, Florence, MT 59833 (406) 532-5120 <u>bauermtranch@gmail.com</u>

Jeff Mortensen, Secretary

886 Wierda Way, Manhattan, MT 59741 (406) 580-2680 jmortensen@manhattanbank.com

Mike Colpo

PO Box 1753, Big Timber, MT 59011 (406) 350-1880 <u>lzj@mtintouch.net</u>

D.J. Berg

3701 Zircon Way, Helena, MT 59602 (406) 366-1849 <u>djberg12@gmail.com</u>

Tom Grimes

PO Box 108, Sheridan, MT 59749 (406) 580-1856 <u>tomguides@gmail.com</u>

Justin Spring

993 Juniper Lane, Alberton, MT 59820 (406) 830-6134 justin@boone-crockett.org

Grant Winn II

684 Ridge Road, Stevensville, MT 59870 (406) 721-2400 gwins@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor & Publisher

Traci Ulberg

Meetings Northwest, LLC (406) 273-7224 tulberg@meetingsnorthwest.com

Contact us at:

Montana Wild Sheep Foundation PO Box 17731 Missoula, MT 59808

Visit us at montanawsf.org.

President's Message

Wow, where does the time go? It's hard to believe that it has been almost three months since our 25th Annual fundraiser and we are already planning the 2018 fundraiser! Our 2017 fundraiser was a huge success this year. It was a record for revenue and there was some serious excitement in the room! Having all the Life Members in the room standing for the Life Member Sheep Hunt drawing was something that I will never forget. Looking around at the people who have worked for over 25 years on Montana sheep issues, as well as new members excited to get involved was a pretty unique experience. A sincere thank you goes out to all of you that attended, donated and spent some money to put more sheep on the mountain!

After much discussion and investigation, we are back in Bozeman March 9-10, 2018, at the Best Western Gran Tree Inn for our 26th Annual Event. Our board and planning committee investigated other venues, dates, etc. but all things considered, this venue was the best option. We will refine the ticket purchase process to make sure all Life Members have the opportunity to be in the room for the drawing. This will surely be a not to miss event as we will be GIVING AWAY ANOTHER **FULLY GUIDED ALASKA DALL SHEEP HUNT TO A LIFE MEMBER PRESENT** AT THE BANQUET.....This generated so much excitement and increased the revenue for the chapter, so it makes sense to continue. **Someone** present in the room will be going sheep hunting in Alaska with Lazy J Bar O Outfitters August 20-31, 2018. This will surely up the ante again for the 2018 banquet. Make sure you get signed up for your LIFE MEMBERSHIP online, as well as put the banquet on the calendar now. You MUST be a LIFE MEMBER and MUST BE PRESENT to win. As those of you who were at the last few banquets will tell you, we pack the house! We sold out the room last year in 10 days and continuing our Fully Guided Sheep Hunt raffle will mean that you will need to get your tickets early. We will also only be selling tickets online next year. We will have online ticket purchase up and running in January



Besides our newsletter, you can stay up to date on news, activities & current events by visiting our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MontanaWildSheepFoundation

President Message continued from page 3

2018 and we will put the information into our November/December 2017 Newsletter.

Also related to fundraisers, the Board has also made the decision to head to **Billings**, **MT in 2019**. The last time we held our event in Billings was 2007 and we hope to follow the precedent of 2 years in each town. Any members located in Billings that would like to assist would surely be welcomed.

In conservation news, the **February 2017 Domestic & Wild Sheep Symposium** was a great opportunity to hear presentations by both domestic and wild sheep biologists. I definitely learned a few things, as everyone in the room was smarter than me.... Kurt Alt, John Vore and Dave McEwen did a great job of putting together a panel of experts that provided a basis for moving forward on the disease issues. You can view all of the presentations on FWP's website here: http://fwp.mt.gov/events/sheepSymposium/default.html. This symposium also served as the kickoff to our Montana Wild/Domestic Sheep working group that will focus on solutions in Montana to address bighorn/domestic conflicts and success. There will be more details coming on this effort and please reach out if you have the capacity to assist.

Finally, I just wanted to thank all of the MTWSF board members, volunteers, donors and sponsors from the 2017 banquet one more time. It takes a significant effort from a great number of people to pull off these events. Without the support of volunteers, members, businesses and bighorn enthusiasts, we wouldn't be able to fund any of the work or "put more sheep on the mountain." Thank you for all that you do.

Brian Solan

Montana Wild Sheep Foundation President bsolan.bs@gmail.com • (406) 461-7432

Lall for Volunteers/Board Members

This is the official call for nominations to the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation Board of Directors for 2018. Typically our elections happen in late summer / early fall for the following year's director positions. This year there are three Directors whose terms are up – Mike Colpo (who is term limited out), Brian Solan and Justin Spring. If any member has the desire to serve on the board, please contact me. Thank you!

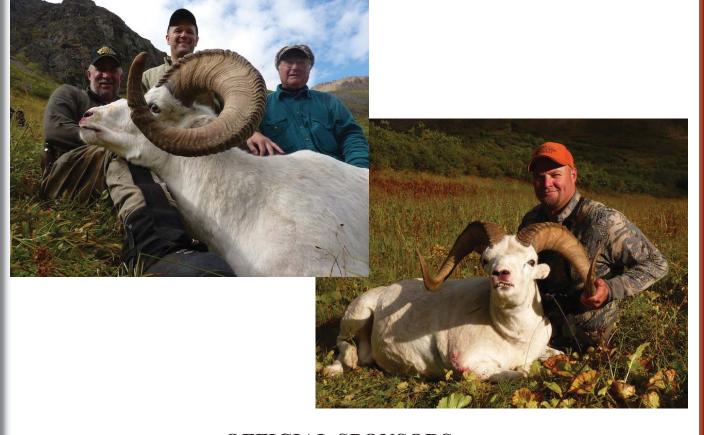
Brian Solan, bsolan.bs@gmail.com (406) 461-7432



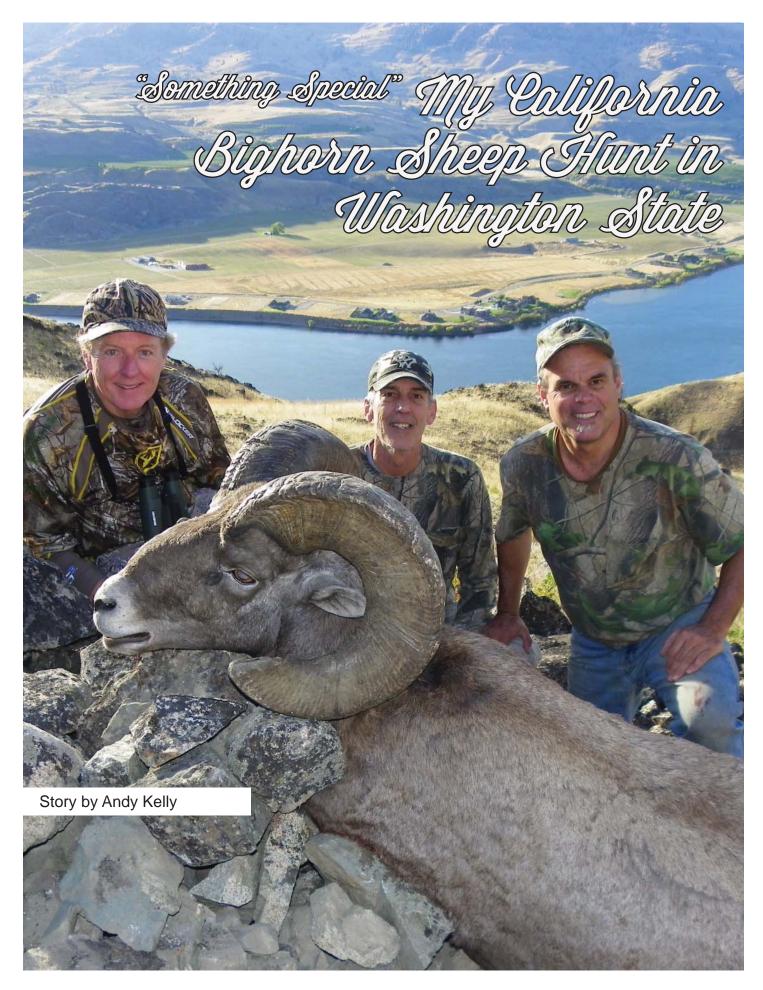


2018 LIFE MEMBER RAFFLE

- All <u>LIFE MEMBERS</u> of MT Wild Sheep Foundation are included.
- MUST BE PRESENT at Annual Banquet in Bozeman, March 10, 2018.
- Transferrable ONLY to another LIFE MEMBER that is also PRESENT.
- Hunt Dates August 20th 31st, 2018 with Lazy J Bar O Outfitters in unit 20A.
- This is a great Alaska Dall Sheep Hunt with a very successful outfitter.



OFFICIAL SPONSORS: Montana Wild Sheep Foundation Lazy J Bar O Outfitters



When I drew my 2016 California Bighorn sheep tag in the Chelan Butte unit of Washington State, I initially did not realize what a great tag I had drawn! Entering the draw with 10 points, as a non-resident, I felt very lucky to draw one of the two regular tags issued.

I first reached out to the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) District Wildlife Biologist in the Wenatchee area, along the Columbia River in central Washington. David Volsen was incredibly knowledgeable and helpful, having studied this sheep herd for a number of years, and even shared, via email, several of his maps of the area. Upon closer review, I noticed that Dave's maps were even marked where the rams typically "hang out". Wow, I felt like a kid with a treasure map, containing a large "X," as I planned my first scouting trip to the area! Maybe this could even be a DIY hunt, I thought. On my initial visit to central Washington, I encountered beautiful orchards and vineyards along the Columbia River, surrounded by very good sheep country. I drove where I could within the Chelan Butte unit, hiked and glassed other areas of the unit, eventually locating 30+ sheep, but no big rams. Unfortunately, I also saw so many places where big rams could hide on the unit's BLM and Washington State lands, and private property, that I quickly realized I was going to need some help if I hoped to harvest a really good ram in the Chelan Butte unit.

Two things struck me about my first conversation with Jon Barker, of Barker Trophy Hunts. First, I could not believe how excited Jon was for me to have drawn this tag. In 2015, he had guided his hunter, in this same unit, to the Gold Medal for California Bighorn Sheep of North America, as recognized at the Wild Sheep Foundation's Convention in January 2016. Secondly, Jon demonstrated he knew so much about the remaining individual rams in Chelan Butte, and the surrounding units, that I knew he could help me harvest a great ram. Jon ended our phone call by saying, "You can really do 'something special' with this tag."

We agreed to make the most of this opportunity. I learned that Jon, and one of his primary "local" guides, Joe Mosher, study the rams in this unit all year long, as they sometimes guide the Governor's Tag Auction or Raffle Sheep Tag winners. They had identified 1 or

2 exceptional rams, at that time, in the Chelan Butte unit. Joe, having grown up in the area and currently living near this unit, was able to provide regular scouting updates and photos prior to the hunt. He also knew many of the private land owners in this unit in case access permission was needed. Jon and Joe identified one ram as being the best of the whole herd, from among a group of eight rams that traveled together just before the season opened. His left horn was noticeably heavier than his longer right horn in all the scouting photos, and he looked like a great ram.

Opening morning came and I found myself climbing up a steep mountainside with both Jon and Joe. Having seen the rams the night before, they already had a plan for us to move part of the way up the mountain during the early morning darkness. As it became brighter, we could see 4 rams grazing their way across the top of the mountain. Our target ram was not among them. Soon, about 100 yards behind, and below the first group, we saw another group of 4 rams, with our ram being one of them. We continued up the mountain, and as cover became scarce, and it became brighter, the rams knew we were there, and kept an eye on us. I initially tried to position myself over a fallen tree, then crawled to a group of rocks that was a little closer to the rams. To relax me before the shot, Jon sounded like a yoga instructor as he said, "Take a deep breath, exhale slowly, r-e-l-a-x, and repeat a few times." It was working until Jon ranged my ram and asked me, "How are you at 340 yards?" The sheep were getting a little nervous and starting to work up the mountain, when my shot rang out. My ram ran 15 yards up the mountain, then fell back down to where he started. Seventy-five yards higher up on the mountain, the remaining seven rams grouped tightly together on a rock ledge, looking down at, and waiting, for their leader to join them. They milled around there for another 10 minutes until we began moving up to my ram.

I had always heard that California Bighorn sheep were smaller, and had thinner horn mass, than Rocky Mountain Bighorns. Well, not in Washington State! When I walked up to my ram he was heavier down through his horns than an average Rocky. What a spectacular scene, on the mountain holding my ram by the horns, and looking down over the beautiful Columbia River gorge.

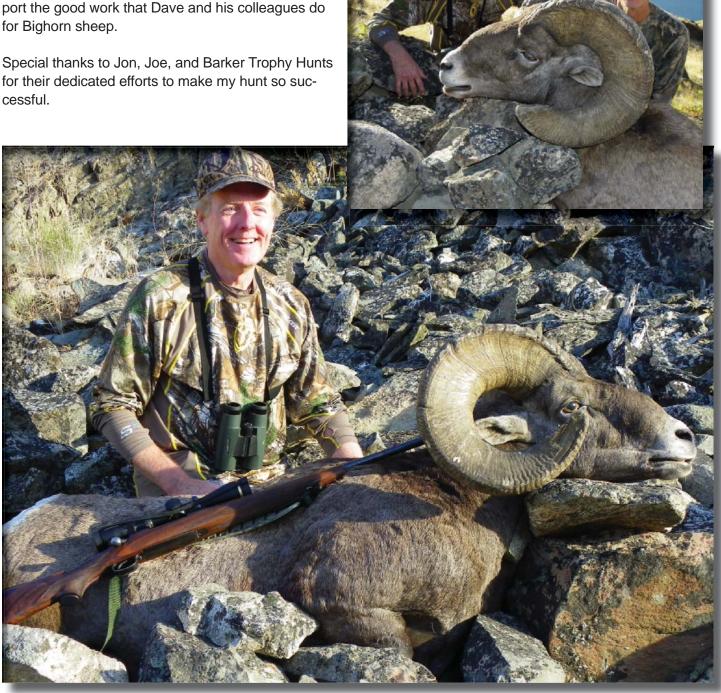
Dave Volsen, WDFW Biologist, came into the office

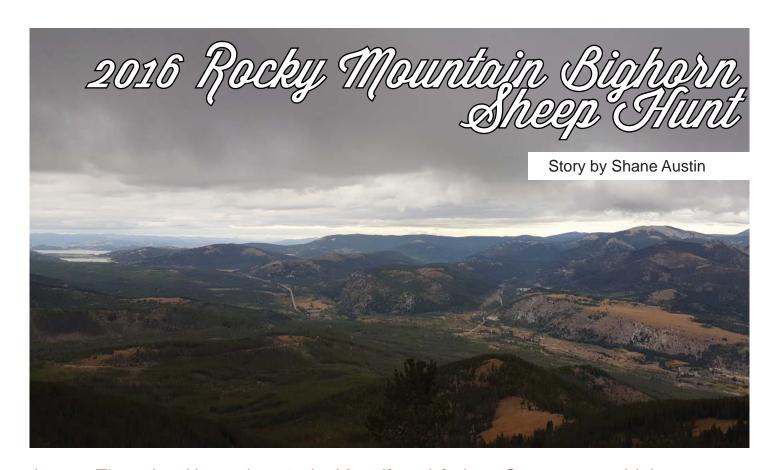
Something Special continued from page 7

on Sunday just to meet us, and to measure, pin, and take DNA samples of my 9 1/2 year old ram for their ongoing research. The 90 minutes we spent with Dave was like a seminar on Bighorn sheep and sheep hunting. He talked about all the research they have done on the Chelan Butte herd, DNA sampling, sheep transplants, population studies, habitat enhancement, and much more, as he measured and processed my ram. I also learned that most of the WDFW sheep research budget is funded from the Governor's Tag Auction and Raffle Sheep Tag revenues. I will continue to buy Washington sheep raffle tickets to support the good work that Dave and his colleagues do

for their dedicated efforts to make my hunt so suc-

My California Bighorn scored 178 5/8" net, Boone & Crockett. As luck would have it, Barker Trophy Hunts and I won Gold medals for guiding, and harvesting the largest California Bighorn at the recent Wild Sheep Foundation Convention in January of 2017. Now, that is "something special"!





It was Thursday November 17th. Myself and father, Casey were driving to meet our hunting partner for the day, Chad Galle. We met Chad at our regular spotting location, just off the highway outside of Anaconda, Montana. It was 6:30 in the morning. We spotted the area and talked about our plan of attack for the day. We saw a few different rams from where we were, but could tell they weren't the quality of ram we wanted. Our plan was to check out Olson Mountain as that is where we had seen the bulk of the rams this season. On our way up to the top of Olson we stopped a few different times to spot, but didn't see anything. We proceeded to the top and stopped on lookout mountain where we always spot from to check out the surrounding area. We saw a few rams from far away, but had no intentions on leaving Olson to peruse that bunch until we checked out another canyon that had been notorious for sheep.

Once we got to the canyon, we unloaded our packs, grabbed our rifles and spotting scopes and began to glass the area. It had been lightly snowing all morning, but at this point it started to snow a little harder (there was about 2 inches on the ground) and fog began to move in. We were afraid our visibility would be compromised due to the weather. At first, we didn't see any sheep, but soon after waiting for the sun to break through the clouds, Casey pointed out a group of sheep. In the group, there was four ewes one young ram and one mature ram that looked pretty

good. We sat on the group for a while, trying to get a good read on the ram, but he was hard to see as he moved in and out of the trees.

Once he stepped through, we were able to get a nice look and really judge him. I knew right away he was one of the bigger rams we'd seen this year. He was wide, had length, dropped below his jam line and had darker horns. We came to the conclusion he would be in the 180" range +/-.

2016 Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Hunt continued from page 9

After a while of looking, the herd began to make its way up the mountain and was about to drop over to the other side, so the time to make a decision was running out. This ram had the characteristics I was looking for, it was getting later in the year and we knew that there was not a lot of days left in the season, and we didn't want to pass him up, so I said I'm going to shoot.

It was about 10:00 am and at this point the herd was not far from moving out of visibility. We ranged and measured the ram at 352 yards. I took a good rest and put the ram in my scope. The ram had been acting "rutty" the whole time we watched him that morning and when I had him in my scope he was about to mount an ewe right when I pulled the trigger. The gunshot echoed through the steep canyon, and the herd scattered. I tried to follow the ram the best I could, but lost track of him. Chad and Casey saw where he went into the trees, but they could not see him either.

A few moments later we saw the herd run off, every sheep in the herd was accounted for except for the ram, so that was a good sign. If I had missed, he would have been right there with the heard. I had a good feeling the ram was hit well, I had a good rest and held right where I wanted to. After a while of looking in the area of where the ram went into the trees, Chad spotted him, he looked sick. He wasn't 20 feet away from where he went into the trees, we kept an eye on him for a while and were anticipating he would bleed out. The visibility wasn't great, and we were only able to see a small part of the ram. We saw him stand up and lay back down several different times, so we had a good feeling he wouldn't leave. After a while of discussion, we decided to go after him and find a good place to finish him off. We began to walk. It would take about 30 minutes to get down the steep mountain. We dropped off in elevation down some steep rocks to get to where he was. As we moved



through the trees we saw the tracks, blood, hair and his beds where he had laid in places before. We moved through the trees, following the blood trail. I was positioned in front so I could take a shot as soon as we saw him.

As we moved through the trees, the blood trail became more noticeable. we had a feeling he was close. At that time, we were coming around a corner. As soon as I looked around the corner, I saw the ram, staring at me at 40 yards. He was laying down and wasn't in too big of a hurry to get up and run. I threw my gun up, looked through the scope, held behind the shoulder, and as soon as he stood up, I shot. He ran probably 20 yards before he fell over dead. The ram was no match for a 300-caliber rifle at close range. The processes of boning out and capping the ram took about three hours, and when it was all said and done, we got back to the truck at 4:00 pm...the hunt took all day.

In the end, the Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep tag was the hardest tag I ever had to fill. It took a lot of time, 23 days of hunting/spotting for me and about 30 days for my dad. It took a lot of time and help form others along the way as well and I couldn't have done it without the great help. The hiking in steep terrain probably put me in the best shape of my life.

The ram was 8 years old and ended up scoring a 178". My plan is to get a "full body" mount.

It really is a special tag and once in a life time opportunity.

A special thanks to: Ryan Carlyle, Chad Galle, Tyke Galle, Nick Roche, Jack Jones, Joe Boyer, Brian Solan



25 Years of Sheep Thurters Gathering to Put and Keep Wild Sheep on the Mountain

Story by Doug Dreeszen, Past President, Life Member

As everyone was getting seated at the recent 25th Annual Banquet and Fundraiser at the Gran Tree Inn in Bozeman, Mt, I looked around the room trying to recognize any other old timers from past years and found that there were darn few of us there. But what I did see, were a lot of new faces, and most of them were younger wild sheep enthusiasts/hunters who were there to have a good time, great dinner and support our organization. It was great to see about as many young women as men, ready to bid on auction items or just buy a few raffle tickets to support our Montana Wild Sheep Foundation.



Tom Grimes, the Fundraiser Chairman came to the microphone and welcomed everyone and said a few words about having our first Banquet/Fundraiser in the same banquet hall 25 years ago at the Gran Tree Inn, and he thanked all the past presidents for their leadership.

In my contact with a few younger sheep hunters and members these days, I have found that they do not know some of the history of our Chapter, so I thought I would give a little information.

In the spring of 1992, Montana members of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, (FNAWS) headquartered in Cody, WY, received a post card in the mail advising them of an organizational meeting to be held at the Gran Tree Inn in Bozeman, MT, with the purpose of starting a Montana Chapter FNAWS. On May 9, 1992, wild sheep hunters and conservationists gathered and a steering committee was formed with Doug Dreeszen, Larry Altimus, Monte Schnur and Larry Mc Govern. Bozeman residents, Bob Jensen and Tom Sather volunteered at the meeting to run a membership campaign. By our first chapter meeting on July 11, 1992, we had 62 members. Articles of Incorporation were filed and IRS tax-exempt status paper work was formed and the Montana FNAWS was off and running. It is interesting to note that at this meeting Duncan Gilchrist gave a report of domestic sheep grazing on the Sula State Forest near a Big Horn Sheep wintering area. Not much has changed, here it is 25 years later, and we are still having issues with domestics. Our current President Brian Solan, in fact, has had several meetings with domestic sheep producers and with this open line of communication, it looks promising for the future to work out our concerns with these folks.

Also at this meeting, Board of Directors were appointed consisting of Lee Bridges, Glenn Erickson, and Mary Ellen Schnur for a 1 yr. term; 2 yr. term Tim Magness, Tom Sather, and Monte Schnur; 3 yr. term, Larry Altimus, Doug Dreeszen, and Bob Jensen. Officers, President Monte Schnur, Vice President Larry Altimus, and Sec-Treasurer Mary Ellen Schnur.

During this time frame, acclaimed wildlife artist, Gary R. Swanson was living in Montana on his ranch. He originated the famous Chadwick ram in the National FNAWS logo. He offered to donate and design a logo for the Montana FNAWS of a recently found ram skull. He painted a picture of this ram, "The King" which was sold at the first Banquet/Fundraiser that gave our MT FNAWS our first seed money to run the chapter's business. This painting was incorporated into our MT FNAWS logo.

December 12, 1992, first Banquet/ Fundraiser, Gran Tree Inn, Bozeman, MT

Please note: No Fundraiser in 1993, as had 1st one late in the year of 1992.

March 12, 1994, second Banquet-Fundraiser, Copper King Inn., Butte, MT.

February 17-18, 1995, third Banquet-Fundraiser, Holiday Inn Trade Center, Billings, MT.

February 16-17, 1996, forth Banquet-Fundraiser, Holiday inn, Bozeman, MT.

February 14-15, 1997, fifth Banquet-Fundraiser, Copper King, Butte, MT.

February 6-7, 1998, sixth Banquet- Fundraiser, Holiday Inn, Missoula, MT.

February 5-6, 1999, seventh Banquet-Fundraiser, Holiday Inn, Great Falls, MT.

February 25-26, 2000, eighth Banquet-Fundraiser, Cavanaugh's Colonial Hotel, Helena, MT.

February 23-24, 2001, ninth Banquet-Fundraiser, Holiday Inn, Bozeman, MT.

February 8-9, 2002, tenth Banquet-Fundraiser, Holiday Inn Parkside, Missoula, MT.

February 21-22, 2003, eleventh Banquet-Fundraiser, Holiday Inn, Bozeman, MT.

February 20-21, 2004, twelve Banquet-Fundraiser, Ramada Copper King, Butte, MT.

February 4-5, 2005, thirteenth Banquet-Fundraiser, Best Western Heritage Inn, Great Falls, MT.

March 3-4, 2006, fourteenth Banquet-Fundraiser, Holiday Inn, Missoula, MT.

February 23-24, 2007, fifteenth Banquet-Fundraiser, Billing's Hotel & Convention Center, Billings, MT.

February 29-March 1, 2008, sixteenth Banquet-Fundraiser, Hilton Garden Inn, Kalispell, MT.

March 13-14, 2009, seventieth Banquet-Fundraiser, Gran Tree Inn, Bozeman, MT.

March 12-13, 2010, eighteenth Banquet- Fundraiser, Red Lion Colonial Inn, Helena, MT.

March 12, 2011, nineteenth Banquet-Fundraiser, Hilton Garden Inn, Missoula, MT

February 24-25, 2012, 20th Banquet-Fundraiser, Gran Tree, Bozeman, MT.

March 8-9, 2013, 21st Banquet-Fundraiser, Copper King Hotel, Butte, MT.

February 28-March 1, 2014, 22nd Banquet-Fundraiser, Hilton Garden Inn, Missoula, MT.

25 Years of Sheep Hunters Gathering to Put and Keep Wild Sheep on the Mountain

continued from page 13

March 6-7, 2015, 23rd, Banquet-Fundraiser, Colonial Inn, Helena, MT. March 18-19, 2016, 24th Banquet-Fundraiser, Radisson Colonial Inn, Helena, MT. March 3-4, 2017, 25th Anniversary Banquet-Fundraiser, Gran Tree Inn, Bozeman, MT.

Past Presidents - Montana Wild Sheep Foundation (Formerly MT FNAWS)

1992 - 1993 Monte Schnur	2004 - Mike Murphy	
1994 - 1995 Larry McGovern	2005 - 2009 Tom Powers	Please Note: Some years
1995 - 1997 Doug Dreeszen	2010 - 2011 Jack Chambers	list two Presidents for same
1998 - 2000 Jim Weatherly	2011 - 2013 Mike Menke	year due to time of year of
2000 - 2002 Tom Powers	2013 - 2014 Jack Chambers	elections.
2003 - 2004 Tom Sather	2015 - 2017 Brian Solan	

Jim Weatherly also served as Executive Director of MT WSF from November 2004 thru October 2015.

For a more in-depth look at the beginnings of our Montana Chapter, please see the book, "Putting Sheep on the Mountain. The Foundation for North American Wild Sheep twenty-five years dedicated to Wild Sheep 1974-1999". Edited and compiled by Dr. Roy A. Schultz, Daniel A. Pedrotti, and Susan C. Reneau. In this book, the Montana Chapter's history up to 1999 was written by Doug Dreeszen.

"Putting and Keeping Wild Sheep on the Mountain" is a Registered Trademark of the National Wild Sheep Foundation. Use of this registered trade mark has been granted from National WSF for this article.

Photo Gallery



Jack Catron and his ram from HD 482.



Bill Ashe and his ram taken from HD 680.















































Scott & Barbara DeMars
Earl Griffith
B.C. Trophy Mountain Outfitters
Tom Grimes
Fred Boyer - Artist

Randy Melvin - Bull Mountain Rifles
Dan Lilja - Lilja Barrells
Cynthie Fisher - Artist
Out of Africa in Montana Gallery













Montana Wild Sheep Foundation

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☐ 3 year - \$80.00 ☐ Family ☐ 1 year - \$50.00 ☐ 3 year - \$120.00 ☐ Life - \$500.00	Montana Chapter WSF PO Box 17731 Missoula, MT 59808