



[www.montanawsf.org](http://www.montanawsf.org)

MONTANA  
WILD SHEEP  
FOUNDATION

# Wild@Sheep

Fall 2022 | Volume 30, Issue 3



*Stay in the Know:*

[montanawsf.org](http://montanawsf.org)

## THIS ISSUE

President's Message.....	3
Conservation Director's Update.....	4
2022 Teller Wildlife Youth Conservation Expo.....	5
Board Member Election Updates.....	6
Science Corner.....	8

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 credit** - Jasper Poore

## SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES AND PHOTOS!

Have a photo from a great sheep hunt or an article you would like to have published in our newsletter? Submit your photos (in .jpeg format and with a short description) and your articles to [tulberg@meetingsnorthwest.com](mailto:tulberg@meetingsnorthwest.com).

## CONNECT with Montana WSF

Visit us online at [www.montanawsf.org](http://www.montanawsf.org)!

While there, visit the **Photo Gallery** page. If you would like to have a picture posted, email ([photos@montanawsf.org](mailto: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).

## Board of Directors

**D.J. Berg, President**  
[dj@montanawsf.org](mailto:dj@montanawsf.org)

**Don Patterson, Vice President**  
[d5357mt@gmail.com](mailto:d5357mt@gmail.com)

**Jeff Mortensen, Treasurer**  
[jcmort7@gmail.com](mailto:jcmort7@gmail.com)

**Grant Winn II, Secretary**  
[g.winn@nm.com](mailto:g.winn@nm.com)

**Levi Bowler**  
[levibowler@gmail.com](mailto:levibowler@gmail.com)

**Erika Putnam**  
[drerikap@thebendatwhitefish.com](mailto:drerikap@thebendatwhitefish.com)

**Alex Russell**  
[alexrussell@cushingterrell.com](mailto:alexrussell@cushingterrell.com)

**Justin Spring**  
[justin@boone-crockett.org](mailto:justin@boone-crockett.org)

**Ray Vinkey**  
[rvinkey@hotmail.com](mailto:rvinkey@hotmail.com)

**Brian Solan, Volunteer Executive Director**  
[brian@montanawsf.org](mailto:brian@montanawsf.org)

**Kurt Alt, Conservation Director**  
[altwildlife@yahoo.com](mailto:altwildlife@yahoo.com)

## Newsletter Editor & Publisher

**Traci Ulberg**  
Meetings Northwest, Inc.  
(406) 273-7224  
[tulberg@meetingsnorthwest.com](mailto:tulberg@meetingsnorthwest.com)

*Contact us at:*  
Montana Wild Sheep Foundation  
PO Box 17731  
Missoula, MT 59808

Visit us at [montanawsf.org](http://montanawsf.org).

## 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](http://www.facebook.com/MontanaWildSheepFoundation)

# President's Message

Hello friends! It is with much excitement that I write this message to you. The Montana Wild Sheep Foundation is in the middle of change, much like the fall colors. And just like the brilliance mother nature delivers each fall, the Board of Directors and I are expecting these changes to intensify the effectiveness of our organization.

This August an election was held for three vacancies on the Board of Directors. Grant Winn and I were re-elected to another term and we are both thankful for the opportunity to serve. I am excited to welcome Dr. Erika Putnam to the Board of Directors. She brings with her valuable business expertise, in addition to her experiences participating on many other boards. Welcome to the family Erika!

In June, Brian Solan notified the Board of Directors of his intention to step down as the Executive Director by year's end. Thankfully, Brian still plans to stay involved and advised the board to entertain a proposal to hire a paid Executive Director. It was a robust discussion that ultimately led to a unanimous decision to fund and hire the position. Since that time, the board has engaged in a robust recruitment process that yielded many great candidates. I had hoped to make an announcement in this newsletter about who the new Executive Director will be, however we have not quite completed the process. As soon as a decision is made an announcement will be shared via email and in the newsletter.

I can't believe I've made it this far into my message without mentioning hunting season! Fall colors also bring out hunters orange! If you drew a sheep tag this year, I wish you the best of success as you have the experience of a lifetime. When you're finished with your adventure, we would love to hear about your adventure. Be sure to send pictures and stories to us so we can share them with our wild sheep family! Regardless of what tag you drew this fall, I hope you enjoy time afield and create great memories with family and friends.

*D.J. Berg*

Montana Wild Sheep Foundation President

[dj@montanawsf.org](mailto:dj@montanawsf.org)



MONTANA  
WILD SHEEP  
FOUNDATION

Don't miss out on the chance for a once in a lifetime hunt....

## LIFE MEMBER RAFFLE



### About the Hunt:

Location and Outfitter pending.

### To qualify for the 2023 Life Member Hunt Raffle:

1. Must be a Life Member of the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation.
2. Must be PRESENT at the Annual Banquet & Fundraiser on February 24-25, 2023 in Missoula, MT.
3. Transferable only to another Life Member who is PRESENT at the event.

For more information on the 2022 lifetime member hunt, visit <https://montanawsf.org/events-wsf/>.

# *Conservation Director's Update:* **We Are Going to the Dogs** **“A Dawg’s a Dawg for Aw That”**

by Kurt Alt

*Conservation Director, Montana and International Programs, Wild Sheep Foundation*

**T**he Montana Wild Sheep Foundation (MTWSF) and the Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) are pooling our resources with Working Dogs for Conservation (WD4C) to address bighorn sheep management needs. Last year, WSF approved a Grant in Aid proposal from WD4C to fund a startup project to: 1) use dogs to detect M.ovi and 2) develop the feasibility of using canine-enforced spatial separation. Both MTWSF and MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks wrote strong letters of support to WSF in support of this project.

But let’s step back a moment, WD4C was already working with Montana State University College of Agriculture, testing the ability of dogs to detect M.ovi in domestic sheep. With our collaboration with MSU and MTFWP, we encouraged WD4C to apply for a grant. This first year of work has shown great promise in detecting M.ovi in wild sheep feces, using collections from the ongoing Little Belts and Highlands bighorn sheep projects. In the last few months, interest in this project from a Canadian province and a half dozen western states has grown. This has led to the WSF approval of a new grant.

As the initial part of this project continues to refine the abilities for dogs to detect M.ovi in wild land settings, applications become exciting. For example, using dogs to do general M.ovi surveillance of sheep herds, rather than using expensive and intrusive helicopter capture. A further application could be using dogs during trap and trans-location efforts, to detect M.ovi in individuals to minimize the risk of transferring the pathogen into herds receiving aug-

mentations or into new herds being established.

The second part of this project, using canine-enforced spatial separation, will be developed this fall and has equal real-world application. WD4C will convene a workshop with expertise from 3 canine training disciplines, i.e., livestock guardian dogs, handled herding dogs and aversive conditioning dogs, to evaluate and strategize use of existing training methods for canine-enforced spatial separation between domestic and wild sheep. MTWSF anticipates that WD4C will apply to MTWSF for a grant this fall to expand this effort. This has the potential for strong collaboration between domestic and wild sheep interests to mutually address local concerns with co-mingling, providing managers with an effective new (yet old) tool.

We are extremely optimistic that our canine friends can help resolve and solve long standing bighorn sheep management concerns that will be beneficial to both our Montana domestic and wild sheep interests. This work serves to remind me, that despite our technological advances, dogs are remarkably “canny” and continue to be “man and woman’s best friend”. 🐾



# 2022 Teller Wildlife Youth Conservation Expo

by Tom Powers

This summer we completed another successful camp with eighteen (18) kids being educated in the different species of North American Wild Sheep along with the disease issues associated with them and other wildlife here. Presentations were given by our local FWPS Biologist and the Forest Service as well as wilderness presentations by Smoke Elser and Wayne Chamberlin. Additionally, Gene Wensel and Berry Wensel, original founders of the Montana Bow Hunters Association, came in to teach about hunting whitetails. Day classes included horse packing, trapping, archery, and “leave no trace camping.”



Unique to this year’s camp, we also had a “camp within a camp” dedicated to fly fishing only. Four of the eighteen kids participated. We acquire a commercial (free fishing license) from the state of Idaho every year for the entire camp kids and all the adults. Many thanks to all those that helped out! It is definitely a team effort. 🍷

---

## Thank you to our 2022 Beartooth Sponsors!



# Board Member Election Updates

Our 2022 MTWSF Board Elections are complete. DJ Berg and Grant Winn II were re-elected to the board for another three year term. Erika Putnam was elected as a new board member. All of these volunteers will provide valuable leadership to our organization. The board will conduct an officer election in October. Check out our website for the results.

Max Bauer termed out this year, after nine years of service to MTWSF! Max served as treasurer for the entirety of his tenure, providing superior guidance on financial and tax matters. He also helped guide the board in many difficult decisions along the way. If you see Max at the banquet this year, please extend him some gratitude for all of his efforts. Thanks Max!

All the recently elected or re-elected Board Members provided bios on themselves, continue reading to learn more about who is serving on the MTWSF board!



## D.J. Berg

It has been an honor to serve on the MTWSF Board for the last six years. In that time, I have held the position of Board Member, Vice President, and now President. It has been a privilege to serve the interests of wild sheep and to work alongside Brian Solan and the Board of Directors for the last two terms. Together we have accomplished amazing things.

I am very proud of the many hours myself and the board put into fundraising the last few years. While many non-profits faced fundraising challenges, our team overcame these challenges with dedicated volunteerism and new ideas. I have helped lead our organization in making some critical decisions for our future. Specifically, ratifying a Conservation Committee and authorizing a paid Executive Director. These decisions were historic for MTWSF and will now allow this organization to do more for wild sheep conservation.

In my last term, I would like to lend my organizational leadership experience to grow MTWSF's positive influence on big horn sheep. My top priorities are to strengthen our financial position, establish the MTWSF Conservation Committee, and to assist the new Executive Director to ensure their success.



**DESERT SHEEP HUNT**  
WITH SAN JOSE TROPHY HUNTS IN SONORA, MEXICO

**\$200**

2<sup>ND</sup> AOUADAD SHEEP HUNT  
3<sup>RD</sup> STONE GLACIER GEAR  
4<sup>TH</sup> ZEISS SPOTTING SCOPE

## Desert Sheep Hunt Winners!

1 <sup>st</sup> Place <b>Brian Nelson</b> Belgrade, MT	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place <b>Jacob Froehlich</b> Boise, ID
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place <b>Jerry Krier</b> Kalispell, MT	4 <sup>th</sup> Place <b>Teresa Davis</b> Prineville, OR



### **Grant Winn II**

Growing up on a ranch near the small town of Plains, Montana, I had an early appreciation for the outdoors. Hunting, fishing, backpacking and horse trips were all on the agenda. I was especially interested in the large Bighorn Sheep herd in the area. We would watch the rams fight and chase ewes every fall and I've been infatuated with Bighorn Sheep ever since.

Today, I live in the Bitterroot Valley and have three adult children. I work in Missoula and have been a financial advisor for 31 years. Raising grass fed beef and traveling are my hobbies but my passion is hunting. I usually travel annually to hunt along with hunting in Montana. Hunting on three continents has been eye opening in seeing different cultures, wildlife, hunting methods and conservation practices. I also owned a booking agency for seven years and arranged hunting trips throughout the world.

Although I have never hunted Bighorn Sheep in Montana, I am friends with Jim Weatherly, who is the founding Executive Director of MTWSF, and he encouraged me to become a member. I have always tried to give back and support the activities I am passionate about. I served as a volunteer Bowhunter education instructor for eight years and received the Charlie Whitfield award for the top new instructor. I was a founding board member of the Five Valleys Chapter of SCI and served as Vice President for 11 years. In 2016, then MTWSF board member Shane Clouse asked if I could step in to cover the rest of the term of a board member who was leaving, and I haven't looked back. I'm proud of the growth and the accomplishments of MTWSF over the past six years I have been involved. This growth will enable us to fund more projects for our ultimate goal of putting more sheep in the mountains of Montana.

---



### **Dr. Erika Putnam**

Dr. Erika Putnam, Holistic Chiropractic Physician, is the owner of The Bend in Whitefish, Montana. She uses a whole person approach to treat spinal and extremity conditions and other health problems with a variety of chiropractic techniques, rehabilitation, nutrition, lifestyle and functional medicine. She has over 25 years of experience in the chiropractic field and holds a 500-hour yoga instructor certification. She is also certified in animal chiropractic. Dr. Putnam is a published author on several collaborative books and currently leads an online writing group.

Erika has volunteered and held various positions on many boards including the Women's Business League, Canyon County Fair Board, and The Idaho Board of Chiropractic Physicians. She is currently a director on the Authors of the Flathead Board. She has worked on the banquet committee for Wild Sheep for both Idaho and Montana and has been attending the Annual Wild Sheep Foundation Convention for over 40 years.

Erika is an outdoors enthusiast who balances her work life by road bike cycling, hiking, teaching yoga, hunting big game and seeking adventure and sanctity in mountains and rivers. In her spare time, she writes and dreams of owning her own flower farm. She maintains a blog about health, wellness and living in Montana and more information can be found on her website [www.thebendatwhitefish.com](http://www.thebendatwhitefish.com).

# Science Corner

## Greenhorns and Highlands Update

Intro by Ray Vinkey

Photo & Update by Dean Waltee, Wildlife Biologist, Fish Wildlife & Parks, Sheridan, Montana

*As an organization, we work diligently with our partners in Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks to enhance existing, and establish new, bighorn populations through transplants like the Little Belts and Tendoy's last year. Transplants can function to establish new populations, augment existing populations, or re-introduce bighorn to areas where populations were lost—generally due to disease or over exploitation of populations during the end of the 19th and early 20th century.*

*Restored bighorn populations return a native species to the landscape, allow for wildlife viewing and provide for hunter opportunity. In this month's Science Corner, we provide an update from FWP Wildlife Biologist Dean Waltee on a bighorn population re-established by introductions to the Greenhorn Mountains of southwestern Montana in 2003 and 2004. In total 69 bighorn (ewes=56, lambs=10, rams) from the Missouri Breaks near Winnett and the Rocky Mountain Front near Augusta were introduced.*

*This is an interesting population as they are not well known and the population has not boomed after introduction, but almost 20 years afterwards, persists and provides hunter opportunity. In 2022 this population in HD 330—largely residing in the Ruby River Watershed—had a minimum observed count of 42 sheep and provided for the opportunity to harvest one ram. Happy Hunting!*





## Here's Dean Waltee's update:

"Folks, From June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022, I recorded all bighorn sheep observations I made or collected from others. During fall 2021 hunting seasons, I asked each hunter passing through the Alder (N=741), Blacktail (N=264), and Kidd (N=217) check stations about bighorn sheep observations. Hunters reporting at the Alder Check Station provide information from a large percentage of the Ruby River Watershed and southern Tobacco Root Mountains. Hunters reporting at the Blacktail, and Kidd check stations provide information from the Blacktail Deer Creek, Sage Creek, and Red Rock River watersheds. From late-March through April, I spent several days afield searching for and classifying bighorn sheep from the ground. The search area focused on known winter concentration areas within the Ruby River Watershed and did not include all possible bighorn sheep use areas. I occasionally detect bighorn sheep from the air while completing trend surveys of other wildlife species. These data provide minimum known distribution, minimum known population, and population vital rates (i.e., lamb: ewe ratio).

## Survey Results

Thirty-five bighorn sheep observations and a minimum known post-winter (April) population of 42 individuals were documented. This represents the minimum number of bighorns known alive and not a known total population. Given the large and geographically diverse area the Greenhorn herd uses, it's unlikely every individual sheep was documented. The method used to classify sheep may also bias the observed total low. i.e., if two ewes and two lambs are observed at a location on survey day one and two ewes and two lambs are observed at the same location on survey day two, the classification would be documented as two ewes and two lambs for the survey location. Whereas it's possible two separate groups totaling four ewes and four lambs were present. The method minimizes the probability of double-counting individuals and over-estimating the minimum population.

A lone bighorn ewe was observed with mountain goats in the Tobacco Root Mountains during September 2021. This was the sixth observation of a lone ewe among mountain goats in the Tobacco Root Mountains documented since September 2018. One observation was made by me while completing the Tobacco Root Mountains Mountain goat survey dur-

ing October 2019. The other five have been reported by mountain goat hunters. I believe these observations are of a single ewe bighorn that immigrated into the Tobacco Roots and has been accepted into the mountain goat herd. Two hunting parties, reporting at the Blacktail Check Station, reported observing two bighorn sheep (1 ram and 1 unclassified) on the Sage Creek side of the Blacktail Mountains last October. No subsequent observations of bighorn sheep have been documented in that area.

During late-March through April, I classified 42 bighorn sheep as 19 ewes, 11 lambs, 1 yearling ram, and 11 adult rams. That compared to 42 observed bighorns last year and an average of 45.8 (Number=8, Standard Deviation=6.0, 95% Confidence Interval=41.6–50.0). The observed lamb: 100 ewe ratio was 57.9 (95% CI=36.0–79.8). The observed total ram: 100 ewe ratio was 63.2 (95% CI=42.7–83.7). The observed adult ram: 100 ewe ratio was 57.9 (95% CI=36.0–79.8). The observed yearling ram: 100 ewe ratio was 5.3 (95% CI=0.0–20.7). Forty-two percent (95% CI=11.1–72.3) of observed rams were  $\geq \frac{3}{4}$  curl.

## Harvest Management

One annual harvest opportunity for any ram was established in 2018 in HD 330 the Greenhorn Mountains. This harvest opportunity was recommended by myself and adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission following guidelines outlined for the herd within the existing Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy. Each of the four past license holders harvested rams. Those included an 8.5-year-old in 2018, a 5.5-year-old in 2019, a 7.5-year-old in 2020, and a 7.5 year-old, in 2021. One license for any ram harvest was issued for fall 2022.

## Habitat

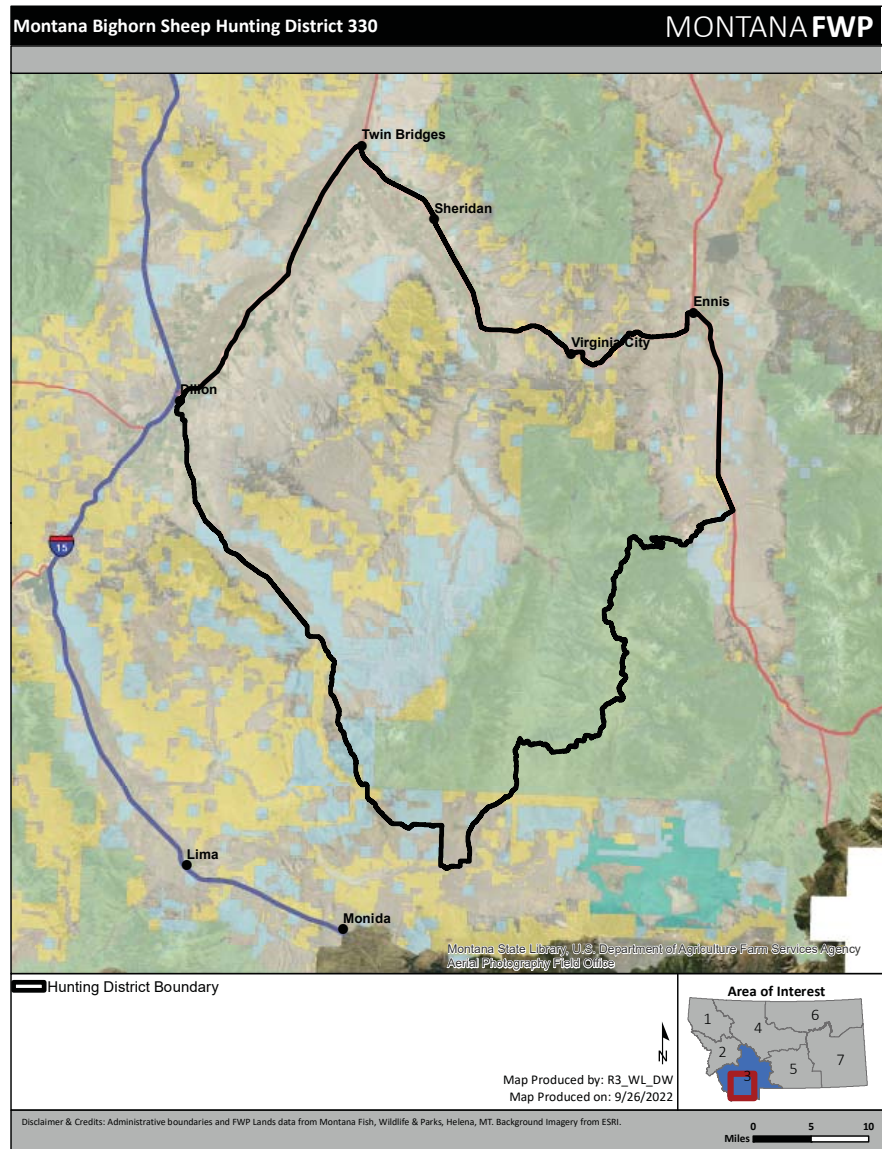
Conifer tree cutting and follow-up prescribed fire projects, expected to benefit the Greenhorn bighorn population through increased open foraging areas and increased forage quality and quantity, were completed by the Bureau of Land Management along the west slope of the Greenhorn Mountains during spring 2021. Similar work has been completed on adjacent private lands and may occur on state lands. The United States Forest Service continues to work through an Environmental Impact Statement analyzing similar projects on lands they administer along the west slope of the Greenhorn Mountains. Deci-

sions on those projects are expected soon.

## Herd Health

To date, no disease-related mortality events are known to have occurred among the Greenhorn bighorn herd. Biological samples were collected from rams harvested in 2018 and 2019. The 8.5-year-old ram harvested in 2018 tested negative for all known pathogens. The 5.5-year-old ram harvested in 2019 tested negative for *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* and positive for *Pasteurella Leukotoxin lktA* and an unspecified *Mannheimia* species.

As part of ongoing mountain goat and bighorn sheep herd health assessment across Montana, 22 bighorn sheep were captured from the Greenhorn Herd and sampled during January 2021. A final report of those findings is expected soon. During the January 2021 capture, radio collars were deployed on three rams and seven ewes to aid in management and update our understanding of herd home range. To date, one ewe and one ram from the collared sample have died. Mortality was determined to be the result of an abdominal injury, including a broken rib, for the ewe and malnutrition influenced by an abscessed leg wound for the ram. The remaining eight collared sheep remain alive. 🐾



If you have any questions about these efforts or would like to discuss bighorn sheep management, please feel free to contact me anytime ([ray.vinkey@mt.gov](mailto:ray.vinkey@mt.gov)).

## YOU HELP KEEP SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN WITH YOUR SUPPORT



Thank you for your ongoing support as a member to fulfill our ongoing goal to Keep Sheep on the Mountain! We now have a way to easily take donations outside of banquet season! Do have an employer who matches your donations? Do you want to maximize your tax returns by donating to a 501c(3)?

### WE MADE IT EASY

- 1 Scan the QR code (to the left) with your phone's camera app and make a donation today!
- 2 Or, go to our website ([montanawsf.org](http://montanawsf.org)) and click on the "Donate Today" button in our menu to make your donation.



31<sup>st</sup> Annual Fundraiser  
Hilton Garden Inn  
Missoula, Montana  
February 24 – 25, 2023

**BEARTOOTH Donor**

For and in consideration of pledges and donations made to the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, a nonprofit organization, a Beartooth Donor contributes the following: In excess of \$4,000 retail value being cash donations, merchandise, art or services for the purpose of door prizes, auction or raffle items.

- Booth Space at the event on the evening of February 24th and the day of 25<sup>th</sup> (limited number available – first come, first serve).
- Beartooth Ad space (Premium) on the ticketing website.
- Premium Ad Space on MTWSF website for the remainder 2023.
- Logo is printed in MTWSF Newsletter
- Specific mention of level of support and video ads during the banquet fundraiser.
- A banquet table for (8) included in the donation.

**BRIDGER Donor**

For and in consideration of pledges and donations made to the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, a nonprofit organization, a Bridger Donor contributes the following: In excess of \$1,500 retail value being cash donations, merchandise, art or services for the purpose of door prizes, auction or raffle items.

- Bridger Donor Ad space on the ticketing website.
- Standard Ad space on MTWSF website for the remainder 2023.
- Specific Mention of level of support and Photo ads during the banquet fundraiser.

**BITTERROOT Donor**

For and in consideration of pledges and donations made to the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, a nonprofit organization, a Bitterroot Donor contributes the following: In excess of \$500 retail value being cash donations, merchandise, art or services for the purpose of door prizes, auction or raffle items.

- Bitterroot Donor Ad space on the ticketing website
- Standard Ad space MTWSF website for the remainder 2023.
- Photo/Image ads during the banquet fundraiser.

**DESCRIPTION OF DONATION:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 100% Donation to MTWSF

ESTIMATED VALUE OF DONATION: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ % Donation to MTWSF

Is a booth space request? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

MTWSF Member Receiving Donation: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Donors may fill out form above and mail to P.O. BOX 17731, Missoula, MT 59808-7731 or email to [info@montanawsf.org](mailto:info@montanawsf.org)

Additional information and donation form available at [www.montanawsf.org](http://www.montanawsf.org)

MTWSF is a 501c(3) organization – TAX ID #81-0478530



**Montana Wild Sheep Foundation**  
 PO Box 17731  
 Missoula, MT 59808

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

Return Service Requested

## Join Montana Wild Sheep Foundation!

Interested in becoming a member? Membership rates can be found below. To join or renew, visit us at <https://montanawsf.org/membership/>.

- Youth
  - 1 year - \$20.00
  - 3 year - \$35.00
- Regular
  - 1 year - \$35.00
  - 3 year - \$90.00
- Family
  - 1 year - \$50.00
  - 3 year - \$120.00
- Life - \$500.00

