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Subject: Bighorn sheep, Rocky Mtn goat hunters invited to free orientation July 18 in The Dalles

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Bighorn sheep, Rocky Mtn goat hunters invited to free orientation July 18 in The Dalles

SALEM, Ore.—The 115 lucky hunters who drew a bighorn sheep or Rocky Mtn goat tag and other interested hunters are invited to an orientation on July 18 at 9 a.m. in The Dalles. The orientation is *required* for all 2015 Rocky Mtn goat hunters; sheep hunters are strongly encouraged to attend.

The Oregon Chapter of the [Foundation for North American Wild Sheep \(FNAWS\)](#) offers this orientation in partnership with ODFW. Attendees will go over maps and areas to find sheep, hunting ethics, marksmanship, survival, hiring an outfitter, check-in/check-out requirements and other topics.

The event will be held at the Readiness Center, Columbia Gorge Community College, 400 E Scenic Drive. Hunters should pre-register by contacting FNAWS' George Houston tel. 503-826-9109 / Ghouston@hevanet.com or Don South, tel. 503-647-5954.

"Bighorn sheep and Rocky Mountain goat hunts are rare once-in-a-lifetime tags and the orientation is meant to prepare lucky hunters for this very special experience," says Jeremy Thompson, ODFW district wildlife biologist in The Dalles.

Bighorn sheep died off in Oregon in the 1940s due to unregulated hunting and their susceptibility to domestic livestock diseases. The first successful bighorn sheep relocation in Oregon occurred in 1954, when 20 California bighorns were relocated from British Columbia to the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge in Lake County. Since then, the population of bighorn sheep has grown to an estimated 3,500-3,700 as a result of ODFW's aggressive restoration efforts.

Rocky Mountain goats were extirpated from Oregon prior to or during European settlement in the late 19th century. The rarest game animal hunted in the state today, only 20 tags were available for the 2015 season. Oregon's current Rocky Mountain goat population is the result of reintroduction efforts that began in 1950 when five goats were transported from Chopaka Mountain in northern Washington to the Wallowa Mountains.

Hunters have been instrumental in these species' restoration to native habitat in Oregon. Hunter purchases of license and tags plus [raffles and auctions](#) of these tags each year have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund bighorn sheep and Rocky Mountain goat reintroductions to native habitat in Oregon.