

*** *Montana* ***
WILD SHEEP
FOUNDATION
KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN

WildSheep

Winter 2016 | Volume 24, Issue 1

The Warrior

Five feet of snow and the most incredible sight, a silhouette of the largest ram I have ever seen.

MT FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
**2016 Bighorn
Sheep Horn
Measurements**

Check out the *Photo Gallery*

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All contributed material will be published at the discretion of the Editorial Board of Montana WSF. The Editorial Board consists of the editor of the newsletter, the executive director of the chapter, and the president of the chapter.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Photo on page 3, 17 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 s_clouse@yahoo.com

Max Bauer Jr., Treasurer

5074 Gardner Lane, Florence, MT 59833
(406) 532-5120 bauertranch@gmail.com

Jeff Mortensen, Secretary

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

Jack Chambers

3208 Paul Lane, Missoula, MT 59803
(406) 251-4082 jackchambersori@yahoo.com

Mike Colpo

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

Bruce Sterling

66 Sterling Drive, Thompson Falls, MT 59873
(406) 274-6023 bsterling@mt.gov

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

*Grant volunteered to fill Tom Carlsen's vacant seat and the Montana WSF board accepted. His term will expire September 2016.

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

President's Message

As I am writing this, I am preparing the trade show booth, photos and sheep mounts for the trip to the Wild Sheep Foundation's Sheep Show in Reno, NV (Jan 21-23). There will be thousands of sheep enthusiasts telling sheep hunting stories (and in many cases stretching the truth drastically), raising money for conservation and discussing strategies to "put more sheep on the mountain". It will be a great time and a great opportunity to reach out and share best practices with partners in the name of conservation.

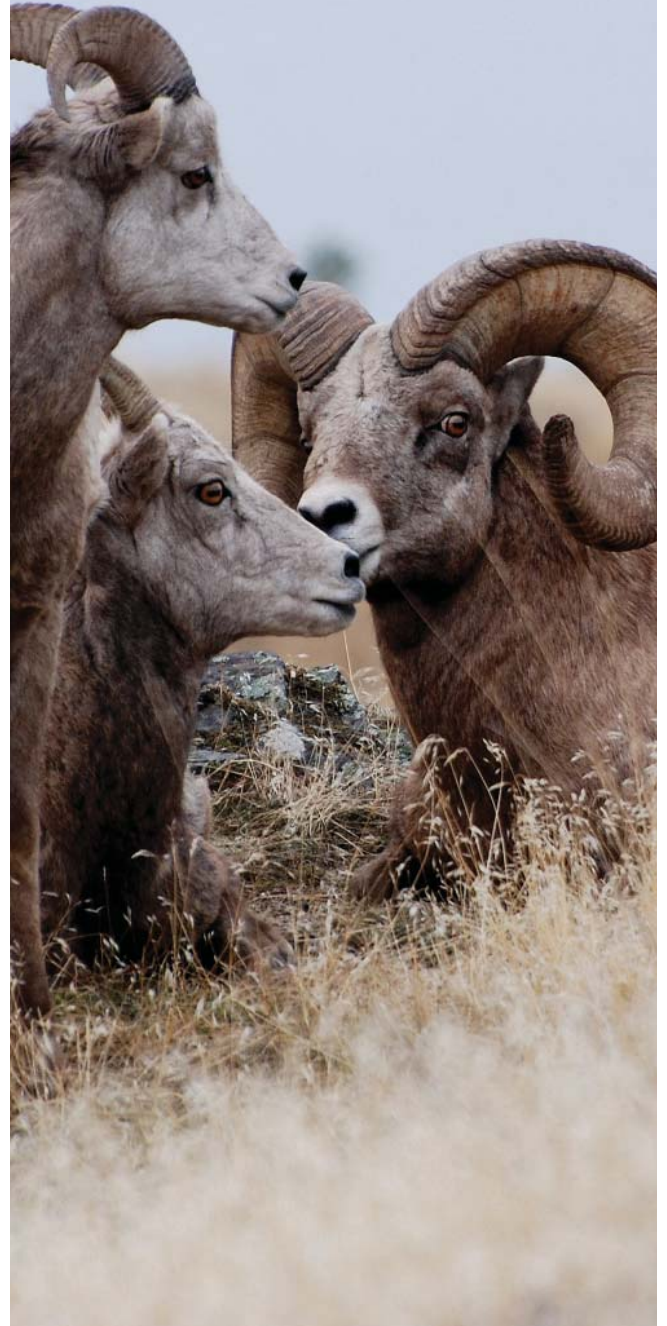
After the Sheep Show, then it's onto the Montana Outfitters & Guides (MOGA) winter meeting in Helena (Jan 29-30) where MOGA is holding a conservation symposium focused on bighorn sheep. There will be representatives from Wild Sheep Foundation, Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, Montana Woolgrowers, MOGA, Montana FWP, National Wildlife Federation, Montana State University, private landowners, Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribe and others to discuss Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Conservation in Montana. A seldom had opportunity to get all of the players at the table for real world discussions on how to "put more sheep on the mountains of Montana". Please consider attending and supporting conservation of bighorn sheep in Montana.

Then the real work begins in preparation for our **24th Annual Fundraiser March 18-19, 2016 in Helena, MT**. Yes, we are back in Helena again this year as we had a record turnout at last year's event. The newly remodeled **Radisson Colonial Hotel (formerly the Red Lion Colonial)** was a great venue last year and this year they have added a new lounge area, updated lighting, updated audio/visual equipment and a long list of other improvements. There will be some new and exciting raffles and drawings focused on our new and life membership, as well as a "Whiskey Tango" auction/raffle that will involve (7) bottles of Montana produced premium Whiskey, trips to Las Vegas and firearms to win!! Presentations from Dr. Robert Garrott on his bighorn research at Montana State University are on the schedule as is our **Annual Youth Event at the Montana Wild Education Center in Helena (10am-1pm) March 19th**. It is sure to be a great event. Make sure you get your tickets early for the banquet, as we sold out last year and turned people away at the door.

Brian Solan

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

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FACEBOOK?



Besides our newsletter, you can stay up to date on news, activities & current events by visiting our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/MontanaWildSheepFoundation

2016 Montana Wild Sheep Foundation Banquet

March 18th & 19th • Radisson Colonial Inn, Helena, MT

2016 Annual Banquet Agenda

Friday March 18, 2016 – Radisson Colonial Inn

(5pm – 9pm)

Membership Meeting & Social

- *Board meeting and social with exhibitors. Open to all members.*
- *\$20 for a MTWSF pint glass with all the beer you can drink!!*

(7pm – 8pm)

Hunt Preparation - Jack Atcheson, Jr. & Mike Colpo

Saturday March 19, 2016 – Montana WILD Education Center at Spring Meadow Lake State Park

(10am – 1pm)

Youth Event - Partnership w/ Montana WILD <http://fwp.mt.gov/education/montanaWild/>

- *Shooting demonstrations, archery, wildlife displays, live animals.*

Saturday March 19, 2016 – Radisson Colonial Inn – Exhibits open 9am-6:30pm

(9am – 11am)

Montana's Bighorn Research Initiative - Presentation

- *Dr. Robert Garrott, Director, Montana State University Fish & Wildlife Ecology & Management Program*

(2pm – 4pm)

Backpack Hunting Tricks and Tips - Presentation

- *Various Industry Experts Discuss What Works for Them*

(5pm – 6:30pm)

Social with Exhibitors

- *\$20 for a MTWSF pint glass with all the beer you can drink!! A no-host full bar.*

(6:30 – 10pm)

Annual Fundraiser Dinner & Auction

- *Gray Thornton – President/CEO Wild Sheep Foundation*
- *Silent & Live Auction, Raffles, Dinner*

Major Fundraiser Items

Youth Event: 10 am - 1 pm @ MT Wild Education Center. Bring your kids for archery shooting, animal tracking demonstration, and wildlife display.

Custom Rifle Raffle: Defiance Machine of Columbia Falls, MT has donated their “Deviant” action with integral 20 MOA rail for the 2016 custom rifle in a .270 Remington. Lilja Barrels of Plains, MT has donated the 24 inch custom barrel. Randy Melvin of Bull Mountain Rifle Company in Billings, MT is building the rifle. It will be fitted on a McMillan Game Scout fiberglass stock donated by Kelly McMillan. It also features a Jewell trigger and TSR Aluminum rings. The rifle serial number is MTWSF 2016 and will include a scope. Tickets are \$20 each. Need not be present to win.

Sheep Camp Raffle: 10' X 12' Relite Spike III tent by Montana Canvas of Belgrade, Montana. Includes internal frame, Riley stove, cots, sleeping bags and other camp amenities.

New Member Raffle: One new members name will be drawn for a rifle. You must have joined the chapter since the 2015 Fundraiser.

Hat Raffle: Karl Tyler Chevrolet of Missoula is again sponsoring our hat raffle. 48 numbered hats and one lucky number will be drawn for a rifle.

Taxidermy Raffle: To set the stage, anyone who brings a wild sheep mount will be entered into a drawing for a rifle.

“Whiskey Tango”: (7) Premium Montana made whiskey bottles in the silent auction with a raffle ticket attached. 1 in 7 will win a Rifle.

Photo Contest: Photo categories include: “Hunter in the Field”, “Hunter with Trophy” or “Wild Sheep”. One photo entry per person per category.

For the latest info on our event check our website at www.montanawsf.org.



REGISTRATION FORM
MONTANA WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION
March 18-19, 2016 FUNDRAISER BANQUET
Radisson Colonial Hotel, Helena MT (Formerly Red Lion)

For Room Reservations call 406-443-2100

(Indicate your attendance at the Wild Sheep Convention for the \$99.99 plus tax room rate)

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Street Address _____ Telephone Number _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

I am also registering the following guests:

Name _____ Address _____

Name _____ Address _____

(Please list any additional names & addresses on an attachment)

FRIDAY MEMBERSHIP SOCIAL DINNER

No tickets needed. Annual membership meeting, Jack Atcheson, Jr. & Mike Colpo presentation on "Hunt Preparation - Physical & Mental." Appetizers and drinks.

SATURDAY BANQUET

Prior to March 1st

After March 1st

Adult Dinner	_____ Tickets @ \$50 each	_____ Tickets @ \$55 each	\$ _____
Youth Dinner	_____ Tickets @ \$40 each	_____ Tickets @ \$50 each	\$ _____
Table Sponsor	_____ Tables @ \$350 each	_____ Tables @ \$375 each	\$ _____

(8) dinner tickets and a bottle of wine included with each table sponsor ticket.

RAFFLE TICKETS

	Prize	Cost	
Sponsor Raffle	Remington 700 SPS	_____ Tickets @ \$300 each	\$ _____
<i>(1) Remington 700 SPS for Every (5) Sponsor tickets sold.</i>			
Custom Rifle Raffle	Custom Built .270 Remington	_____ Tickets @ \$20 each	\$ _____
Sheep Camp Raffle	Wall Tent, stove, cots, etc.	_____ Tickets @ \$10 each or 12 for \$100	\$ _____

(All dinner and raffle tickets will be held for pickup at the registration table.)

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

	Term	Cost	
Regular Membership	1 Year	_____ Members @ \$30	\$ _____
	3 Year	_____ Members @ \$80	\$ _____
Youth Membership	1 Year	_____ Members @ \$15	\$ _____
	3 Year	_____ Members @ \$35	\$ _____
Family Membership	1 Year	_____ Members @ \$50	\$ _____
	3 Year	_____ Members @ \$120	\$ _____
Life Membership (Until 4/1/16)	Lifetime	_____ Members @ \$350	\$ _____
Life Membership (after 4/1/16)	Lifetime	_____ Members @ \$500	\$ _____

Total \$ _____

Major Fundraiser Items:

- Whitewater Rafting Trip - 5 Days/4 Nights on Salmon River
- Youth Event Saturday 10am @ MT WILD Facility
- Guns, guns, and more guns to be given away in raffles!
- Leupold Optics Package
- Womens package raffle
- Red Lodge B&B Stay
- Original Cynthia Fisher artwork
- Silent and live auction items

How are you Paying? Check Credit Card Master Card Visa

Name on Credit Card _____ 3-4 Digit Code _____

Credit Card No. _____ Expiration Date _____ (mo/yr)

Signature of Card Holder _____ Telephone _____

Mail this form with check or credit card information to:
Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, PO Box 17731, Missoula, MT 59808
or register online at www.montanawsf.org
For questions contact Brian Solan 406-461-7432 or bsolan.bs@gmail.com



I think for most boys, and a lot of girls especially lately, growing up in Montana with its huge variety of wildlife we learn to hunt and fish at an early age, my early days were no exception, my dad, “Pa” as I called him was my mentor! I’ve hunted quite a few species, but bighorn sheep was always a dream of mine.

As soon as I was eligible I always asked Pa if I could put in and he obliged. When I was in high school I took over the application process and have done so for the last 45 years.

On June 15th of this year, Christmas came early. Most people nowadays check their drawing status on the computer as soon as we know licenses are drawn. I felt like a little kid on Christmas morning when I saw I was successful for a sheep license in GMU 213. It was a combination of pure excitement with a little bit of nervous expectations for a hunt that I’ve always dreamed of, but have never been a part of.

Within days I was already preparing for what I feel will be a once in a lifetime hunt, especially since I am 57 and can’t put in for another 7 years. Of course I ordered an area specific map for GMU 213, bought a new pack and delved into reading, watching sheep videos and contacting people in the know about sheep. I liked the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation on Facebook and then I asked if anyone knew much about the sheep population and best places to start looking. Within hours I got a response from Brian Solan of the foundation and he told me he took a sheep out of the unit about 5 years ago. I contacted Brian and what an outstanding person to get in touch with! He grew up there and I think

he has one quarter sheep blood running through his veins... I can tell he loves everything and is very knowledgeable about bighorn sheep.

Within a week or so my best friend, also my wife, and I were doing day hikes looking for sheep and learning the area. Who knew, even though I grew up 30 minutes away from the area in Butte, that hiking and scouting the area we would find such awe inspiring views and pristine mountain lakes that we will continue to enjoy for years to come.

Opening day came on September 15th, as it always does for those who draw the coveted Moose, Sheep or Goat licenses in Montana. Even though I spent probably a good 10 days off work and on scouting I had not seen a sheep in the unit, I was still excited to be in the field with a tag in my pocket. I did call the area biologist and he did say the population was down to around 67 sheep on his last count. He did say there were at least 15 decent rams in the area and that usually the last few weeks are the best chance to see most of them due to the weather that time of year and the rut. After 45 years of waiting, I was hunting when I could. My wife would accompany me when she could and my son Ry came when he could. It wasn't until October when I first started seeing sheep, one young ram and ewes.

I hunted off and on but on November 8th I was off for the last three weeks of the season. I hunted hard, took a long walk but to no avail...no rams! The next day after a morning hunt I was driving to a different part of the area when a bruiser of a ram shot across the road. I was out, pack on and within minutes I had crossed the creek and was following the big ram straight up Garrity mountain. It is at this time I realized I was not as young as I wanted to be, but how strong and sadistic these animals are. As soon as I reached the cliffy area going straight up on his tracks and seeing that the next ledge was 4 feet up and his tracks bounded from one ledgy area to the next, I knew not only was this an exercise in futility but he was going to do this all day if need be.

Being exhausted, I retreated home and came back

the following day after with my son looking for rams. We met a local fella named Dan Haffey who shared some photos of rams he saw a week earlier and laughed and said like all the others, not to worry, you'll get a decent ram. My son and I went west to glass some areas and found some rams way up feeding. We decided how to go after them and it worked to perfection. After a two hour hike we came out over the ridge above them to catch them both at 75 yards just staring at us. I put the scope on them as they were side by side and lowered it stating to my son...too small! One was a half curl and the other a three quarter or so, legal but not a shooter in this area. As they ran to our left the THIRD ram followed, not knowing there were three I just had enough time to get him in the scope to see he was a good ram but that was it, they slipped around the mountain and were gone.

We walked back to the truck and realized it was about a 5 hour excursion up and back, but we saw sheep and were excited, but tired. We stopped along the road and started scoping the mountains for sheep again. It's hard to believe how fast a body can go from feeling tired to complete exhilaration when your son says "Dad... LOOK"!!! About 80 yards in front of us coming from the creek side were three rams, one that I could see was a heavy broomed off old guy.

I exited my truck, crossed the road and got far enough away to shoot all while focusing on that lead ram that was soon to be mine. I know I was thinking "seriously, after all this scouting and miles of walking, I see him from my truck"? I knelt down only to find I couldn't see in the tall grass. I promptly stood back up and I could see the top 4 to 5 inches of his back and his head as he quartered away from me on the run. I put the crosshairs on him just below the hump that a mature ram has and squeezed off the shot. As anyone who hunts knows you see the animal dropping even as you have the recoil...and he dropped like a rock! As he went down a passersby yelled something and I turned to see who it was yelling and looked back at my son and told him to grab my pack. I turned to see the other sheep running off. This is where I was a bit confused, there were three, but I had already

It's hard to believe how fast a body can go from feeling tired to complete exhilaration when your son says, "Dad...Look"!!!

The Warrior continued from page 7

shot the big fella with a 300wby mag. I was focused on the lead ram and was wondering, was there a fourth that came out behind the other three? This is when my son Ry ran to me with my pack and said "he got up, he isn't down!" I never took a shot at the ram running away because I didn't want to shoot two!!! Needless to say, the guys in the truck told my son, as I was then after the sheep, that I had hit him in the horn and the ram went down, was kicking his legs and got right up like he was never hit! They watched as the three rams went up over the mountain like nothing had happened! There was no blood, no evidence at all he was hit!

As we drove home to Helena that evening I was sick to my stomach. I never miss like that especially at about 100 yards, if that! I kept running it through my mind, was it me, was the scope off? I always go into the field with a sighted in and clean rifle... WHAT HAPPENED? The next day I headed to the range to find my scope must have taken a hit at some point during my journeys hunting. It was off, high and to the left. It finally made sense but I didn't feel any more at ease. I spent two sleepless nights before returning the next day, thinking and being stressed about hitting such a majestic animal but not harvesting it! Not much sleep and a lot of stress by not only me but by my wife Linda also. She knew I was stressed, she knew I felt bad and was upset about that day. I arrived early and glassed two different rams. I decided to make a stalk on one but to no avail, just another 4 hour long hike.

That evening, a Friday, my wife met me in Butte to do some hunting for the next couple days. Saturday we arrived just at shooting light, it was a warmer day and a little windy. We glassed several different places trying to locate some rams and when we did find one to go after we decided to try and see if we could run into him. I must say that in all of the days she scouted and hunted until this point, she had not seen a legal ram. She also told me that morning that if she didn't see a ram she wasn't coming anymore. I know her though, she would have come! We never got a shot at the ram but she did get to see one so she was on board to hunt again on Sunday.

We ran into Brian and I told him we would try Olson gulch the next morning and he stated that with it being warm it might be a good idea since the sheep would move up without the bad weather.



On Sunday, November 15th we arrived a little later and unloaded our 4 wheeler to get us up to the good glassing areas. We were into good sheep country and were nearing the top of the gulch when I spotted three rams laying up above us on a drifted in ledge. I was glassing to see the size and saw a mature heavy ram to the left, definitely older and heavier than the other two. I was at quite an angle down from him and once again had just his top part of his body to aim for. I took the shot and they were up and ran to my left. I settled the crosshairs on his vitals and squeezed off the shot and finished him off. He tumbled about 60 yards as the others ran past him. He stopped tried to get up but he was done. I

had taken out the heart and lungs, not knowing my wife Linda was taking pictures as it all happened.

As I walked up the mountain I realized I had taken a ram, on my terms and it was him! It was the ram I hit four days earlier. I feel so grateful it was the same sheep I had lost hours of sleep over. This sheep, my wife (who had put in many hours on this adventure) was with me and that was simply awesome. I've made some great friends as well along the way!

*The sheep dubbed
"warrior" has battle scars
from not only other rams,
but from me as well. I
am truly blessed!*

I now have a story not many can tell. I took a beautiful old ram, I shot him on two different days four days apart with different family members each day. 🍖



Jim Weatherly Retirement

by Brian Solan, President - Montana Wild Sheep Foundation

When most people think of Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep in Montana, they immediately think of Jim Weatherly. For some it is because he harvested the largest ram ever taken in Montana (and the U.S.) as he is linked forever to the record books with that legendary Rock Creek Ram. There is something about big rams that gets everyone excited.

Not to take away from Jim's hunting accomplishment, but for those of us in the conservation world we think of Jim in a different light. We think of Jim as the authority on Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep conservation in Montana. Whenever we have a question about Montana bighorn sheep, grazing allotments, herd health, access issues, prescribed burns, transplant successes and failures, etc. - we call Jim

Weatherly. Jim is a walking encyclopedia of knowledge and expertise on the subject. For the past 20+ years, Jim has tirelessly donated his time, money and knowledge to "putting more sheep on the Montana mountains." Jim has served as Executive Director of the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation with an annual salary of \$0.00, as he has donated his time completely. Jim is primarily responsible for most of the projects and work the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation has completed.

For me personally, Jim is the guy who got myself (and most of the other current board members) involved with the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation. He's been a mentor in both conservation issues and in life. He has been more effective than most paid staff and it will be nearly impossible to replace the effort that Jim has donated over the years. And although we don't

want Jim to stop working on sheep issues in Montana, he has decided to formerly step down as Executive Director of the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation and enjoy more retirement weather in sunny Arizona during the winter. What Jim doesn't know is he will still need to answer questions on a weekly basis, so he isn't fully getting rid of us....

Please join me in wishing Jim all the best and thanking him personally for all of the work he has done for Montana Rocky Mountain Sheep conservation over the years. 🍷



Steve Kline, Jim Weatherly, and Mike Menke with a young ram that was transplanted from Wild Horse Island in 2011.



Montana Outfitter & Guides Association Conservation Session

Managing Bighorn Sheep in Montana: Challenges & Opportunities

Saturday January 30, 2016

Radisson Hotel (Formerly the Colonial Red Lion), Helena, MT

Saturday Managing Big Horn Sheep in Montana: Challenges and Opportunities (Saturday January 30 8:00 am to 12:00 noon)



This two panel session will focus on the current status and management of wild sheep in Montana. Emphasis will be placed on the historic trends in wild sheep abundance and distribution, challenges in management and recovery, pathways to success. Along the way we will discuss domestic and wild sheep interactions, the myths and facts, strategies for ensuring the sustainability of wild sheep and sheep production. We will host a panel of renowned experts. This session will be open to the public.

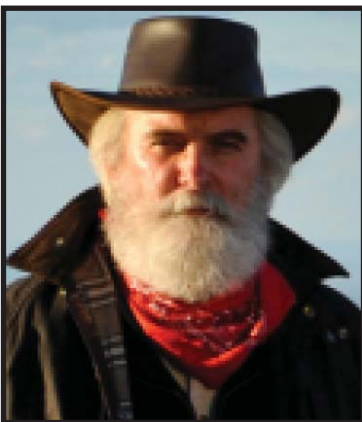
Panelists: John Vore MFWP, Jack Atcheson, Jr. WSF, TBA MTWGA, Dave Hunter DVM, Dr. Bob Garrott – MSU, Brian Solan MTWSF, Dale Becker CSKT Wildlife Program Manager, Matt Wickens – Dog Creek Outfitters, and Kit Fischer, NWF

Steering Committee: Kevin Hurley – WSF, Brian Solan – MWSF, Mac Minard MOGA, Jack Atcheson Jr – WSF, Robert Arnaud, MOGA

REGISTER for MOGA CONVENTION

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ebednhwoeb8fcf88&llr=gjeiz6jab>

Saturday Conservation Partners Luncheon – Shane Mahoney (Saturday January 30, 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm)



Following the Conservation Session Challenges in Managing Wild Sheep in Montana, we will be joined by Shane Mahoney, one of the leading and most recognized conservationists of our time. As our guest and Featured Speaker he will deliver a message that educates and motivates people to the benefits of partnerships in conservation, particularly as it might apply in the complex management challenges surrounding wild sheep in Montana. Shane Mahoney is widely recognized as a leading authority on North American conservation history and policy and has been in the forefront of debates on issues of sustainable use within both the United States and Canada. Well recognized as a communicator on these issues he will offer case studies where diverse interests have come together for the benefit of wildlife in a very compelling manner. More specifically answering the question with regard to Wild Big Horn Sheep; why is it essential that diverse interests must come together if

Wild Sheep are going to continue persist and ultimately thrive on the Montana landscape? This session promises to be an extraordinary highlight to the MOGA Winter Convention.

REGISTER FOR LUNCH WITH SHANE MAHONEY - Seating is limited and requires special registration

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ebsgvfj28b4379f4&llr=gjeiz6jab>



November 4th

Story by Robbie Seymour

On November 4, 2014 I sealed the deal on what would be the most grueling hunt I have ever been a part of. That hunt was a Montana Crazy Mountains mountain goat hunt that would span the course of 17 days.

I hiked 137 miles and looked at 133 mountain goats before pulling the trigger from a cliff face in a very high wind. Two days prior, while hunting solo, I managed to find myself in the precarious position of standing on a frozen waterfall hidden under the snow. The next step sent me tumbling down the mountain and caused damage to my already bad knee (a fact I had mostly kept to myself until this writing.) I relied heavily on my brother Jared, A.K.A “Pack Mule” to bare the brunt of the load for the agonizing pack out on that goat hunt as I limped out of mountains in a blizzard, in country that was not designed for humans to ever be.

Following that trip, I made an appointment with a knee specialist who confirmed what I already knew.....knee surgery was to follow. I figured if I had to have a knee surgery, this would be the best time. Moose and sheep were the only two species I had any notable amount of preference points for, and even then the chance of drawing a permit was poor at best. I would coast through 2015 fishing walleye tournaments and nursing my knee back to health.....or so I thought. On the day permit results were due to come out,

I was barely off crutches. I was caught up at work when my brother sent me a text message, "YOU'RE HUNTING CURLY HORNS!"

If you want to see what successful wildlife management looks like, then spend a few days in the Missouri River Breaks. Wow! There is a LOT of bighorn sheep in that country. I'm not saying they are going to be easy to get to. In fact, that is some of the most formidable country a hunter could ever step foot into. Spotting sheep won't take you long, but most of the vertical bluffs are a daunting task to tackle, if not impossible. My first weekend in, I managed to see several rams that would be considered trophies in any other area, the biggest being in the low 180's by my best guess.

I had set the lofty goal of shooting a ram with my bow, which would score top ten in the world. It didn't take long for me to realize just how difficult a ram can be to judge. I tried to keep a log of how many sheep I had been seeing and where. I had to stop keeping track because there were just too many sheep to tell if I was counting a sheep I had already seen or if it was a new one. I was at 157 sheep that I figured were in far enough areas apart that I could consider them to be definitely different sheep when I stopped counting. Any ram I could get a decent picture of on my phone through the spotting scope I would take home and zoom in on, trying to assign a score to it. It became a weekly game of showing the pictures of rams to friends in the hunting community and trying to guess the scores. Some rams I had seen on multiple occasions and it was interesting to see how far they would or wouldn't travel. I knew I didn't want to get serious about finding a trophy ram until November when the rut started, so I did my best to help other hunters who were lucky enough to draw a permit, but were struggling to find sheep. Coincidentally, my uncle had drawn a bighorn permit in the adjacent hunting district to mine, so I also spent several days helping him. All the while, I was honing my skills at judging rams.

On November 4th, one year to the day from shooting my mountain goat, I spotted a ram that had great bases, carried his mass very well and had decent length.

Several rams were tempting and I kept them in the back of my mind, just in case I couldn't find the ram I was looking for. One such ram was beyond a full 360 degree curl, but just didn't have the mass I wanted. It was without a doubt the prettiest ram I saw all season. As November rolled around I was starting to question whether I had unrealistic expectations about mass when I spotted a sheep for a brief moment that even from a mile away had dwarfed any sheep I had seen up until that point and had GIANT length to go with it. I didn't know if I had time to get to him before dark, but I was going to try. Half way to him I was able to get another look at him through the spotting scope. What followed was a blur of expletives and me throwing my spotting scope. I couldn't believe what I had just seen. The ram I had been waiting for all season was broken on one side, and not by just a little bit..... halfway gone. On another occasion I snuck in on a group of

rams with my bow only to watch the biggest ram break off the tip of his horn right in front of me while fighting another big busted up ram. Were all the rams going to be broken up by the end of rut?

On November 4th, one year to the day from shooting my mountain goat, I spotted a ram that had great bases,

carried his mass very well and had decent length. He was a ram that I felt had a very good chance of being top ten in the world and possibly better. It took a couple attempts to make it to his elevation and we found ourselves above treacherous drop-offs in saturated gumbo from 24 hours of straight rain. At one point we had to turn around and abandon our vertical progress in an attempt to find a route that wouldn't lead to our death. Eventually we got there only to realize two more rams joined him and the harem, and one was big enough to challenge his authority. As they began to battle, I couldn't help but wonder if I was going to watch this big ram bust his horns to pieces. Before I knew it, they had chased each other over the ridge and out of my sight.

Had I just blown my opportunity? I had several opportunities to take a shot with my rifle, but I really

November 4th *continued from page 13*

wanted the bow kill. Pack Mule began yelling at me, “Why weren’t you shooting? That’s a big ram!” I looked over to my father, thirty yards below, who was in obvious pain from the climb up. His knees have also been ravaged by years of miles in the backcountry and hard labor. It was then that I made up my mind. Although I still liked my odds of getting this ram with my bow, it was more important to me to have my dad see it since he may likely not have the fortune of drawing such a coveted tag.

The next chance I got, I was going to air mail a hopped-up 150 grain .270 ballistic tip. No sooner had I made up my mind when the big ram came running over the top toward me, chasing a hot ewe. He stopped at 250 yards broadside and that was the last step he ever took. A rough tape in the field echoed what we had guessed for score and was confirmed the next day by the biologist: both bases over 16.5 inches, first quarter mass of 16 inches, and 40 inch length for a total green score right at 195+/- . In all I had seen four more rams that I felt were 190” caliber, at least a few more in the upper 180s, and a couple that would have been upper



190's or more had they not been broken. Talk about great conservation and wildlife management. My hat is off to all those past and present, such as Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, which have done their part to make Montana such a great place to live and recreate. 🍷

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

2015 Bighorn Sheep Horn Measurements

Region	Hunting District	County	Harvest Date	Type of Harvest	Age	Right Horn Total Length	Circumference Base Right	Left Horn Total Length	Circumference Base Left
1	124	Sanders	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	7	35.5	16	35	16.375
1	100	Lincoln	9/27/2015	Hunter Harvest	8	37.625	14.5	37.375	14.5
1	124	Sanders	10/2/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	34.375	15	33.5	15
1	124	Lincoln	10/10/2015	Hunter Harvest	8	35.25	15.125	34	15.25
1	123	Sanders	10/20/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	41.25	15.25	41.375	15.25
1	124	Sanders	10/29/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	37.25	16	36.375	15.875
1	124	Sanders	10/31/2015	Hunter Harvest	5.5	34.875	14	32.875	14.5
1	124	Sanders	11/3/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	29.75	15.25	31.75	16.125
1	123	Lincoln	11/4/2015	Hunter Harvest	10.5	37.75	14.25	38	14.5
1	124	Sanders	11/10/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	38	15.875	37.125	16
1	121	Sanders	11/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	36.75	15.625	37.375	15.5
1	123	Sanders	11/16/2015	Hunter Harvest	10.5	35.25	14	31.375	14.375
1	124	Sanders	11/18/2015	Hunter Harvest	7	34.375	16	35.625	16
1	102	Lincoln	11/20/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	32.25	15	36.75	15.125
1	123	Sanders	11/20/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	37	14	37	14
1	100	Lincoln	11/25/2015	Hunter Harvest	10.5	41.125	14.625	36.625	14.75
2	203	Missoula	9/24/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	38	16.125	33.75	15.375
2	203	Missoula	10/4/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	5.75	16.5	37.625	16.25
2	212	Powell	10/25/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	36	14.75	39	14.5
2	216	Granite	10/28/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	35.5	15.625	40.25	15.625
2	203	Missoula	10/31/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	37.5	15.5	37.75	15.5
2	210	Granite	11/7/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	40.25	15.875	38.75	15.625
2	250	Ravalli	11/8/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	38.5	16.625	37.125	16.5
2	203	Missoula	11/8/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	38.625	15	35.625	14.875
2	210	Granite	11/9/2015	Hunter Harvest	10.5	34.625	15	36.375	15.5
2	261	Ravalli	11/10/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	38.125	16	37.5	16.25
2	203	Missoula	11/11/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	33.25	15.25	35.25	15.25
2	213	Deer Lodge	11/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	11.5	26.5	14.125	36.75	14.5
2	250	Ravalli	11/18/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	36.5	15	35.25	14.875
2	250	Ravalli	11/26/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	40.25	14.875	39	14.875
3	315	Beaverhead	9/6/2015	Hunter Harvest	3.5	20.375	11.125	20.375	11.5
3	315	Beaverhead	9/6/2015	Hunter Harvest	3.5	25	13.875	25.75	14
3	315	Beaverhead	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	4.5	26.125	12.125	25.25	12
3	315	Beaverhead	9/18/2015	Hunter Harvest	5.5	30.375	14	27.125	14.25
3	340	Silver Bow	9/19/2015	Hunter Harvest	11.5	38	13.625	38.625	14.625
3	302	Gallatin	10/4/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	35.5	15	34.25	14.875
3	315	Beaverhead	10/8/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	27.75	14.25	29.625	13.375
3	303	Park	10/25/2015	Hunter Harvest	3.5	28.75	14.875	29.875	14.625
3	303	Park	10/27/2015	Hunter Harvest	8	34.75	14.5	34.25	14.5
3	302	Madison	10/27/2015	Hunter Harvest	4	26	13.875	24.25	13.75
3	302	Madison	10/28/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	34.75	15.25	38.5	15.5
3	315	Beaverhead	11/6/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	35	13.875	34.5	13.75
3	301	Gallatin	11/8/2015	Hunter Harvest	3.5	26	14.5	25.75	14.125
3	301	Gallatin	11/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	34.25	15.25	34.5	15.375
3	301	Gallatin	11/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	32.25	14.75	31.75	14.75
3	301	Gallatin	11/20/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	30.25	15.75	29.5	15.5
3	301	Gallatin	11/21/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	29.5	15.25	29.75	15.25
4	482	Fergus	9/13/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	39.125	15.75	34.5	15.875
4	482	Fergus	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	5.5	38.375	15	39.375	15

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks 2015 Bighorn Sheep

Region	Hunting District	County	Harvest Date	Type of Harvest	Age	Right Horn Total Length	Circumference Base Right	Left Horn Total Length	Circumference Base Left
4	482	Fergus	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	38.25	16	39	16
4	482	Fergus	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	42.25	16.625	40.125	17
4	482	Fergus	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	39.5	16.875	40.75	16.75
4	482	Fergus	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	11.5	34.875	15.875	36.375	15.25
4	482	Fergus	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	38.75	16	38.375	15.875
4	482	Fergus	9/18/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	40	17	42	16.875
4	482	Fergus	9/18/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	45.375	16.625	43.125	16.625
4	482	Fergus	9/19/2015	Super Tag	9.5	40	16.75	42.625	16.625
4	482	Fergus	9/19/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	40.5	16	40.625	16
4	482	Fergus	9/19/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	37.625	16.25	38.875	16.375
4	482	Fergus	9/23/2015	Hunter Harvest	6	37.5	15.25	37.25	15
4	482	Fergus	9/26/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	41.875	15.125	38.625	15.125
4	421	Teton	10/6/2015	Hunter Harvest	12.5	41.75	15.75	39.125	15.75
4	482	Fergus	10/17/2015	Hunter Harvest	5.5	35.125	17.25	35.375	17.375
4	482	Fergus	10/18/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	40.125	15.875	41.125	15.875
4	422	Teton	10/24/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	31.375	15.75	33.5	15.5
4	422	Teton	10/28/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	35.875	15.5	34.25	15.875
4	482	Fergus	11/3/2015	Hunter Harvest	7	33	14.375	31.375	14.875
4	424	Lewis And Clark	11/4/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	38	14.25	38.75	14.5
4	482	Fergus	11/4/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	40	16.5	39.25	16.625
4	482	Fergus	11/6/2015	Hunter Harvest	5.5	35.875	14.875	33	15
4	482	Fergus	11/8/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	36.5	15.75	37.125	15.75
4	423	Teton	11/12/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	36	14.75	32.25	14.875
4	424	Lewis And Clark	11/12/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	38.125	15.25	38.5	15.25
4	423	Teton	11/13/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	35	14.25	35	14.25
4	424	Lewis And Clark	11/14/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	37	13.75	36.5	13.75
4	422	Teton	11/14/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	37.625	14.25	39.25	14.25
4	422	Teton	11/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	36.625	14.625	35.625	14.625
4	424	Lewis And Clark	11/17/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	33.5	14.75	35.75	14.75
4	482	Fergus	11/17/2015	Auction Tag	8.5	39.625	15.625	38.25	15.625
4	421	Teton	11/19/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	36.25	14.25	38.25	14
4	482	Fergus	11/19/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	43.375	15.75	38.125	15.75
4	441	Teton	11/22/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	36.375	15.875	33.5	15.625
4	423	Teton	11/22/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	35.75	14.5	36.25	14.5
4	422	Teton	11/23/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	34.125	15	37.375	15
4	441	Pondera	11/27/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	29.5	15.25	30	14.875
4	441	Teton	11/27/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	37.125	15.375	33.75	15.625
4	441	Teton	11/28/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	31.375	14.5	31.5	14.625
5	500	Stillwater	9/23/2015	Hunter Harvest	11	30.5	13	33.5	12.625
5	503	Carbon	10/11/2015	Hunter Harvest	4	32.25	14.75	32.25	15
5	501	Stillwater	10/27/2015	Hunter Harvest	10.5	34.375	12.375	35	13.125
5	502	Park	11/12/2015	Hunter Harvest	4	35.25	15	35.25	15.125
5	503	Carbon	11/14/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	32.5	15.375	31.25	15.5
5	502	Carbon	11/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	6	31.5	13.25	32.75	12.75
5	500	Stillwater	11/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	7	34.25	13.75	29.375	13.875
5	502	Carbon	11/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	2	24.75	12.25	20	12.25
6	622	Phillips	9/8/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	37.75	16.375	41.25	16.375
6	620	Phillips	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	38.125	16.75	38.125	17
6	622	Phillips	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	5.5	35.125	15.75	34.25	15.875

Horn Measurements *continued from page 15*

Region	Hunting District	County	Harvest Date	Type of Harvest	Age	Right Horn Total Length	Circumference Base Right	Left Horn Total Length	Circumference Base Left
6	622	Valley	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	33.5	15.75	34.875	15.25
6	680	Blaine	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	5.5	40.375	17.5	41.375	17.5
6	680	Blaine	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	36.625	14.875	38.375	14.625
6	680	Blaine	9/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	10.5	40.5	15.75	39	15.75
6	622	Phillips	9/17/2015	Hunter Harvest	10.5	35.25	14	36.125	14.125
6	680	Chouteau	9/17/2015	Hunter Harvest	5.5	40.25	15.5	40.375	15.75
6	622	Valley	9/18/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	35	15.875	34.5	16
6	680	Blaine	9/18/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	40	16	41.25	16
6	680	Blaine	9/18/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	37.25	16.5	39.25	16.75
6	680	Chouteau	9/22/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	39.25	16.5	39.625	16.75
6	680	Blaine	10/6/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	33.375	16	32.75	16
6	680	Blaine	10/8/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	39	16.25	33.125	16.375
6	622	Phillips	10/14/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	33.875	14.75	36.5	14.875
6	680	Blaine	10/14/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	33	16	36.375	16
6	622	Phillips	10/15/2015	Hunter Harvest	7.5	40.5	15.5	40.25	15.5
6	680	Blaine	10/18/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	36.5	16.125	36	16.5
6	680	Blaine	10/23/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	39.875	15	38.375	15
6	680	Blaine	10/24/2015	Hunter Harvest	4.5	34.5	15	36.375	15.125
6	680	Blaine	10/24/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	32.5	15	38.75	15
6	680	Blaine	10/31/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	38.375	15.25	38	15.375
6	680	Blaine	10/31/2015	Hunter Harvest	11.5	33.625	14.25	32.5	14.125
6	680	Blaine	11/1/2015	Hunter Harvest	8.5	41.5	15.375	39.5	15.375
6	622	Phillips	11/8/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	36.75	15.75	37.625	15.875
6	680	Chouteau	11/8/2015	Hunter Harvest	10.5	39.125	15.25	37.75	15.25
6	622	Phillips	11/12/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	38.625	14.125	37.125	14.125
6	680	Blaine	11/14/2015	Hunter Harvest	9.5	38.375	16.25	35.25	16.5
6	680	Blaine	11/14/2015	Hunter Harvest	11.5	35.5	15.5	35.125	15.5
6	680	Blaine	11/14/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	33.75	16.375	38.25	16.375
6	680	Blaine	11/16/2015	Hunter Harvest	6.5	36.75	14.625	36.875	14.5
6	622	Valley	11/16/2015	Hunter Harvest	8	34.5	14.625	36.25	14.875
6	680	Blaine	11/17/2015	Hunter Harvest	5.5	37.75	16.25	39.125	16.5
6	680	Blaine	11/22/2015	Hunter Harvest	10.5	34.75	15.5	39	15.375



Photo Gallery



Above:
Eric Barclay HD 482

Right:
John Dolan HD 210





Chris Scruggs HD 424

Photo Gallery



Take your kids hunting - they are the future of conservation!

Aubrie Zohner and her ewe bighorn she shot on 09/18/15 in unit 203 here in Montana. She made a great one shot kill at 100 yards with her .25-06. These ewe hunts are a great way to introduce youth to sheep hunting.





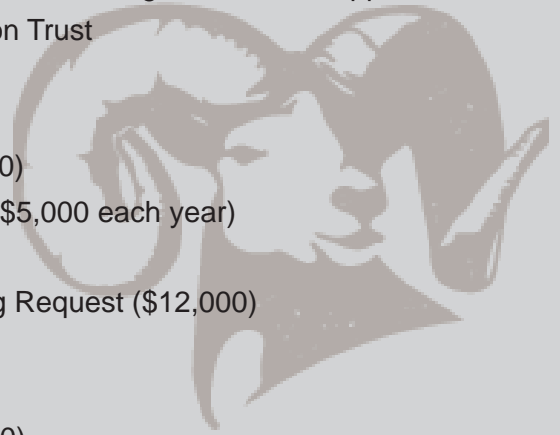
Above:
Nick Tolstedt HD 680

Right:
Don Clark HD 123



2015 Project Funding Summary **for the Montana Chapter of Wild Sheep Foundation**

- Forest Service Cutoff & Priscilla Peak Prescriptive Burns (\$15,000)
 - MSU Genetic Research Pilot Study (\$20,000)
 - Anaconda Garrity WMA property acquisition - Montana WSF wrote the grant that was approved for \$100,000 in funds from Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust
 - Youth Conservation and Education Expo (\$5,000)
 - Be Bear Aware Educational Request (\$500)
 - Wisherd-Blackfoot Canyon Conservation Easement (\$25,000)
 - South Dakota Chronic Sheddors Research Study (3 years - \$5,000 each year)
 - US Sportsman's Alliance Funding Request (\$2,000)
 - Wild Sheep Foundation - Montana Specific Projects Funding Request (\$12,000)
 - MOGA Conservation Day Sponsorship (\$2,000)
 - NWF Domestic Sheep Buyouts in Tendoy's (\$5,000)
 - Highlands Herd Radio Collar Tracking by MSU Intern (\$2,800)
- TOTAL 2015 Project Funded: \$94,300+**



Join us May 14, 2016, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm!
Youth Conservation & Education Expo
Shooting • Hunting • Ethics • Education • Camp Drawings
Red Slack Barn, Teller Wildlife Refuge
1180 Chaffin Lane, Corvallis, MT



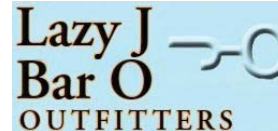


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