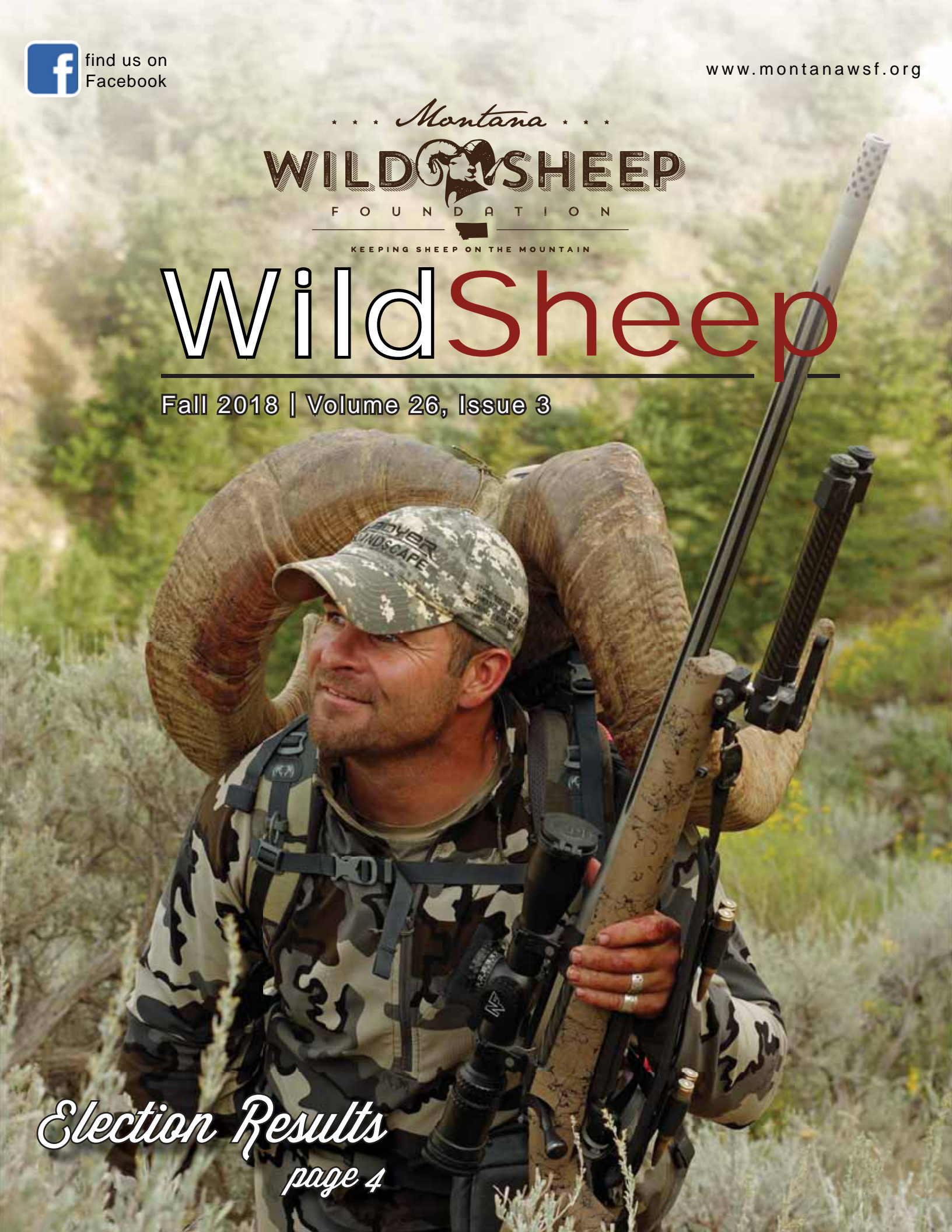


*** Montana ***
WILD SHEEP
FOUNDATION
KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN

WildSheep

Fall 2018 | Volume 26, Issue 3

Election Results
page 4



THIS ISSUE

President's Message.....	3
Election Results.....	4
Cheating Habitat - Big Horn Sheep, Wild Horse Island and Beyond.....	5
Montana Matters Summer Camps.....	6
2019 Montana Wild Sheep Annual Banquet & Life Member Raffle.....	7
Montana WSF Life Member Sheep Hunt 2018.....	8
Montana WSF goes to Washington D.C.....	14
Thank You 2018 Banquet Sponsors.....	18

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 details - Joe Boyer packing out a Unit 482 Ram. Photo by Brian Solan.

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.



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).

HAVE YOU LIKED US ON FACEBOOK?



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

www.facebook.com/MontanaWildSheepFoundation

Board of Directors

Shane Clouse, President

5779 US Highway 93 North, Florence, MT 59833
(406) 370-4487 s_clouse@yahoo.com

D.J. Berg, Vice President

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

Max Bauer Jr., Treasurer

5074 Gardner Lane, Florence, MT 59833
(406) 239-2920 bauertranch@gmail.com

Grant Winn II, Secretary

684 Ridge Road, Stevensville, MT 59870
(406) 240-2864 gwins@gmail.com

Levi Bowler

PO Box 5012, Kalispell, MT 59903
(406) 871-6430 levibowler@gmail.com

Don Patterson

358 Whispering Willow Way, Corvallis, MT 59828
(406) 370-4227 d5357mt@gmail.com

Corey Piersol

101 Covey Court B, Bozeman, MT 59718
(406) 600-8248 cpeirsol@sitkagear.com

Justin Spring

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

Ray Vinkey

PO Box 2414, Thompson Falls, MT 59873
(406) 370-3938 rvinkey@hotmail.com

Brian Solan, Volunteer Executive Director

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

It was a long hot summer and now hunting season is heating up with excitement. I still haven't drawn the coveted Montana Wild sheep tag, but I did manage to draw a Moose tag in area 250 so I have been spending my spare time scouting in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. It's always a blessing to be able to enjoy the largest wilderness in the lower 48 and it happens to be my backyard! In my travels I am also looking for the wild sheep herd that frequents the area for we are working with Montana FWP to capture, collar, and test 4 rams and 4 ewes from the area.

The Montana Wild Sheep Foundation (MTWSF) has been active on the landscape working for wild sheep. In June, several of our board members attended the 2018 Sheep Summit in Jackson, Wyoming where we learned about the current issues for wild sheep in North America. We are still working on a possible land purchase in the Paradise, MT area. The property is currently owned by Stimson Lumber Company. We are hoping to work with Stimson to keep the land in public ownership as it is key wild sheep habitat. Ray Vinkey, Grant Winn, and I

walked the property and confirmed it is excellent. We need to work out several issues before we can make the purchase, but we will keep you posted as to our progress with the parcel.

MTWSF continues its commitment to youth outreach and education. Former MTWSF President Tom Powers was recently recognized for his unfailing dedication to youth in Montana. Tom has organized a collaborative Youth Expo that is held at Teller Wildlife Refuge each Mother's day weekend. This year there were well over 600 youth and family members in attendance as well as over 40 conservation groups with a common mission to expose youth to the outdoors in a positive way. This year over 100 scholarships were delivered to youth to attend conservation camps throughout Montana. Tom has coordinated two camps in Western Montana. The Montana Matters Margruder camp at the Historic Magruder ranger Station and the Montana Matters Scripps Camp on the Nez Perce Highway. Each camp has dedicated wild sheep education programming for the youth are the future of hunting and conservation. Hat's off to Tom Powers for all of his tireless efforts and thousands of donated hours to help wild sheep conservation by educating youth.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for March 9, 2019 to attend the MTWSF Wild Sheep Fundraiser at the Big Horn Resort in Billings.

Shane Clouse

Montana Wild Sheep Foundation President
shane@shaneclouse.com ♦ (406) 370-4487



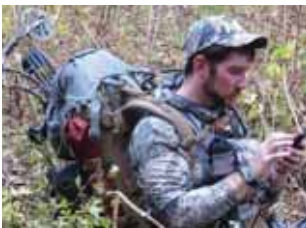
Election Results

We have some good news and some bad news. Let's start with the bad news first to get it over with. A major change to the Board of Directors is that both Tom Grimes and Jeff Mortensen have rolled off the board. Many of you know both Tom and Jeff and understand the impact they have made on the Montana Chapter and Wild Sheep. Both of these guys are as good as they come and have put countless hours in behind the scenes. Luckily, they are both going to stay involved somewhat in the chapter to provide some guidance and advise. To both Tom and Jeff, we appreciate all you have done and all you will continue to do. Thank you, my friends.

Now for the good news. Your current President Shane Clouse was re-elected for his third and final term on the board. Shane was also elected President for another year by the board of directors. Shane will continue to lead the charge for Wild Sheep conservation in Montana. Here is the lineup of your 2018-2019 MTWSF Board:

- President – Shane Clouse
- Vice President – D.J. Berg
- Secretary – Grant Winn, II
- Treasurer – Max Bauer Jr.
- Director – Levi Bowler
- Director – Don Patterson
- Director – Corey Piersol
- Director – Justin Spring
- Director – Ray Vinkey
- Brian Solan - Volunteer Executive Director

We are also welcoming two new faces to the Board in Don Patterson and Corey Piersol. All of you should have seen these bio's, but we wanted to print them again to make sure you get familiar with your new board members:



COREY PIERSOL

I would be honored to serve on the board of the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation. While I was not elected during the last election, I have continued to serve bighorn sheep. I was the 2018 Banquet Chairman,

and under my leadership we set fundraising records at our Bozeman event. I also participated on a bighorn sheep collar recovery in Yellowstone National Park. The recovery effort was a success and we were able to identify that the ewe had a lamb. These experiences have heightened my desire to help Montana Bighorns.

As the Customer Service Manager at SITKA Gear, I have been able to leverage my knowledge of the outdoor industry to help raise funds to put and keep wild sheep on the mountain. I also have experience as a board member for the Bitterroot Climbers Coalition where I helped protect public access and raised funds for projects.

I spend much of my time in the back country; hunting, fishing, and climbing. With two young children, I greatly value our public lands and our ability to hunt and provide for our families. I believe in improving/preserving our wild spaces and protecting our public lands. I have enjoyed working with the current board and would like the opportunity to support the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation and wild sheep as a Board Member.



DON PATTERSON

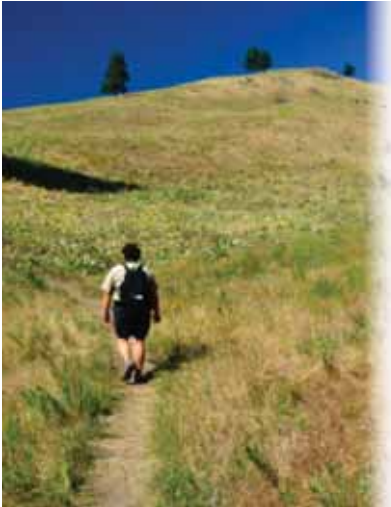
I would like to serve on the board for the Montana Wild Sheep foundation because of my desire to preserve and enhance the

habitat of wild sheep in Montana. This is my second attempt running for the board. I'm a life member of Montana Wild sheep foundation, Life endowment member of the NRA and currently serve as the treasurer for the Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association. I am a graduate of University of Oregon and Oregon Institute of Technology. During my career I worked in Alaska, Oregon, and Wyoming before moving to Montana.

I am a lifelong hunter and fisherman and want to give back now that I have retired from a career in a Land Management agency. I have lived in Montana for 28 years. I welcome the opportunity to serve on the board of Montana Wild Sheep and will work and collaborate with the members of the board to preserve and enhance habitat to ensure a strong future of wild sheep in Montana for future generations.

Cheating Habitat - Bighorn Sheep Wild Horse Island and Beyond?

Story by Kurt Alt, WSF Conservation Director, Montana and International Projects



Typical grassland conditions observed where light colored grasses are generally shallow-rooted undesirable annual grasses. Perennial grasses and Arrowleaf balsamroot were generally green at the time of our visit, July 26, 2018



Spreading micronutrient based fertilizer, September 2018



Charismatic giants of Wild Horse Island, September 2018

Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is an invasive annual grass native to Europe and east Asia and found across western North America rangelands, including North America's premier bighorn sheep habitat. Cheatgrass readily occupies degraded rangelands and negatively impacts forage quality and availability for many species of wildlife and livestock.

Fire actually increases cheatgrass distribution and density. Cheatgrass, a winter annual, has shallow roots (12 inches or less) and takes advantage of spring/early summer moisture. It matures early and dries quickly providing fine, highly combustible fuel for late summer/early fall fires. Following fire, cheatgrass often invades at higher density and can increase fire intensity and frequency. Current management prescriptions are limited, and can risk increasing rather than decreasing cheatgrass invasion.

Wild Horse Island is no exception, with invasions of cheatgrass and two other Bromus invasive undesirable annual grasses (see photo). Stuart Jennings, Montana FWP, MTWSF and WSF are collaboratively embarking on a new undesirable annual grass (cheatgrass - *Bromus tectorum* and 2 other bromus species) experimental management program on Wild Horse Island. In addition to increasing susceptibility to rangeland fires, cheatgrass has low forage palatability to wildlife most of the year and is typically considered detrimental to habitat quality.

"Developing control options for annual grasses would be a strategic advantage in managing Wild Horse Island for iconic wildlife. Annual grass control options are few. Two emerging options for annual grass control are on the horizon, one herbicidal (Bayer/Esplanade) and one micronutrient fertilization based (this project)." (Stuart Jennings, 2018)

This past September, 9 plots were established on Wild Horse Island with different treatments and different habitat characteristics. Three locations were selected by FWP based on high, medium and low presence of undesirable Bromus species presence. Vegetation measurements and photos were taken at each plot. At each location 3 different micro-nutrient based treatments rates were applied.

After waiting for rain and snow over the next 6 months to dissolve the fertilizer coinciding with bromus germination, we will revisit, measure and photograph each plot, i.e. sometime in May 2019. We are hopeful, in the long-term, this new and innovative approach will lead towards a broader application on the island and potentially elsewhere in bighorn sheep habitat and rangeland ecosystems. This is an application of science at the "real world" management level involving experimental application, followed by evaluation and, eventually and optimistically, management implementation. Please stay tuned! **Photos courtesy of Stuart Jennings. Å**

Montana Matters Summer Camps

Story by Tom Powers



All the youth in the photo above went to one of the conservation camps sponsored in part by Montana WFSF. Youth helped do volunteer work in area 270 on a block management area. They pulled old barbed wire and fence posts on Lazy J Cross ranch. The ranch allows hundreds of hunters to access hunting for mule deer, whitetail deer, elk, and wild sheep.

Every year in May we do a great event to show support to our future hunting conservationists. It's called the Youth Conservation Education Expo. It's held at the Teller Wildlife Refuge near Corvallis, Montana on the Saturday before Mother's Day.

With all the support we receive financially from the wild life organizations and grants we receive we are able to send many of our youth ages 7-18 to various summer camps. The camps are all professionally run and teach everything from the basics in land, water and wildlife conservation to advanced topics related to disease issues with bighorn sheep and deer. Also included in the advanced camps is the North American Model of Wildlife. This year 160 kids were able to participate in the various camps, shooting events, and horse and mule packing classes.

I want to single out two camps this year starting with **The River of No Return Camp** held deep in the Selway Bitterroot travel corridor between two Wilderness areas totaling 3.4 million acres. It is at this camp that Kurt Alt and our local biologist Rebecca Mowry instructed the kids on the disease issues affecting our bighorn sheep and deer herds. Also of interest, is the newest

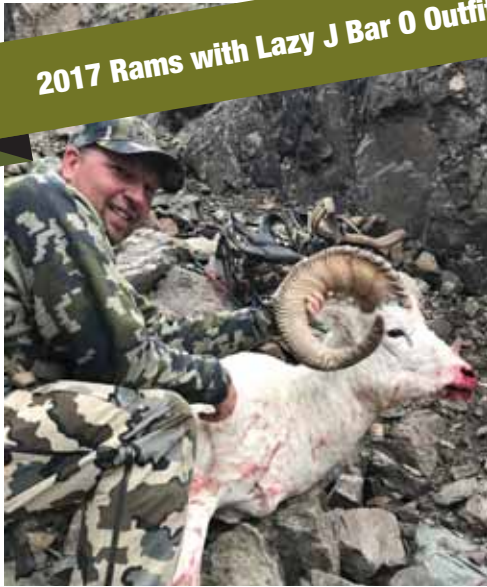
camp at the **Scripps Ranch**. Here an all-day shooting event took place. All the 20 gauge shotguns, shells, and biodegradable clay pigeons were furnished by Montana FWP. All the 22 ammo was furnished by Darren Newsom, owner of Armscore (our local ammunition manufacturer). The event was run by the people from the Whittecar Shooting Range out of Hamilton. They are all Montana FWP Certified instructors as well as NRA Certificated.

I would encourage you as parents, grandparents or interested persons to come and visit one of the camps. You are always welcome and I think you will be impressed as to how funds are spent for our future. Å

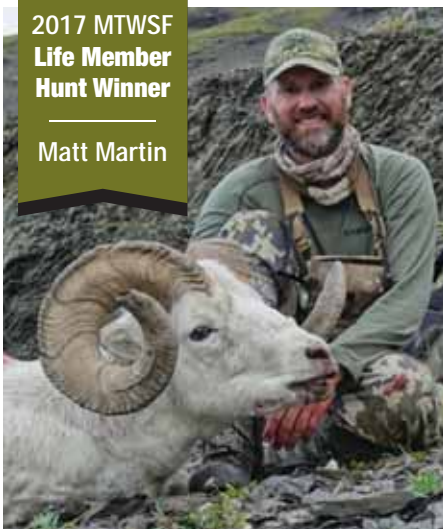


2019 MT WILD SHEEP ANNUAL BANQUET & LIFE MEMBER RAFFLE

2017 Rams with Lazy J Bar O Outfitters



2017 MTWSF
Life Member
Hunt Winner
Matt Martin



WHEN:
MARCH 9, 2019
6PM - 12PM

WHERE:
BIGHORN INN
BILLINGS, MT

SPONSORS:

LAZY J BAR O
OUTFITTERS



GLACIER
BANK

Kenetrek
Boots
FOR THE TRAIL LESS TRAVELED®

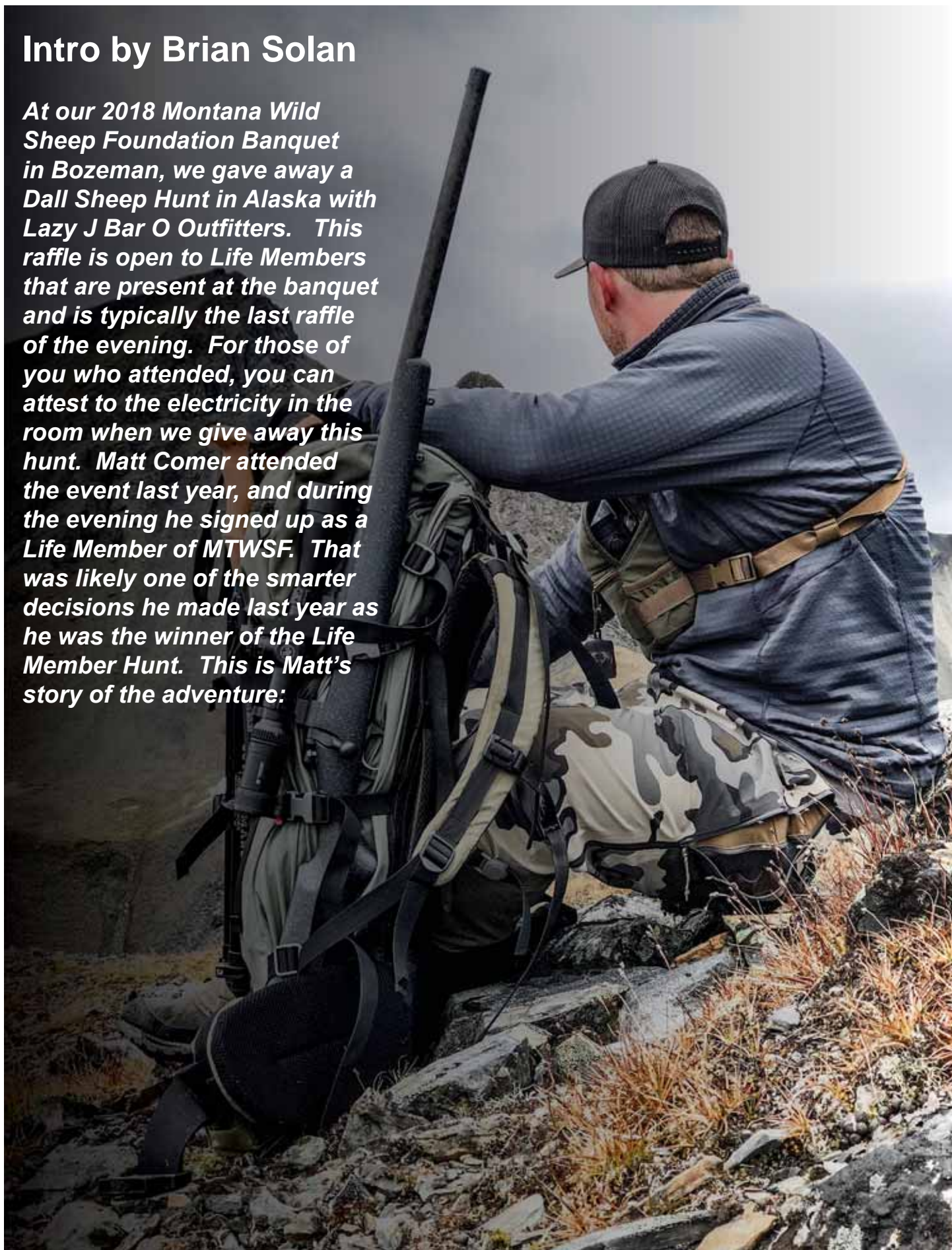
All LIFE MEMBERS of MT Wild Sheep Foundation are included in drawing. MUST BE PRESENT at the ANNUAL BANQUET in Billings, March 9, 2019 to win. Transferrable ONLY to another LIFE MEMBER that is also PRESENT. Hunt Dates are August 10th-21st, 2019 with Lazy J Bar O Outfitters. This is a great Alaska Sheep Hunt with a very successful outfitter.

WWW.MONTANAWSF.ORG



Intro by Brian Solan

At our 2018 Montana Wild Sheep Foundation Banquet in Bozeman, we gave away a Dall Sheep Hunt in Alaska with Lazy J Bar O Outfitters. This raffle is open to Life Members that are present at the banquet and is typically the last raffle of the evening. For those of you who attended, you can attest to the electricity in the room when we give away this hunt. Matt Comer attended the event last year, and during the evening he signed up as a Life Member of MTWSF. That was likely one of the smarter decisions he made last year as he was the winner of the Life Member Hunt. This is Matt's story of the adventure:



Montana Wild Sheep Foundation Life Member Sheep Hunt 2018

Story by Matt Comer



LIFE MEMBER RAFFLE



**MONTANA
WILD SHEEP
FOUNDATION**

Matt
Comer

406-579-1216

Day 1

The day was finally here, so much anticipation, so much preparation, all leading up to this. I woke up early in Fairbanks on August 19th, made my way to Fred Meyer to catch my two-hour shuttle toward Denali. The weather was nice as the pilot picked me up at the airstrip. My pilot had a sense of urgency as the weather can change at a moment's notice. I piled all my gear into the plane and strapped in. We took a Maule about 20 minutes into the remote area and set it down on a gravel bar. When I landed in camp spirits were high.

Success of past hunters advertised on the tree of rams as you walked into camp. I met the guides, checked my rifle, and got situated for the short stay in my wall tent. Once I was settled in we looked at sheep from camp and had a dinner of sheep ribs that another hunted had just brought off the mountain.

Day 2

The sound of bells woke me up at daybreak as the horses returned home. Cowboy coffee and a few eggs got everyone going. The wranglers and guides saddled the horses. I packed my gear into dry bags and then into panyards. It was starting to rain as we rode out of camp, we had about a 6 hour ride to our spike camp. The ride in was beautiful, so much untouched, unspoiled wilderness at our fingertips. Once we got to camp the rain was coming down so hard we needed to wait for a lull so we could set up what we needed for camp. We didn't glass any sheep on the ride in, but we did see two giant bull moose and a handful of cari-



bou. The rain subsided for a few minutes as we set up camp. My guide and I made our dinner in our sleeping bags and listened to the rain fall on the tent.

Day 3

Again I woke up to the bells of horses, this time with a steady rain beating on the tent. I got up and noticed I was sleeping in about 1" of water. During the night the rain continued to fall and created a swimming pool under the tent we were in. After about 20 minutes of bailing, my mattress wasn't floating anymore. I made a cup of coffee and started to lounge. My guide and I napped and lounged until the evening. About 7 pm the rain lifted and gave us some glassing time. We moved our camp out of the swamp that we were in to a much drier location. 9 sheep, 5 caribou, and 2 moose were spotted as we ate our mountain house. As it got dark we listened to the ptarmigan cackle and crow, another wet Alaskan day in the books.

Day 4

The same group of ptarmigan that put me to bed woke me up, I went out to make some coffee and realized the fog was lifted for the most part. 2 ewes were spotted right away on a nearby hillside. I coaxed my guide

out of the tent with a coffee and he began saddling the horses. An hour horseback ride up the creek yielded 32 ewes and 5 rams. My first rams of the trip were in my spotting scope. My guide, Jared, quickly made a plan to tie up the horses and make a move to get closer. As we worked our way up the scree we felt the wind change at our backs. Gone. While we were up on top of the mountain we decided to do some glassing before the next rainstorm rolled in. A few more ewes and a handful of caribou was all we were able to see. Back to the horses. On our way back to the spike camp we glassed up 7 rams on a spiny ridge not far from camp. It got too dark to see if there was anything of quality, but we could tell they were rams. We took care of the horses and cooked some dinner in the dark. As I settled in for the night the rain began to fall. We ended the day seeing 57 sheep, 12 of them rams. Side note - a Nalgene bottle filled with boiling water in your sleeping bag at the end of a cold wet day might be the greatest thing ever.

Day 5

I awoke to a steady rain beating down on the tent (again). Thinking it would be another day weathered in, I was able to catch up on some more sleep. After a





while the rain subsided, and I rolled out of my sleeping bag to see the band of rams right where we put them to bed. As the fog rolled in and out I was able to video the rams on my phone through my spotting scope. When the rain settled back in I reviewed the footage and thought one ram needed a closer look. He was wide and flared out, lamb tips on both sides, really close to meeting the legal ram criteria.

My guide saddled the horses and I got my backpack ready. It was about a 40 min horseback ride until we cleared the alders and were able to tie the horses up. We threw our packs on and started to make the climb. After about an hour we crested the saddle adjacent to where the rams were bedded. Peering over I caught glimpses of white sheep bedded in the black rocks at 225 yards away laid a beauty of a ram. It didn't take long until the ram's 6th sense kicked in. Out of nowhere the ram 180'd and caught us on the skyline. A 10-minute stare off ended and the ram started to trot off. Jared said "he's legal!" A fast scramble to get my gun on him before he left the scree field... too late. My guide and I started to have a conversation about what just went down and what we should do next. Mid conversation, the bigger ram and 6 of his younger buddies appeared on the skyline far above us. Jared got a quick range "380", and I let the PROOF 6.5 Creedmoor do its thing. I had just killed my first sheep!

What a unique, unnerving feeling it is when you are walking over to your first ram. Is he legal? What if he's not? How badly did the fall mess him up? We quickly crossed a scree field and peered over the 200' fall where the ram just tumbled down. After carefully descending the rocks I was finally able to put hands on my first sheep. A beautiful 36.5", 9.5-year-old dream come true. After a few moments with the ram we started to get to work. The rain was on and off while we cut up the sheep on the mountain, a pack out I won't forget any time soon. We made it back to the horses just before nightfall and rode through the rain until we reached the tent. We put the horses away and made some hard-earned Mountain House that tasted a little bit better

that night. Completely soaked, I boiled up my nightly Nalgene bottle and crawled in my sleeping bag.

Day 6

We woke up to the first ray of sunshine I've seen in a week. We quickly broke camp and loaded up the pack horses so we could make the six-hour ride back to main camp. Riding across the tundra on a sunny day was breathtaking, the fall colors were beginning to pop, the mountains were coated in snow and there was a briskness to the air. The creek crossing on the way back were a little bit dicey as all the rain had the creeks and rivers swollen. We arrived back at main camp just before dinner time. Still soaking wet but feeling accomplished we got situated. The camp cook grabbed both racks of sheep ribs and grilled them up. We ate sheep ribs, sipped whisky, and told stories the entire evening.

Day 7, 8, 9, 10

The next three and a half days I spent socked in camp until the pilot could come pick me up. Socked in main camp wasn't a bad thing with a sheep tag punched. There was an abundance of good food, whiskey, and plenty of entertainment. When the weather finally cleared the pilot buzzed in and grabbed me around noon on day 10. Of the 10 days I was in the Alaska Range, I think it rained all but 36 hours or so. When I finally made it home to Bozeman it still took me a solid



day or two to get my gear dry. I cannot thank Montana WSF enough for providing this amazing opportunity. It was a trip of a lifetime, and something I will cherish forever. **A**



Montana Wild Sheep Foundation goes to Washington, D.C.



Story by Brian Solan

Left to Right: Senator Jon Tester, Garrett Long, Representative Greg Gianforte, Brian Solan, Senator Steve Daines

A first for the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation! A semi-annual trip to Washington D.C. to lobby for wild sheep interests was organized by Greg Schildwachter of Watershed Results, LLC (<http://www.watershedresults.com>) on behalf of Wild Sheep Foundation National (WSF) and the WSF Chapters & Affiliates. For those of you that don't know Greg Schildwachter, he is the lobbyist for WSF and provides advocacy and consulting in Washington D.C. for WSF and other wildlife focused non-profit groups (Boone & Crockett, Ducks Unlimited, Safari Club, National Wildlife Federation, etc.). The attendees for this semi-annual event have included WSF Chapter Leaders from around the U.S. along with Garrett Long (WSF Staff) and Greg Schildwachter who coordinates the trip, meetings, etc. This is the first time that Montana Wild Sheep Foundation has participated, and it was definitely worth the price of admission.

The meetings that Greg set up were tailored to the chapter leaders who attended and their respective Congressmen in Washington. There were chapter delegates from New Jersey (Eastern WSF), New Mexico (NMWSF), Nevada (NBU), Oregon (OFNAWS), Idaho (IDWSF) and I was there to represent Montana.

The trip started on Wednesday morning with the weekly Montana Delegation Coffee. This is a jointly hosted event by **Senator Jon Tester, Senator Steve Daines and Representative Greg Gianforte**. They meet and have coffee with Montana residents who have made the trip to Washington D.C. This gathering on September 5th included some Montana tourists, Kalispell Chamber

of Commerce members, Salish-Kootenai tribal members and our Montana Wild Sheep group of Garrett Long (Marketing & Communications Director for WSF) and myself. We had some great conversations with all three of our delegates and set up the talking points for our individual meetings later with each of them and their staff. I'm not sure if other states do this sort of thing, but it is a great way for people to connect with your representation.

My first individual meeting was with **Representative Mike Simpson from Idaho**. Rep. Simpson is the primary sponsor of the previous funding effort to keep the U.S. Sheep Experimental Station open. Bruce Minch-

er (Idaho WSF) and I met with Rep. Simpson and discussed a modified mission statement for the US Sheep Experimental Station. Rep. Simpson mentioned multiple times that he cannot continue to get funding for this station if there is not a new mission and the woolgrowers need to come to the table for discussions. Both Bruce and I reiterated the willingness to support funding for the Sheep station with a mission that focused on disease research with domestic and wild sheep. I reinforced that with a modified mission which focused on disease research between wild and domestic sheep, that MTWSF and IDWSF would fully support continued funding of the US Sheep Experimental Station.

The next meeting was with **Senator Martin Heinrich of New Mexico**. While it wasn't directly related to Montana issues, we all attended this meeting as Senator Heinrich is a well-known hunter and conservationist (see photo). He is very up to speed on the issues in New Mexico. This guy gets it and is willing to help the cause. Bryan Bartlett (New Mexico WSF) led the discussion and focused on the Rio Grande Gorge herd and issues with the Forest Service and non-engagement on the "risk of contact" issue. Senator Heinrich committed to a phone call and letter to the USFS to follow up and pressure them to come to the table for discussions and assistance on the risk of contact analysis.

Our first Montana delegate meeting was with **Senator Jon Tester**. Senator Tester and his staffer Henry Ring were generally open to discussions on the Forest Service, Risk of Contact and the Wilderness Study Area issues. I led the discussion on the Forest Service "risk of contact" analysis. The Senator committed to a phone call or letter to the USFS to follow up and pressure them to come to the table for discussions and assistance, after our meeting with the USFS Chief Vicki Christiansen (later in the trip). Greg Schildwachter focused on the Senator asking the USFS for examples of how the USFS is implementing the "risk of contact" direction to spur their involvement. We requested that the Senator ask the USFS for a quarterly report on the good, the bad and the indifferent examples of "risk of contact". The Gravelly Range and Montana were provided as examples of positive involvement by the USFS. We discussed our working relationships with Montana Woolgrowers and public access to the Centennials on the Montana side of the US Sheep Experimental Station. We discussed how this area is outfitted, but public access is not allowed by the US Sheep Experimental Sta-



tion. He agreed to look into this issue if we can get the details together. I reiterated our desire to work closely with the Montana Woolgrowers to find solutions on the ground in Montana for both wild and domestic sheep. Senator Tester agreed and confirmed that approach is the best fit in Montana.

Next on the agenda was a meeting with **Senator Steve Daines**. Senator Steve Daines and his staffers Joshua Sizemore and Dan Gerig were up to speed on all of the issues we wanted to discuss. The discussions were focused around the USFS language to analyze "risk of contact" in the previous (3) omnibus funding bills, yet lack of actual results from this direction. I thanked the Senator for requesting the language in the bills as he was responsible for this language. Greg Schildwachter again focused on the Senator asking the USFS for examples of how the USFS is implementing the "risk of contact" direction. This was the exact same ask we had of Senator Tester. We discussed the WSA release bill that he has sponsored, and I relayed some concerns with the process and the timeline of legislation versus public process prior to legislation. Senator Daines reiterated his commitment to wilderness and discounted the ideas that heavy mining or logging will occur on the released WSA's. He somewhat "filibustered" on the issue as it seems important to him and highlighted the fact that the Roadless Rule would prohibit any commercial mining or logging. Senator Daines is an avid backpacker and does spend a lot of time personally in the wilderness, specifically the Beartooth's. I reinforced the idea that MTWSF is supportive of a collaborative solution and we want to see a process that avoids litigation and future problems.



A fairly quick meeting with **Senator Tom Udall's (New Mexico)** staffer Stephenne Harding rounded out the day's meetings. Stephenne is a Whitefish, MT native and understands the New Mexico and Montana WSF issues. Discussions were again focused around the USFS language to analyze "risk of contact". Bryan Bartlett (New Mexico WSF) led the discussion and focused on the Rio Grande Gorge herd and issues with the USFS. Stephenne committed to a phone call or letter to the USFS to follow up and pressure them to come to the table for discussions and assistance on the risk of contact analysis, after our meeting with the USFS Chief.

To end the day's events, the group attended the **Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus Banquet**. This is an annual event for sportsmen groups to connect with likeminded Congressmen and support Sportsmen issues. While there we connected with other groups like the *NRA*, *Mule Deer Foundation*, *Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation* as well as getting some face time with Senator Martin Heinrich, Representative Greg Gianforte, Representative Paul Ryan and Representative Mike Coffman, Colorado. A great event and a somewhat similar vibe to that of a Sheep Show banquet in Reno.

The next day's events started with our Montana **Representative, Greg Gianforte** and Tripp McKemey – Senior Legislative Assistant. Similar discussion were had at this meeting regarding the USFS "risk of contact" analysis. We also discussed the Wilderness Study

Area (WSA) release bills that he has sponsored. I sat on a round table discussion recently in Lewistown, MT that Rep. Gianforte sponsored to get input on the WSA legislation. I thanked the Congressman for including MTWSF in this discussion. I also relayed some concerns with the process and the timeline of legislation versus public process. The congressman reiterated his commitment to wilderness and discounted the ideas that heavy mining or logging will occur on the released WSA's. I reinforced the idea that MTWSF is supportive of a collaborative solution and we want to see a process that avoids litigation and future problems. Rep. Gianforte brought up the idea of an additional amendment to the legislation to put a timeline on the public process, perhaps (2) or (3) years. Rep. Gianforte also brought up that the WSA's have gradually morphed into wilderness management and they weren't originally managed that way. He referenced the Bitterroot (Blue Joint) mountain bike decision. Through the WSA process I've developed a good relationship with Rep. Gianforte and his Senior staffer, Tripp McKemey. After the meeting, Tripp asked us for another draft of the WSA release process and our suggestions to help bring consensus to the issue.

The final meeting of our trip was with the **Senior Management of the US Forest Service (USFS)**. Attending the meeting were **Chief Viki Christiansen** – USFS Service Interim Chief, **Rob Harper** – Director of Watershed, Fish, Wildlife, Air, and Rare Plants and **Allen**

Rowley – Director of Forest, Rangelands Management and Vegetation Ecology. The focus of the meeting was the language in the omnibus funding bill the previous (3) years and the impression that the USFS is not following through on implementation of the “*risk of contact*” analysis. Greg Schildwachter focused on asking the USFS for examples of how the USFS is implementing the “*risk of contact*” direction. A quarterly report on the good, the bad and the indifferent was the ask and similar to the direction we were asking from Congress. It was like pulling teeth to get them (USFS) to agree to the task of a “*risk of contact*” implementation quarterly report, but we finally got acceptance. In true USFS fashion, they wanted to define a process of what projects/forests to analyze, which stakeholders needed to be involved, etc., etc. We kept up the pressure for a quick 1-page quarterly report on examples of implementation

of the “*risk of contact*”. They finally agreed to this effort. The Senior Management team had recently toured the Gravelly Range in Montana and met with stakeholders there. I’m not entirely sure who that was, but both Allen Rowley and Rob Harper made references that they appreciated the MTWSF’s work to collaborate and find solutions in the Gravelly Range. Whoever they met with in the Gravelly Range, had good things to say about our efforts in Montana.

In closing, I understand that this is a lot of information and detail on specific meetings but given the opportunity I thought I should make all of the chapter members aware of the efforts that MTWSF is implementing to further bighorn sheep recovery and growth in Montana. If you have any questions or input on the topics discussed above, please feel free to give me a shout. **Ä**



Montana State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign

MTWSF is registered with the Montana State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign! If you are employed by the great state of Montana we invite you to give generously to wild sheep. Our SECGC # is 5617

GIANT RAMS OF MONTANA

Volume I

John “Timmer” Reeves



Foreword by Dale A. Burk

Requesting photos and stories for John “Timmer” Reeves’ new book “Giant Rams of Montana”

Timmer has been working on a compilation of Montana’s giant wild sheep, the people that hunt and conserve them, and the stories they have to tell. Montana had truly been blessed with the biggest Rocky Mountain wild sheep in world. Montana Wild Sheep Foundation members are the passionate hunters and conservationist leading the charge to put and keep Montana’s giant wild sheep on the Mountain.

His first book, “Giant Rams Of Montana” Volume I will be on sale at WSF sheep show in Reno, NV, February 7-9, 2019. He hopes to have “Giant Rams Of Montana” Volume II published in 2021 or 2022.

John “Timmer” Reeves would like to share your hunt of a lifetime story. Please consider sending your photos and story to John “Timmer” Reeves, MTWSF life member #36. Please email submissions to johntimmerr@hotmail.com or visit him online at www.facebook.com/john.reeves.9277.



Thank you 2018 Montana WSF Sponsors



LEUPOLD





Scott DeMars
 Earl Griffith
 B.C. Trophy Mountain Outfitters
 Tom Grimes
 Fred Boyer
 Jim Weatherly
 John Lee
 Cynthia Fisher
 Out of Africa in Montana Gallery
 Lon Dale
 John Lewton
 JS Ironworks
 McKinnie Outfitter
 Bob Steffan



NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MISSOULA, MT
PERMIT NO.74

Montana Wild Sheep Foundation

PO Box 17731
Missoula, MT 59808

Return Service Requested

Advertising Rates

- Business Card
(3 3/4" x 2 ") - \$50/yr
- 1/4 page
(3 3/4" x 5") - \$100/yr
- 1/2 page
(7 1/2" x 5") - \$200/yr
- Full page
(8 1/2" x 11") - \$400/yr

Join Montana Wild Sheep Foundation!

Interested in becoming a member? Simply complete the below form and return with payment.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Select category (one only please per form) and membership length:

- Youth
 - 1 year - \$15.00
 - 3 year - \$35.00
- Regular
 - 1 year - \$30.00
 - 3 year - \$80.00
- Family
 - 1 year - \$50.00
 - 3 year - \$120.00
- Life - \$500.00

Mail this form and dues to:

Montana Chapter WSF
PO Box 17731
Missoula, MT 59808