

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is fall again, tags have been drawn, purchased, and we are busy scouting and/or hunting. We are all looking for that once in a lifetime animal we dream of. This is an exciting time of the year for me, and I assume for you. I am hunting!

2021 has been another crazy year for all of us. The ongoing pandemic has kept things in turmoil. We were not able to have a booth at the "Sheep Show" in Reno, although we did have an on-line booth for "Sheep Week", not quite the same. We were able to have a booth at the Central Oregon Sportsmen Show! It was great seeing and visiting with the folks who stopped by. We had our 2021 Banquet planned at Eagle Crest Resort in the spring and then adjusted to summer in The Dalles and finally give up again for this year with the uncertainty of meeting in large groups continued.

OR FNAWS did host, with ODFW, the annual Bighorn Sheep and Rocky Mountain Goat Workshop and had a great turn out. It was a wonderful day with some of the happiest people in Oregon - Bighorn Sheep and Rocky Mountain Goat tag holders! The workshop was followed by our First Annual Mountain Hunters Rendezvous at the Deschutes River State Park. What a great time together with the many folks who attended! The next morning, we held our Summer Board Meeting.

We were not able to work on many of our planned work projects. Although we did participate and provide input on the many projects and areas of interest relating to bighorn sheep and rocky mountain goat management across the State. See the article on Government and Legislative Affairs work by OR-FNAWS included in this newsletter; I think you will be impressed with all the things your OR-FNAWS Chapter is engaged in.

We have some wonderful raffle hunts scheduled for this next year and beyond. We just raffled off a guided cougar hunt in Arizona and are working on several more! So, keep watch on the OR-FNAWS social media sites, web pages and newsletters for more information and buy your tickets. You cannot win without buying a ticket!

If you are interested in getting more involved in OR FNAWS, our annual Board and Officer elections occur at our Winter Board Meeting, which this year is planned for January 8th. Let us know if you are interested and we can get you an application form.

For 2022, OR-FNAWS was again selected by ODFW to auction the Oregon Governor's Rocky Mountain Goat tag! We will be looking to auction this tag at next year's Annual OR-FNAWS Banquet on April 30th at the Eagle Crest Resort in Redmond, Oregon. The next day, May 1st, we will have our Spring Board meeting. Please plan on joining us for a weekend together celebrating and supporting Oregon's bighorn sheep.

In closing, let me urge you to get out and enjoy Oregon's great outdoors. Get with family and friends and enjoy this wonderful time of year. Think about taking someone new to hunting or fishing and show them what it means to be a hunter conservationist. Let us finish 2021 enjoying the amazing wild places we are so blessed to have doing the things that we love.

Good luck, stay safe and happy hunting.

Kevin Martin

President, Oregon FNAWS

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2022 ANNUAL BANQUET UPDATE

Our banquet is coming up in 2022 and we cannot wait to get back to live events with all of you folks. We will go live with ticket sales and registration in January following our winter board meeting.

We have a lot of great items to raffle, auction and giveaway at the banquet and we hope you will join us in person in 2022.

The event is scheduled for April 30th, 2022 at Eagle Crest Resort in Redmond, Oregon. For those of you who purchased 2020 banquet tickets and rolled them over, we will be contacting you directly to confirm your attendance at the 2022 banquet.

So mark your calendars for April 30th, 2022 and plan to be in Redmond for another amazing fundraiser event!



Upcoming Events:

January 8th 2022:

Winter Board Meeting

Virtual Meeting

January 13th -15th 2022:

2022 Sheep Show

Reno, NV

March 10th - 13th 2022

2022 Central Oregon Sportsman Show

Expo Center Redmond, OR

April 30th 2022:

2022 Annual Fundraising Banquet

Eagle Crest Resort Redmond, OR

May 1st 2022:

Spring Board meeting

Eagle Crest Resort Redmond, OR

July 16th 2022:

Bighorn Sheep & Mountain Goat Workshop

Readiness Center The Dalles, OR

Tentative Projects

Juniper Cut: Winter 2022

Guzzler Maintenance: Ongoing

Youth Outdoors Show: Spring 2022

Habitat improvement: Spring 2022

DALL SHEEP HUNT RAFFLE

Oregon FNAWS is the last chapter or affiliate to have the opportunity to raffle off a Dall Sheep hunt with Ultima Thule Outfitters out of Alaska. Ultima Thule will be transitioning to donating a Dall Sheep hunt to the <1 Club at Wild Sheep Foundation's Sheep Week.

This means this is your last chance to be able to hunt amazing Dall Sheep in the Wrangell's with a legendary sheep outfit lead by Don C. Martin and his team through a raffle where you can purchase tickets. Ultima Thule went 100% in 2021 with Dall Sheep Hunts. UTO was awarded WSF outstanding Outfitter award.

Tickets will go on sale mid December and we will send all of our membership emails to inform them. In the meantime, lets check out some of Ultima Thule's successful raffle winners from the past!



2021 Bighorn Sheep & Mountain Goat Orientation

Written By: Marcus Gores

Annually Oregon FNAWS co-host the Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goat Orientation with ODF&W. This year we were able to host the event in person back at the Dalles Readiness Center in The Dalles, OR. We had a showing of 64 tag holders and a total of 160 attendees including tag holders hunting party, OR FNAWS board members, and ODF&W staff.

The event covers hunt preparation, species identification, trophy preservation and hunt specific information based on the tag holders that were in attendance.

New to this year's orientation was the ewe tag holders breakout session. As ODF&W has created a new hunt in the John Day and Deschutes River canyons for ewes, a major focus on this portion of the orientation was identification between ewes and yearling rams.

The orientation was recorded and is posted on our YouTube channel. If you have interest in reviewing the orientation search "Oregon FNAWS" on YouTube and view most recent videos.

Guest speakers: Jeremy Thompson (ODFW), Kevin Martin (OR FNAWS), Larry Jacobs (OR FNAWS), Don South (OR FNAWS), Taylor Skinner (2020 successful tag holder), Andy Weibel (Weibel Taxidermy), Vic Coggins (OR FNAWS), Hank Landsiedel (ODFW), Jon Muir (ODFW), Craig Foster (OR FNAWS), Scott Torland (ODFW), Craig Gunderson (OSP), Tom Peterson (OR FNAWS).



2021 GOVERNMENT & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

A2021 Bighorn Sheep and Rocky Mountain Goat Tag Holder - OR FNAWS sent a letter to all the individuals who drew a Bighorn Sheep or Mountain Goat tag in Oregon's Controlled Hunt drawing. We host the annual Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goat Orientation for tag holders to assist with hunt planning and education on the species. We invited tag holders to the Orientation on July 17th. We shared the agenda and that it would cover hunt preparation, trophy care and preservation, field judging, sex identification as well as spending time with hunters and the ODFW biologist that is assigned to your hunt area. These topics and the one-on-one time with the local biologists greatly benefit the experience and gets them set up for success come this fall. Orientation is required for all Mountain Goat hunters.

The annual orientation is sponsored by Oregon FNAWS in partnership with ODFW and is provided to tag holders at no cost. We had 45 sheep and 20 goat hunters attend this year's event.

July 10, 2021 - Letter to ODFW Director and Commissioners on the Minam Wildlife Area Acquisition.

OR FNAWS provided a letter on our support for the purchase of 15, 573 acres to make the Minam River State Wildlife area. The Minam River State Wildlife Area Acquisition will link wildlife habitat from the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and the federally designated Eagle Cap Wilderness Area to the Minam State Recreation Area at the confluence of the Minam and Wallowa Wild and Scenic Rivers. The property includes numerous Oregon Conservation Strategy habitats and species, federal and state listed species, and species of local economic and cultural importance, such a bighorn sheep, elk, and mule deer.

July 28, 2021 - Letter of Support signed with the Idaho and Washington Wild Sheep Foundation Chapters to the Wild Sheep Foundation - On optimizing Mycoplasma Ovipneumoniae test and remove management to restore bighorn sheep populations. The proposal is for the second year of a multi-jurisdictional, multi-year adaptive management project to further investigate the use of "test and remove" to clear *M. ovipneumoniae* (Movi) from ailing bighorn sheep populations. The objective is to improve the health of the bighorn sheep populations at Burnt River, Oregon; Lookout Mountain, Oregon; Lower Salmon River, Idaho; Lostine, Oregon; and Yakima Canyon, Washington. This project builds on previous research and management techniques. The project will allow for further testing of management techniques among multiple, bighorn sheep herds in the tri-state area. In addition, gaining a better understanding of the patterns and determinants of health and disease in these populations would help in finding ways to make "test and remove" a more efficient management tool that can be used more widely in other sheep populations west wide. We will continue to stay engaged with USFS and BLM on this topic.

July 31, 2021 - Letter of Support signed with Idaho and Washington WSF Chapters to the Wild Sheep Foundation - for Risk of Contact Model Update and Training GIA funding - The 2021 Interior Appropriations Bill again directs the Forest Service and the BLM to continue the quantitative, science-based analysis of the risk of disease transmission between domestic and bighorn sheep. The Risk of Contact (ROC) tool provides a science based, repeatable way to assess the risk of disease transmission from domestic sheep to bighorn sheep. There has been a substantial amount of progress this last year to improve the tool's accessibility, usability, and functionality. There is still work needed to bundle all software into an easy-to-use package and how to provide continuing technical support, documentation updates and analysis improvements to users.

In addition, the only foray probability distribution supplied with the tool is based off Hells Canyon bighorn location data. While the ROC tool accepts user inputs for all the required data, the default foray data is almost always used. A critical improvement to the model would be adding habitat/ecotype foray probabilities based off data from bighorns that occupy a range of habitats different than Hells Canyon. This would both improve the contact risk estimates from the ROC tool and strengthen its application in using ROC estimates to support land management decisions.

We support improvements to the functionality and foundation of this important tool that provides the needed information for sound management decisions to maintain separation between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep and goats.

August 3, 2021 - Letter to ODFW Commission - OR FNAWS sent a follow up letter to the ODFW Commission before the upcoming Commission meeting and testimony on the Minam Wildlife Area Acquisition.

August 6, 2021 - Testimony Minam Wildlife Area Acquisition - OR FNAWS provided testimony, along with other Conservation/Hunting Organizations, to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission supporting the purchase of the Minam River State Wildlife area, and the commission approved the purchase.

August 6, 2021 - Letter of Support for Marsha Naegeli for ODFW Commissioner - OR FNAWS recommended Marsha Naegeli of Portland for an appointment to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission, Representing District #3.

She lives on a ranch with horses and livestock and has a strong sense and appreciation of both the urban and rural perspective on resource management. Marsha is a strong supporter of protecting and restoring our fish and wildlife resources, from a science based prospective, for the benefit of present and future Oregonians. She supports ODFW's efforts to introduce the next generation to hunting, fishing, and experiencing the natural environment. There has been no appointment to this position to date.

August 30, 2021 - WSF and OR FNAWS had a phone conversation, on proposed language in the Fiscal Year 22 appropriations bill, with U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley's Oregon and DC Staff. The WSF in July 2018 sent a letter to the Assistant Director of National Forest Systems for the US Forest Service explaining our desire to refill the Full Curl Coordinator Position. Identified were several areas that needed attention that have not been addressed since the position was vacant: (1) giving voice and visibility to major issues, (2) liaison with wild sheep constituent groups, (3) leadership in tracking, disseminating, and implementing the best available science, (4) collaboration with universities and agencies, (5) coordination with WAFWA and States, (6) keep agency leadership up to date, (7) build relationships with woolgrower industry representatives, (8) work with USFS field units to reduce conflicts, project implementation, and climate change strategies facing bighorn sheep and their habitat.

The appropriations request, from OR FNAWS and WSF, is for the USDA Forest Service to fill the National Full Curl Coordinator Position to assist the US Forest Service and others addressing bighorn sheep and domestic sheep and goat conflicts.

September 1, 2021 - Informal conversations between OR FNAWS and Hart Mountain NAR Staff inquiring about the process of the Draft Bighorn Sheep Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These draft documents are used to identify and evaluate proposed short and long-term actions by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to restore a self-sustaining population of California bighorn sheep on Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge (Hart Mountain NAR). The purpose of our ongoing conversations is to understand how the process is proceeding and when to expect another opportunity to participate in order to address the decline of bighorn sheep on Hart Mountain NAR. Hart NAR staff hope to have responses to comments received and the final EIS released before January, 2022.

Owyhee Sportsmen Coalition - had another conference call with Senator Wyden's Staff related to the progress of the "Malheur Community Empowerment for the Owyhee Act". At this time, it appears if there is to be any movement on a new bill it would be nearer the end of the session. The Sportsmen Coalition is also working together developing a presentation to give at the upcoming Oregon Recreation and Trails Summit, October 20th.

Bighorn Advocates - participants had a discussion related to prescribed and wildland fire effects to bighorn sheep and their habitat across the west.

Stop Poaching Stakeholders - Due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, there has been a reduction related to the activities of ODFW and the Stakeholders. There has only been a few shared emails and phone calls.

Initiative Petition 13 (IP-13) - The intent and impacts of this bill would clearly be to eliminate hunting and our hunting heritage. In addition, standard farming, ranching, and animal husbandry practices would become criminal acts.

The intended and unintended negative consequences of this ballot are far reaching. The direct impacts to the state of Oregon and to local communities who rely on hunting, fishing, farming, and ranching would be devastating. Oregon Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (OR FNAWS) has serious concerns about this initiative and has been working with other organizations to assure Oregonians to have a clear understanding of the adverse impacts of the initiative on local communities and to not sign this petition.

September 17, 2021 - Airspace Optimization for Readiness for Mountain Home Air Force Base, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) comments from Idaho WSF, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited, Wild Sheep Foundation and OR FNAWS - This Draft EIS analyzes the potential environmental consequences resulting from the Department of the Air Force (DAF) proposal to optimize the airspace available at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. Optimization would deliver aircrew training to achieve and maintain proficiency at low altitudes, in mountainous terrain, with a consistent floor for supersonic training.

Since 1999 there have been over flight restrictions/mitigations in place across the Idaho Military Operation Areas (MOAs) (Owyhee North and Jarbidge North) to address concern regarding bighorn sheep; particularly lambing areas during lambing season (April – June) when they are particularly vulnerable to disturbance. Across the Oregon and Nevada MOAs the flights have been high enough above ground level to reduce potential negative effects. These restrictions/mitigations have also addressed concerns regarding antelope, deer, elk, and sage grouse. It appears these restrictions/mitigations have been adequate in addressing our past concerns.

We have concerns regarding the anticipated increase in decibel level associated with lowering the Low-Altitude operational floor. Fitness of individual bighorn sheep often decreases with increased disturbance levels and is important to limit potential negative impacts of recreation and human disturbance during critical times of the year.

Additionally, under two proposed Alternatives, the supersonic floor would drop. Both proposed alternatives would increase the noise and disturbance levels for wildlife and humans utilizing the area.

We would prefer the no action (no change) alternative, as it has proven to provide air space use and meet the needs of the bighorn sheep populations and the increasing recreational uses. If the decision is to move forward with one of the action alternatives, we are offering recommendations and mitigations, as have been in place in Idaho, to assure the impacts to the bighorn sheep populations and the increasing numbers of recreating public are minimized. We will stay engaged as the EIS process continues.



Successful Tag Holder: Will Hook Cusick Mountain Rocky Mountain Goat

If I was to sum this hunt up in one sentence it would be, “I can’t say it was everything I hoped for because it wasn’t like anything I could have imagined.” I intended on tackling this hunt in a DIY approach with two old friends, Mark and Sam. Even with all the years of hunting experience between us we quickly realized this was a whole different ball game and we were in over our heads. Admitting I needed help and hiring a guide was probably the best decision I could have made for this hunt. I got in touch with Brian Sanders of Oregon Backcountry Outfitting and I knew I’d found ‘The Guy.’

On the ride in every direction I looked, peaks jutted vertically towards the sky and I changed my definition of what was a *nasty* canyon. This mountain range had the scenery and landscapes I had only seen in photos. With all the planning behind me, for the first time since June 20th, I couldn’t help but smile with excitement. Snow was being called for overnight and the thought of looking for a white critter against fresh snow was less than ideal but I had bought the ticket and now it was my turn to ride.

The next morning was our first dedicated day of the hunt. The weatherman had been right and we woke up to about 2” of fresh snow. I was rudely awakened to learn a mountain goat *hunt* in the Eagle Caps is more of a death defying *climb-not hike-CLIMB* up a mountain. We would have to gain over 3k feet from camp to get to where the goats lived (which put my sea level butt at over 9k feet). I’m here to tell you, there is NOTHING you can do to offset a rapid change in elevation like that or prepare for maneuvering on that shale besides actually doing it.

We had spotted a couple goats during our initial ascent but none gave me that, *whoa!* feeling so we continued our trek. In the next basin Brian spotted a bachelor herd and there was the *whoa!* I had heard about. After some careful examination through Brian gave his opinion; we had found our billy.

We closed the gap and when the weather broke the billies started to stand and our billy offered a hard quartering away shot. Thankfully, what I lack in mountaineering skills, my rifle and I make up for by putting 180gr hunks of lead where they need to go. The moment I flicked the safety off it was like I entered the 4th dimension. When the trigger broke I could *feel* the firing pin strike the primer and the pressure grow inside the chamber. At less than 300 yards, the time of flight was only a fraction of a second but I could watch the bullet, frame by frame, through the scope as it found its mark. Through my scope I watched him rear backwards then crash back down onto the shale. Our billy started to slide and all I could do was hold my breath. The way it was looking, he was going to end up another couple thousand feet below and at least half a mile away. I figured just by drawing this tag I had used up every ounce of luck the universe had ever saved for me and now I was now destined to watch our billy disappear over the edge. To my surprise I had one last sprinkle of luck tucked away. Like it was part of the plan he slid into the only scraggly pine tree able to carve out an existence in that basin. Our billy came to rest just a few big steps from the edge.

With the longest sigh of relief I’ve ever let out, I took one last moment to take it all in and thought back to all the incalculable series of events that had lead me to this moment. I tried to narrate a quick video to convey the magnitude of that moment, but the emotions overpowered my ability to speak. I’d be lying to say I wasn’t a little disappointed by how this came to an end so quickly but I am eternally thankful for who I got to share it with, how everything developed and concluded but also for not having to climb that forsaken mountain again.

Brian and his team of guys are not human. Everything that pushed me beyond my limits, they did with a heavier pack, without dripping a bead of sweat or needing to catch their breath and usually wearing full set of rain gear and/or puffies. I don’t recall seeing any of them take a break unless they were in camp and the chores were done. They are some of the toughest, hardest working SOB’s on the planet. Without them this hunt would have likely been a tragedy. There is no way to measure the amount of gratitude I owe them.

I’m still on the fence as to if I’ll have him *officially* scored. After all we went through, an arbitrary equation to come up with some *magical* number doesn’t seem all that important in the end. What I wanted out of this hunt was an experience and an experience is what we got.

See photos on next page.

Successful Tag Holder: Will Hook Photos



Lostine Sheep History

We were fortunate enough to have this excerpt of notes shared with us from Vic Coggins, current Oregon FNAWS board member and retired ODF&W Biologist. This bit of information is from 50 years ago on the release of 20 Rocky Mountain Bighorn back into the Lostine to group up with existing herds. We would like to thank Vic for sharing and hope you enjoy a bit of history related to our mission at Oregon FNAWS.

November 19, 1971 - Fri -
 Weather - Ptlly cloudy, cool.
 Met state vet, D. Swart, others at hatchery.
 Traveled up Lostine R to Silver Cr. bar. Released
 20 Rocky Mtn Bighorn sheep (15 ewes, 5 rams)
 from Jasper Park, Alberta, Canada at base of
 Dry Fork. All animals appeared to be in good
 shape and most regrouped almost immediately and
 traveled up the Dry Fork (heads at Translator). All animals
 were very robust and had heavy winter coats
 in excellent condition. They appeared ~~much~~ a good deal
 heavier than the sheep released this spring and were
 much wilder. The sheep were in transit from Wed. afternoon
 (on truck 40 hrs.) but did not appear to suffer
 much. Hay and snow for moisture was provided.
 They do not appear to fight the truck at all and
 ride very well. A list of sheep by age class,
 other pertinent data will be provided below.

sex Age

2021 Tag Holders Success



Dan Cupparo with his 2021 California Bighorn Sheep from the Deschutes Unit.



Tony Monaco with his 2021 California Bighorn Sheep from the Aldrich Unit.

Members & Membership Renewal

Over the last 12 months we have taken out membership renewals and new members digital. This helps us as an organization collect correct information and store it collectively. Though this may be new to some folks, this process has already proved to be successful for our annual members. We are working away from paper renewals and increasing our active members through the website. Online renewals ensures we have up to date information for all members and assists in the ability to contact members to inform them on upcoming events, newsletters, and our annual banquet. Should you wish to not continue your membership you have the ability to alter your membership settings on your account on our website. If you are getting our entire correspondence but do not know how to confirm your membership, please reach out via email: info@oregonfnaws.org

Board Members and Volunteers

President: Kevin Martin

Vice President: Tom Peterson

Vice President: Dave Geelan

Secretary: Robert Welsh

Treasurer: Zach Peterson

Past President: Walter Chuck

Membership: Marcus Gores

Government Affairs: Larry Jacobs

Banquet: Shane Byerly

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