

Oregon Chapter of FNAWS Newsletter



www.OregonFNAWS.org



President's Message

Our legislative work on many items related to ODFW including their budget, Lower Deschutes River Acquisition, Access & Habitat Tag competition, and others have come to a close. My thanks to our OR-FNAWS team members who gave up their Saturday toward the end of May to attend and actively participate in the Youth Outdoor Day, at the EE Wilson Wildlife Area located just north of Corvallis. We had an opportunity to work with over 700 youngsters and their families as they passed through our booth!

Tri-State was well attended this year with members from OR-FNAWS, Idaho and Washington WSF chapters. The boat ride on the river to view bighorn sheep was enjoyable as always! We hope to see all of you make it a point to join us next year! Members from the Executive Leadership Team attended the Chapter & Affiliates meeting in Kelowna, B.C. It ap-

pears to be a substantive and valuable program.

The Bighorn sheep and Rocky Mountain goat orientation/workshop, in The Dalles at the Mid-Columbia Readiness Center was well attended and organized. The summer meeting of the Board of Directors at the Lower Deschutes Recreation Area seemed to go well! Careful review of the board meeting minutes continues to define our ongoing activities.

Your fall hunting opportunities with family and friends is right around the corner. Hope your time in the field this season will be productive, memorable, and safe! Think about adding a new youngster to your hunting adventures this year!

We were successful in securing a statewide deer tag to

auction at our banquet next Spring at the annual banquet, in Hood River. I'm sure that we all are looking forward to the cool days of fall this year! The winter board meeting will be held at the Best Western, Hood River Inn, on Saturday, January 9th. The 2016 "Sheep Show" will again be held in Reno, January 21-24, 2016. Please be sure to include these events in your already full calendar! We need your ongoing support.

Thanks,
George Houston

Upcoming Dates

- Winter Board Meeting, January 9th, 2016. Best Western, Hood River
- WSF National Convention, January 21-24, 2016. Reno, Nevada
- 2016 FNAWS Auction, April 16th, 2016. Best Western, Hood River
- Spring Board Meeting, April 17th, 2016. Best Western, Hood River

Inside this issue:

WSF Stories	2-3
10th Annual Orientation	4-5
Grant In-Aid Funding	4
Peter's Ram	6-7

Membership Information

Attention 2014 Tag Holders

Just a reminder that your one year complimentary Oregon FNAWS membership has expired. This will be the last newsletter you will receive unless you choose to renew your membership. Your continued support of Oregon Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goats is needed and very much appreciated! May you have many more successful draws in the future.

2016 Annual Auction and Fundraiser Information

The 2016 OR-FNAWS Banquet will be held at the Best Western, Hood River Inn, on Saturday, April 16, 2016. The Spring board meeting will be Sunday, April 17th, at a Board room on site. We will be setting up the morning of Saturday, the 16th also.

Wildlife scientists study sheep disease in Wyoming

Wyoming Game and Fish Department officials tell the Jackson Hole News & Guide (<http://bit.ly/1CbnaX2>) that they hope to combine the Wyoming research similar research in Montana and Colorado.

JACKSON, Wyo. | Wyoming wildlife scientists are in the early stages of a study of bighorn sheep.

The study is trying to determine if well-fed, healthy bighorn

sheep are less prone to contracting deadly pneumonia than sheep in poorer nutritional condition.

The research builds on disease monitoring in the Jackson sheep herd in recent years, and also of herds near Dubois and Cody.

Wyoming Game and Fish Department officials tell the Jackson Hole News & Guide (<http://bit.ly/1CbnaX2>) that they hope

to combine the Wyoming research similar research in Montana and Colorado.

They are hoping that the combined research gives a broad-scale look into the dynamics of bighorn sheep die-offs.

Information from: Jackson Hole (Wyo.) News And Guide, <http://www.jhnewsandguide.com>

Bighorn Sheep Die-Off Prompts Second Hunting District Closure

Montana's Fish & Wildlife Commission today closed another bighorn sheep hunting district, this one north of Plains in northwestern Montana, due to a suspected disease-related die-off.

Today's action came in response to a suspected die-off that's claimed more than 90 bighorn sheep from hunting district 122 within the past two years, leaving only 18 seen during a helicopter survey earlier this month, the lowest count since the herd's introduction in 1979.

Last month the commission closed bighorn sheep hunting district 305, near Gardiner due to a confirmed pneumonia die-off of 34 sheep.

Wildlife managers say that while the reason for the decline in hunting district 122 can't be determined with certainty they suspect pneumonia, which could be related to interactions with domestic sheep that occurred on the winter range in 2012 and 2013.

"The rapid population decline is typical of a disease outbreak," said Neil Anderson, FWP's wildlife manager in Kalispell.

"Because the southern Cabinet Mountains are so rugged we haven't yet documented typical symptoms like coughing nor have we located any dead bighorn sheep. In that mountainous country, a sick bighorn could easily die in the rugged cliffs and not be found."

Commissioners voted unanimously via today's conference call to close the 2015 bighorn sheep season in hunting district 122 to further protect the herd and to preclude hunters from applying for licenses there.

Prior to this emergency closure, FWP had offered six either-sex and four ewe licenses in the district. So far about 200 people have already applied for a

license. Those applicants, and others who might apply, will be offered the opportunity to apply elsewhere or be given a refund. Last year about 900 hunters applied for the district's licenses. The deadline to apply for moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, and bison permits is May 1.

Hunting district 122 would reopen to hunting when the population recovers. The 2015 hunting season in hunting district 122 would have run Sept. 5-14 for archery and Sept. 15-Nov. 29 for the general season.

The deadline to apply for moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goat and bison permits is May 1.

Pneumonia strikes East Fork Bitterroot bighorn herd **By Perry Backus**

HAMILTON – For the second time in six years, the bighorn sheep herd in the East Fork of the Bitterroot appears to be suffering a die-off from an outbreak of pneumonia.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Bitterroot-based biologist Rebecca Mowry is asking for people's help in keeping tabs on the herd in an effort to keep the illness from spreading.

The bacteria-caused pneumonia was verified Saturday.

"Someone called about a sick

ram that was right next to the road," Mowry said. "A warden put it down. Its lungs were full of fluid."

In an aerial survey Monday, Mowry found numerous other animals that were showing signs of pneumonia.

"I surveyed the herd from a helicopter," she said. "We would push them a little to see if any would start coughing. Somewhere between a fourth and a third of them that we saw started coughing."

Mowry hopes to keep the illness from spreading to the Painted Rocks bighorn sheep herd in the West Fork of the Bitterroot, which has been one of just a few in the state that's managed to escape a die-off from pneumonia.

To Ready More go to:

http://missoulian.com/news/state-and-regional/pneumonia-strikes-east-fork-bitterroot-bighorn-herd/article_1442b501-32ad-513c-bb3d-97ba0218656a.html

Hunters may be tapped to kill off Montana bighorn herd **By Rich Landers**

HUNTING – Montana officials want to use an aggressive public hunting campaign to kill off a diseased herd of 30-40 bighorn sheep in the Tendoy Mountains southeast of Dillon.

State wildlife commissioners on Thursday gave preliminary approval to a plan to remove the Tendoy herd beginning this fall and restock the area with about 50 healthy wild sheep, the As-

sociated Press reports.

Over-the-counter hunting licenses would cost \$125 for residents and \$750 for non-residents.

If hunters do not kill all the sheep, state officials said they would be removed by aerial gunning and other means.

Bighorn sheep in the Tendoy Mountains experienced major

die-offs due to pneumonia in 1993 and 1995. Officials say the population was augmented three times but still struggled to rebound, likely because some surviving sheep were carriers of bacteria that causes pneumonia.

Montana Decides to Eliminate Chronically Diseased Bighorn Herd **By Daniel Xu**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) announced earlier this week that it will be seeking to depopulate a chronically ill bighorn sheep herd in the Tendoy Mountains. The agency added that hunting will be the primary method of removal for the herd of 30 to 40 sheep, and it will later be restocked.

"Approximately 50 bighorn sheep will repopulate the Tendoy once all members of the diseased herd are removed. The healthy sheep used to restock the area will be from a yet to be determined herd in need

of management reductions at the time," read a recent press release.

The decision was spurred on by the lingering presence of pneumonia in the sheep herd. Pneumonia is particularly dangerous to bighorn sheep and is often a top cause of mortality. Unfortunately for wildlife managers, the disease is also rather difficult to eradicate and can be carried by surviving sheep. Biologists said that over the last 25 years, two large-scale die-offs in the Tendoy were connected to pneumonia and new sheep were

brought in to reinforce the herd three times since 1997. Unfortunately, all that seemed to accomplish was to spread the disease to the new sheep as well. The Tendoy herd was unable to achieve a significant rebound.

"On June 11, the Fish and Wildlife Commission put out for public comment the proposal to sell licenses to accomplish the depopulation and is taking public comment until 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 2, 2015. The Commission will make a final

decision in July and, if adopted, licenses would be offered in early August."

Officials say that the hunt will be similar in format to hunting in unlimited bighorn license areas, but since the objective is to eliminate the herd, no quota will be established. Any animals in the Tendoy Mountains herd not harvested by hunters will instead be removed by WFP agents.

2014 Grant In-Aid Funding

by Don South

The Oregon FNAWS Grant-in-Aid Committee received and reviewed five applications requesting funding in 2014. The committee recommended that all five be approved, and the board agreed. Many of these projects are partially funded by OR FNAWS in conjunction with other organizations and/or agencies, which helps to stretch our dollars.

Project #14-107: \$5000 went to Washington State University for the prevention of Bighorn sheep die offs due to pneumonia.

Project #14-108: \$3000 went to-

ward a captive study at Washington State University clarifying the role of the domestic goats as a source of Bighorn sheep pneumonia pathogens.

Project #14-109: \$1975 was approved for the installation of the Russell Emery well trough and float control located at the Diablo Mountain in the Summer Lake Basin.

Project #14-110: \$1000 went toward the Oliver Creek pasture restoration of approximately 30 acres on the Phillip Schneider Wildlife Area in the South Fork John

Day River drainage.

Project #14-111: \$5000 went to Dr. Sri at Washington State University for continued research into the prevention of Bighorn sheep die-offs due to pneumonia.

Funding by Oregon FNAWS for these projects in 2014 totals \$12,975. We continue to fulfill our goal of putting and keeping Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goats on the mountain

10th Annual Orientation Day

By Ellen and Dale Campbell

What's high in elevation, difficult to find, but well worth the effort? Actually, we're describing the Sheep and goat Orientation Day held this past July 18 at the Dalles. The Fort Dalles Readiness Center, high above the town with a beautiful view of the Columbia River, was the new venue for the event. Over 150 people were present at the orientation including 45 lucky sheep tag holders and 10 lucky goat tag holders (96 sheep tags and 20 goat tags were issued this year).

The purpose of Orientation Day is to provide a wide range of information to this year's Oregon sheep and goat hunters. those

who attended the session gathered information and tips that could potentially increase their chances of success. One speaker pointed out that the successful bidder for a sheep tag offered at the recent Wild Sheep Foundation convention in Reno paid \$165,000, plus a 5% surcharge. Another speaker mentioned the numerous OR FNAWS Board members who had never yet drawn a tag, with one Board member applying for 50 years (so far). It was noted that six or seven tag holders drew tags on the very first year they applied, eliciting groans from many of the other attendees. George Houston, president of OR FNAWS, welcomed attendees and introduced the first of several technical presenta-

tion. Rod Klus, Biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) from Hines, discussed sheep and goat distribution in Oregon, both historically and currently; capture and relocation efforts and techniques; and

pointed out that license fees and contributions from conservation groups such as OR FNAWS help fund this management activity. Jeremy Thompson, ODFW Biologist from The Dalles, discussed measuring, scoring, and field judging rams, including details on horn characteristics and how to calibrate your eye to pick out the "right" ram for you. Scott Torland, ODFW Biologist from Ontario, discussed sheep diseases and urged those going into the field to watch for suspected symptoms of illness in sheep and goats. Walt Van Dyke, retired ODFW Biologist from Ontario, covered "Sheep Hunting 101," a condensed but very informative discussion of many aspects of hunting techniques.

"A first time Hunter's Perspective" was presented by Ryan Sexton, who described the extensive scouting that he and friends conducted so that his wife Kacey, who had drawn the tag and was pregnant at the time of the hunt, to be successful. And Kacey took a nice ram! Andy Wiebel, OR FNAWS Board member, discussed field preparation of trophies including how to skin and preserve the hide depending on the type of mount desired; showed examples of different



10th Annual Orientation Day Continued...



mounts; offered free bottle of salt; and emphasized "do not use black plastic bags."

Larry Jacobs and don south teamed up on an informative discussion of how to be physically and mentally prepared. The strong message was: get good equipment for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity; and "clear the slate" - home, work, friends, and even family may take second place to preparing for a sheep or goat hunt; and 'commitment = success."

Walter Chuck, OR FNAWS Board member and recent successful sheep tag holder, closed the general session with a discussion of what OR FNAWS is all about, including our annual fundraising banquet. Funds are used to support a wide range of project in which members may also participate including developing and maintaining guzzlers, chopping thistle, cutting juniper in sheep habitat, hosting an information booth at Youth Outdoors Day, funding disease research, and hosting this workshop. After lunch, attendees met individually with Area Biologists in order to gain specific information about their unit; further discussed scoring horns; and/or attended a separate goat orientation. The new

venue provided plenty of room for at-

ble bar-be-que spit, and the couple rose at 3am Saturday morning to start roasting the hog. A great time was had by all attendees and no one left hungry.

This Orientation Day continues to grow, thank to participation by our volunteer organizers, ODWF staff, and OR State Police Fish and Wildlife Officers. A review of notes from the 2007 event described 77 attendees, this year we more than doubled that number. In addition to the opportunity to absorb all the information provided at the workshop, each tag holder was offered a one-year complimentary membership in OR FNAWS. We hope that all tag holders will continue membership and become active in our chapter!

Note: OR FNAWS sends an invitation to attend this orientation to all 2015 sheep and goat tag holders, and we also place a notice in the OR Big Game Hunting Regulations that invites anyone interested to attend. All are welcome.

attendees to spread out, and also room for multiple exhibitors.

The final event of the day was an outstanding potluck hosted by OR FNAWS at the Lower Deschutes River State Park, with a special contribution by the Wurdingers. Ray Wurdinger, from Salem and a prior successful bow hunter for a nice ram, brought a whole hog, a porta-



Peter's Ram

This is a story from the perspective of a hunting party member with some of the hunter's account to fill in the details.

A good friend drew the East John Day #1 tag last year and was excited, amazed, incredulous and a little intimidated by the draw. The first thing I told him to do was mark his calendar for the Bighorn Sheep and Rocky Mountain Goat Workshop. Peter made it to the workshop and got the chance to talk with the biologists and learn a few things from the presentations. He also asked me if I would like to join him as part of the hunting party along with Tim and Stewart. I made sure I had the time and gladly accepted. What an opportunity to go along on a hunt in one of the top California Bighorn units in the state and without the pressure of having the tag.

The hunting party started talking about how we would hunt: either from the top, or float. Peter made the call and decided that for his hunt he would like the convenience and comfort of hunting from the top and having access to some areas that are hard to get to from the river. We went out to the prospective Ranch to meet the landowner, get the lay of the land and do a little scouting. It was not hard to find rams. A few were nice ones, and the decision was made. We had the where and now the work of finding The One began. I talked to others who had hunted the area and sent articles on scoring, photos, and words of encouragement to the others. Stewart helped on the shooting side by taking Peter out for practice and dialing up some custom loads for his long range rifle in case it was needed. He was also the one who was going to be buying the groceries so we all made sure that we got him our list of favorites. Peter as well as the rest of us were getting pretty excited as Opening Day approached.

The 4 of us met at the ranch Thursday, got situated in one of the bunk houses and finalized our plans of attack. Friday morning we would split into 3 groups. Tim and Stewart took one part of the ranch, I took a canyon way back on the property, and Peter went to go check the areas where we had previously seen the rams. We met in the middle of the ranch and exchanged info. Peter found a good one in one of the previous spots, Tim and Stewart saw another nice ram and I did not find any sheep in the back canyon. After lunch we

headed to the canyons on the upper part of the ranch and found some wild horses and a couple groups of sheep. One had a nice ram in it. Over dinner Peter decided that the one he saw would be Plan A, Tim and Stewart's would be B and the other would be C because of his location. Dinner was good as well as the friendly banter. We got the trucks loaded and hit the sack early.

Opening day! We were all up early and got some food and coffee in us and were on the



way. Peter was pretty excited as the truck got nearer to the place we would be getting out to make our approach from. We got to the vantage point as the sun was rising and started glassing the area where Peter had seen the ram. What sounded like a slam dunk hunt the night before turned into an air ball when the sheep were nowhere near the draw or spring we had seen them in a few weeks before and again the previous day. The search was on and we spread out along the canyon and sat down to find where they had gotten off to. After some searching we found them almost down to the river at the bottom of the canyon. They were too far for a shot and had walked to the other side of the finger they were on. I made my way over to see where they were headed to and found a bunch with a small ram and ewes. We all met back at the rigs a little dejected but still excited at the fact that we saw sheep. Our next plan of attack should have been plan B but for some reason we skipped to C and never relocated that bunch. But we did find the horses. The mood at dinner was a little subdued but Hey, it's sheep hunting!

Day #2! Peter didn't sleep well and was up early going over the previous day's events in his head. He wanted to go back to see if plan A

was back up top and if not, zip on over to plan B. Stewart and Tim were going to glass from the opposite side of the canyon while Peter and I headed out the ridge. The sheep had moved back up the hill to where I had seen the small ram and ewes and were feeding around the corner. Peter and I jumped in the rig and headed down the ridge to get in front of the sheep and get set up for a shot. We were making our way over to the edge when Peter looked over and was literally face to face with one of the small rams from the group. The sheep had decided to come over the top instead of following the contour of the ridge. The small ram bolted over the side and took the rest down to the river. We met up with Tim and Stewart and they described watching the events as akin to watching a horror movie. On to plan B.

Plan B had Peter and Tim going down into and along the bottom of a narrow canyon on the four-wheeler. Stewart and I went out along the ridge above it to make sure that we would see anything that they might miss or push out. I was on the ridge above and was not privy to this part.

Peter's account:

"After about a mile ride down, I asked Tim to stop the four-wheeler. I would walk the canyon checking the draws for 1/2 hour then he was to proceed. I wasn't off the four-wheeler 5 minutes. I was not even out of Tim's sight and to the first draw on the left of the canyon, when I looked up it 50-70 yards in the crook. There was this Big Ram staring right at me. I was lucky, there was a tall berm that I ducked down in front of to catch my breath and start the cold sweats. I was shaking so hard. Mean while Tim is watching me flail around trying to get setup for what felt like forever. He saw I was getting ready for something and was probably laughing at my gesticulations. The sheep knew something was there but couldn't see me. Everything on top the berm was eye height for me looking and I was looking at them through the grass. Trying to work the bipod as I was shaking was not easy. Finally I got situated and put the scope on the ram who hasn't moved yet. Then I noticed several other sheep with him.

Peter's Ram Continued...

This is where I really froze up. This ram looked so good I didn't even think to look for any other better ones in the group and he was going to be the one. I would be way happy with just him and the easy haul out for us.

With him facing right at me I put the scope on him shaking the whole time trying to figure out where to shoot him.

I didn't want to shoot him in the face. I was so excited that I didn't think to wait them out and then get a broad side shot. I had miles of clear hill side on both sides of them and that would have been the smart thing to do.

This was the time my brain was so scrambled and my heart pounding out of my chest. All I thought was to put it on his chest and pull the trigger. Bang!! Sheep start scattering out both sides of the draw. A giant Ram to the right with several ewes and a big Ram to the left with a bunch of Ewes. I looked to see if my ram was down and didn't see anything. Then I realized it was the giant Ram that ran out the right. I missed taking another shot at him in the draw looking right at me. I had time to take 3 more shots on him as he got farther and farther away.

That's when I felt about 2 inches tall. Thinking no way would I ever have another chance like that ever again.

After all the shooting Tim was by my side and we went to look for blood and found none. He said the other Ram was in the next draw back and said that the one that went right was so much bigger and agreed it was a monster. He headed back for the quad and I started down the draw farther to see if I could find him again."

Stewart and I had heard the shooting, hoped for the best and headed back to the top of the canyon to wait for Peter and Tim. We had seen more sheep at the end of the canyon and a crusher of a Ram headed up one of the farther canyons. They would have been possibilities for later that day or the next. Our anticipation was high as we heard the four-wheeler coming up the canyon but quickly turned to sadness as we saw their faces. Peter looked sick to his stomach and did not get any better as he told his story. We talked for a bit and tried to cheer Peter up and planned a new course of action.

Plan B Act II Peter's account:

"The new plan was for Stewart to take me to see a few rams they had spotted earlier. Wal-

ter and Tim wanted to go see if he could find my shooter. Stewart and I just got to where we were heading and got a call from Tim to come back. Tim and Walter had found a big Ram, but it didn't sound like the Giant Ram. I went down to take a look and we didn't see the Ram. We then continued down the draw leaving the quad. After a few miles Walter spots this giant Ram on top a finger looking down 900 yards away. We all agreed it was a shooter and we would head after him once he moved to give us a path down the canyon without being detected. He stayed there for a long time and then busted straight down hill for some reason. That is when we hustled it down the road to where he came down and started looking for him on both sides. He was nowhere to be found and I thought he headed for the river along the bottom of the canyon. He was not up the other side or in any of the other draws.

Walter then climbs up a draw that curved to the right to get a better look down the canyon. At that point I want to head back up to the quad thinking we would never get close enough to that Ram. Just then Walter came booking down that draw he just climbed, pointing down the main draw. Sure enough there he was on the other side 900 yards away. Why always 900 yards? Anyway by this time it was 4:00PM and the sun was starting to go down causing the left side of the canyon to get shady and the right side still sunny. This gave us the perfect cover to make a move parallel in the shade, with the sun in the Ram's eyes. He was facing us the entire time and never moved as we first closed the gap to 500 and then 300 yards. We finally reached a perfect set of rocks to make a shot from. This time I had Stewart's long range rifle, Tim ranged him at 308 yards, the rifle was dialed in for 300 so I put the crosshairs right on him. I was still debating if he was the giant

Ram. Until he turned and gave me the broad side view of his horns! Just then we hear and see 3 more sheep way up to the right, 1 Ram and 2 ewes. He was much smaller than the one I had been looking at through the scope. I put the scope back on our Ram. I pulled the trigger as he was walking away slowly down the main draw. We knew he was hit the second I pulled the trigger and over he went. He got back up and started walking down the canyon. We headed down the hill to catch up to him and finish the deal. Once he was down for good and we climbed up to him. We noticed some chips in his horns and some bullet holes. They were 2 of my 7mm shots from the morning. Go figure that it was the same big boy from the morning, which made me very happy."

It was great time! Thanks to Peter, Stewart and Tim.





**PLEASE CHECK THE MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE.
PLEASE USE ENCLOSED FORM TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP IF NEEDED.**

FIND US AT WWW.OREGONFNAWS.ORG



VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

Important Contact Information

President, George Houston

ghouston@hevanet.com | 503.826.9109

1st Vice President, Robert Welsh

pnbwelsh@q.com | 541.280.0707

2nd Vice President, Dave Geelan

David.j.geelan@boeing.com |
971.563.0619

Secretary, Jane Hunts

jhunts@harryanddavid.com |

541.564.2681

Treasurer, Alan Day

aday@centurytel.net

503.678.1508 / 503.522.7267

Past President, Larry Hunts

larrydavidhunts@gmail.com

Board Members

Nicholas Berg Linda South

Vic Coggins Don South

Dale Campbell Ellen Campbell

Larry Sides

Brent Tannock

Larry Jacobs

Walt Van Dyke

Walter Chuck

Robert Welsh

Jim Torland

Tom Peterson

Jeremy Thompson

Andy Weibel

Dave Geelan

