



Wild Sheep

Summer 2019 | Volume 27, Issue 2

2019 Legislative Session Update:

MTWSF's Role

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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 - Photo by Darryn Epp Photography

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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).

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President's Message

The Montana special drawing status for Big Horn Sheep permits were released today and the Montana FWP website informed me that I was unsuccessful. Like many of you, I keep applying faithfully every year and each year I am always excited to check my status to see if I finally drew the most coveted hunting tag on the planet! Even though I was unsuccessful I am reminded that it is a true blessing that our wild sheep population is robust enough that I have an opportunity to apply. As a chapter we have many successes we can count in 2018/2019.

- Our Montana Wild Sheep Foundation (MTWSF) membership continues to grow with over 400 members and life members.
- MTWSF now has a voice with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) after a wildlife and transportation summit held last December. Many of our wild sheep are killed on Montana roads so having a voice on the MDT panel regarding road building and wildlife movement corridors can help mitigate wild sheep road kills in the future.
- Our 2019 Billings fundraiser was an overwhelming success. There were over 500 people in attendance over the two day event. The money we raised allows MTWSF to give out many thousands of dollars in grants each year for youth events, wild sheep studies, wild sheep captures, and critical habitat purchase or enhancement. Hopefully in the near future we'll be able to help fund wild sheep transplants.
- MTWSF helped fund youth programs that reached over 500 area youth and helped fund scholarships to over 100 conservation and hunting camps in 2018 and 2019. There will be 3 MTWSF/"Montana Matters" youth camps this summer in the Selway Bitterroot wilderness corridor. Teaching youth about wild sheep issues will be growing our wild sheep conservation leaders for the future.
- MTWSF helped to fund a cheat grass control study on Wild Horse Island. The study was an enormous success and it shows the potential for revolutionary control of cheat grass on public and private land. You'll see more information on that study in this newsletter.
- Thanks to Brian Solan writing a grant request, a \$100,000 conservation easement grant was awarded to MTWSF to purchase the Garrity WMA addition near Anaconda. This is a very important piece of property for public access and is integral habitat for a big horn sheep migration corridor. The land will benefit all wildlife and sportsman access in perpetuity.
- MTWSF helped fund a multi-year habitat improvement project in the Petty Creek drainage west of Missoula. The area continues to yield excellent hunter opportunity for wild sheep as well as elk, deer, moose, turkeys, and more. The project is a multi-year, multi-organizational collaboration to reduce weeds and enhance habitat; as well as a forest management project to reduce wild fire danger and intensity.

There are many more projects and successes I can list. We're still seeking more answers for wild sheep disease issues and continue to stress the utmost importance of wild sheep and domestic sheep separation. Our wild sheep population is still at risk, but as long as we continue to work towards finding a solution, we are winning the battle. Just like drawing a Big Horn Sheep tag, you can't win if you don't apply. In order to see our wild sheep herds restored to abundance we must continue to stay the course as an organization and one day we'll see our wild sheep herds prosper in new areas throughout Montana and beyond.

Shane Clouse

Montana Wild Sheep Foundation President

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2019 Legislative Session Update: MTWSF's Role



Report by DJ Berg

The Montana Wild Sheep Foundation not only helps fund projects and programs, but it also has an advocacy role in state and national legislation. The Board of Directors frequently reviews legislation and offers positions for bills that affect sportsman and specifically, wild sheep. Executive Director Brian Solan is the voice of the chapter on the hill, and he consistently advocates for wild sheep during legislative sessions and FWP commission meetings. This session MTWSF advocated against a bill that would limit wild sheep permits to “once in a lifetime” and restrict youth under 18 from hunting wild sheep. The Board stayed neutral on a bill allowing the pickup of wild sheep horns that died of natural causes after a split vote. MTWSF also offers support and constructive criticism on policy affecting the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks.

In addition to those efforts, MTWSF was selected to participate in the Sportsman’s Caucus Advisory Council for the 2019 session. Director DJ Berg was appointed to serve as MTWSF representative on the Council. The Montana Sportsmen’s Caucus Advisory Council serves as a resource to the Montana Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus on issues related to hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. This Caucus is comprised of a bipartisan group of legislators who share sportsman values and strive to make decisions in the best interest of Montana sportsman community.

The Advisory Council was tasked to provide Caucus leadership with recommendations on how the Caucus should address legislative and regulatory proposals affecting the state’s sportsmen and women. The Advisory Council was also asked to host various policy-themed and fundraising events.

The Council consists of 13 member organizations, whose mission is to “To protect and advance Montana’s hunting, fishing, trapping and recreational shooting heritage through science-based wildlife and fisheries management and the wise use of our state’s natural resources, and to protect and advance the rights and traditions of Montana citi-

zens to hunt, fish, recreationally shoot and trap by engaging in an open dialogue with the Montana Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus."

The session began in January of 2019 and the first order of business was to approve the Council bylaws and plan a social event to kick off the session. The Sportsman's Caucus Social Event was held in at the Brewhouse (Helena) in mid-January. There was an exceptional turnout of sportsman, legislators, and elected officials; including Governor Steve Bullock. Most of the MTWSF Board of Directors was in attendance for the event, as a banquet planning meeting was held the same day. The event was an excellent way to begin the work that lay ahead.

As bills were introduced in the session, the Council started to identify legislation of interest to the sportman community. The Montana Sportsman's Caucus leadership also requested positions from the Council. Each bill was discussed among the diverse members of the Council at regularly scheduled meetings. "Support, Neutral, or Oppose" was the recommendation sent to the Caucus for each bill under consideration. In some cases, the Council offered recommendations to amend bills that could be supported by the group.

At the end of the session, the Council planned and hosted a trap shoot for all legislators to thank them for their support. Those that attended were randomly paired with sportsmen and women for a friendly competition among teams. While the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association took first, the MTWSF team (led by Director Justin Spring) took second place! It was a fun event to celebrate the end of a successful session for sportsman, but the Council's work is not done. Planning is under way for the interim between the sessions to educate legislators on sportsman's' core issues. If you would like more information on the Montana Sportsman's Caucus you can visit <http://congressionalsportsmen.org/state/mt>.

MTWSF is proud to be at the table, advocating for wild sheep and the sportsmen and women of our organization. We will continue to build relationships with our legislators and elected officials to serve our membership and the future of wild sheep. The Board of Directors would appreciate your thoughts on legislation and policy. If you would like to offer your suggestions, please reach out to Executive Director Brian Solan or any of the Directors using the contact information at the front of this newsletter. 🍷



Sportsman's Caucus Trap Shoot



1st place team (MOGA) at the trap shoot. Past MTWSF Director Mike Colpo helped lead the team to victory!



2nd Place Team (MTWSF)

Cheating Habitat Part 2: Bighorn Sheep, Wild Horse Island and Beyond?

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

Pre-treatment, moderate site
(photo courtesy of Stuart Jennings)



*The Fall 2018 Newsletter article, “Cheating Habitat – Bighorn Sheep, Wild Horse Island and Beyond”, describes a project to implement experimental treatments using micronutrient fertilizers to control invasive annual grass, including cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*). This is an update of that project.*

In September 2018, experimental plots were established on three different vegetation sites that are characterized as follows: 1) previously disturbed with high percentage of “invasive annual grasses”; 2) south-facing slopes dominated by native forbs with moderate levels of “invasive annual grasses” and; 3) rough fescue grassland in ponderosa pine habitat with mild or low levels of “invasive annual grasses”. Each site received three different micronutrient-based fertilizer treatment rates (high medium and low) and a control plot. During plot establishment and treatment, base line assessments were made that included: percent annual grass, perennial grass and desirable forbs. Led by Stuart Jennings and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks the experimental plots were re-measured on June 7, 2019.

Post-treatment, moderate site
(photo courtesy of Stuart Jennings)

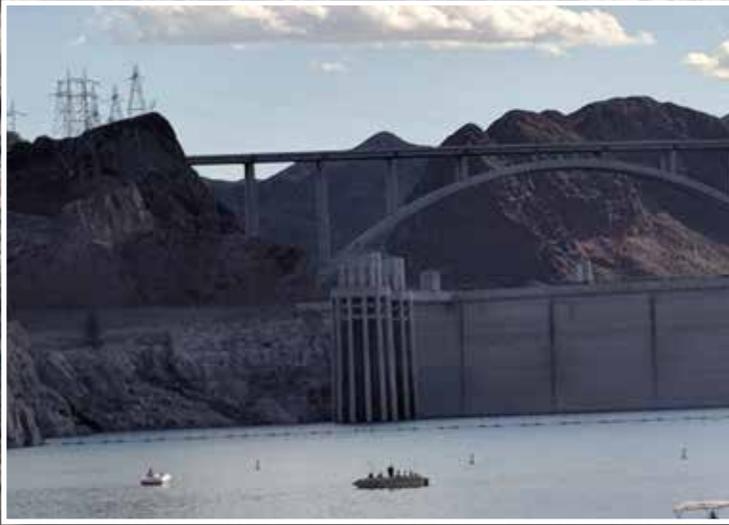


Preliminary results of treatment effectiveness are very encouraging. Stuart reports that on all sites and under all application rates, invasive annual grass cover was reduced from 91% to 5% and 18% to 5% in the disturbed and south-facing slope sites, respectively. Perennial grass cover increased in those same sites with the exception of the high rate in the rough fescue grassland ponderosa pine type, where it decreased. Although preliminary results show a neutral effect on desirable forbs, lupine were negatively affected to varying degrees by all three application rates.

This exciting new treatment shows great promise and wide application. We anticipate expanding this micronutrient fertilizer treatment in the future. Continued monitoring will document the length of time treatment effects last and help refine application rates. After receiving a final report at the end of June, we will discuss the next phase of this project. 🍷

Wild Sheep Foundation Chapter and Affiliates Summit Las Vegas Nevada 5-17-19

Story by Grant Winn II



I was able to attend the Summit this year and it was a great success. There was a Nevada wild-life biologist who spoke first about the recovery of the desert bighorn in Nevada. Very interesting with a full background on the North American wildlife conservation model. In 1960 there was 2-3,000 Desert Bighorns in Nevada, today there are over 14,000 sheep including Desert, California and Bighorn Sheep. Nevada offers 300 sheep tags each year.

Gray Thornton discussed the “New Narrative” regarding the risks of domestic and wild sheep intermingling. WSF is currently filming “Horse rich-Dirt poor. The return of the desert bighorn.” The film address’s the M Ovi issue and the overabundance of wild horses and burros in Nevada. There is currently over 81,000 wild horses and burro’s in Nevada with a carrying capacity for 27,000. The destruction of the habitat is incredible, they had a film we watched regarding this issue. Many horses are dying of starvation but the anti-hunting groups thwart any effort to bring the herd size down to an ecological balance by the euthanasia of these animals.

Many strategies were discussed on how chapters are dealing with the M ovi problem. How to deal with landowners, sheep separation, legislation and domestic sheep producers. Some of the veterinarians discussed how they gave an infected domestic herd antibiotic injections for 5 days followed by a nasal flush, that did remove the M ovi. The cost per sheep was less than \$10 Canadian.

We did participate in some fun events as well. There was a dinner cruise and auction on Lake Mead. (Where did they get that idea??) and a Pink Jeep tour of Red Rocks in the desert. We also attended the annual fundraiser for the hosting chapter, the Fraternity of Desert Bighorn Sheep. 🍷



MONTANA
WILD SHEEP
FOUNDATION

2019 Board of Director Elections - Update

Update by DJ Berg

Last fall, the MTWSF Board of Directors amended our bylaws to allow the use of electronic elections for selection of future board members. The goal of this change was to reduce the cost and time required to cause, mail, and count the ballots. We were also optimistic that the new technology would increase voter turnout. We are excited to announce this year will be the first that MTWSF will conduct electronic elections for the Board of Directors. An online platform has been selected and tested for this year's election and it promises to streamline the entire process.

A call for nominations was mailed in June and closed July 1st (next year this will be done electronically). All nominations received will be considered by the Directors and a list of nominees will be established no later than August 1st. The electronic election will begin no later than August 10th and will end August 31st.

We do need your help to ensure the success of this year's election. We are requesting that all members update their contact information as soon as possible. You can do this by contacting **Marci Johnerson, Membership Manager, Wild Sheep Foundation** at mjohnerson@wildsheepfoundation.org or via phone at (406) 404-8750.



Here is how the process will work:

1. Members will receive an email and text message with instructions on how to vote. If you forget to update your contact information, we will mail you instructions on how to vote.
2. Voters will follow the link to a secure ballot. See the sample ballot on the following page.
3. Complete the ballot, verify your selection, and you're done!
4. You will receive a confirmation message that you voted.

When the election is complete the website will automatically tabulate the results, as shown in the example on the following page. The names of the newly elected Directors will be announced at the September Board Meeting and published in the next Wild Sheep newsletter.

You might be wondering about the privacy of your email address and phone number. The vendor we selected does not sell or market voter information. Further, they offer high integrity elections, with encrypted ballots, options for voter anonymity, and the ability to audit elections.

The current Board of Directors is excited to utilize this technology to make our elections more efficient. We hope this new way of doing business is easier for you as well! If you have any questions about the election, please contact Executive Director Brian Solan or President Shane Clouse.

Ballot > Verify > Confirmation

Montana Wild Sheep Foundation 2019 Board of Directors Election

This is a test. We can add information for the voters, links to our website, etc.

2019 MTWSF Board of Directors (test)

Select up to 3 of 4 candidates, write-in your own candidate or choose abstain to vote for none of the candidates.
We can add additional instructions here...

Candidate		
 Suzy Lamb Information	<input type="checkbox"/>	
 Scott Ram Information	<input type="checkbox"/>	
 John Fullcurl Information	<input type="checkbox"/>	
 Kathy Ewe Information	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Candidate <input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Show more write in candidates
Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/>	

[Verify your selection](#)

Sample Ballot



Sample Results



2019 Board of Directors Election

June 7, 2019 4:04 PM – June 7, 2019 7:50 PM

[See changes](#)
(GMT-07:00) MOUNTAIN TIME (US & CANADA)

Completed **All Votes Cast**

4 ballots submitted

of 4 eligible voters – 100%

3 emails and 3 SMS sent - 0 notices queued

Results

Graphed Results

Vote Audit

2019 MTWSF Board of Directors (test) PLURALITY – 3 VACANCIES

Joe	1 vote (8.3%)
Suzy Lamb	3 votes (25.0%)
Scott Ram	3 votes (25.0%)
John Fullcurl	3 votes (25.0%)
Kathy Ewe	2 votes (16.7%)

John Fullcurl, Scott Ram, and Suzy Lamb win with 25.0% of the vote each.

12 votes tallied and 0 abstentions from 4 ballots

2019 Banquet Memories







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- 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
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