



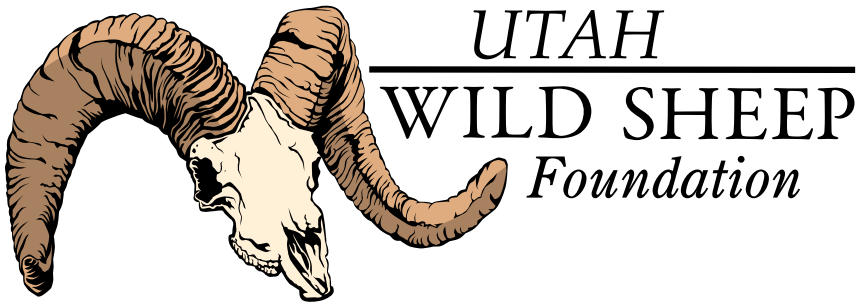
UTAH  

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WILD SHEEP  
*Foundation Magazine*



2025-2026 Edition



## Purpose

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The purpose of Utah WSF is to promote and enhance populations of wild sheep in Utah.

## Vision

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The vision of Utah WSF is to be the best managed, most respected and influential wild sheep conservation chapter in North America.

## Mission

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The mission of Utah WSF is to protect the future of wild sheep in Utah through strategic fundraising, impactful education and outreach, dedicated support of our conservation partners, responsible project funding, advocacy for Sportsman's rights and a commitment to operational excellence.



### On the Cover:

Jana Carter Utah Desert Bighorn

### Special Thanks to

John Petersen and Kate Calei, of Brame Creative, for helping with the layout, design, and publication of the annual Utah WSF magazine and Chris Carling for helping with the production and printing.



# Message From The President

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Travis Jensen

**As I sit down to write this President's message, it is hard to contain the excitement I have for our organization, where we have come, and the goals we have set moving forward.** Multiple fundraising events, sheep hunts, guns and other sweepstakes, growth of our social media and outreach platforms, bi-monthly newsletters, arguably the best 2026 banquet location in Utah—it just goes on and on. And that is just the organizational side of Utah WSF. We are also making huge strides on the ground, significantly moving the needle for wild sheep conservation in Utah.

In 1990 there were less than 25 Desert Bighorn sheep permits and less than 5 Rocky Mountain and California Bighorn sheep permits issued in Utah. This year there were 95 desert permits and 64 Rocky Mountain and California Bighorn permits, for a total of 161 permits issued statewide. That is more than a five-fold increase in permits. In that same time period, total sheep numbers have increased from less than 500 sheep to almost 5,000, which is a ten-fold increase in total sheep numbers. To put those numbers in perspective, Utah is currently harvesting more Bighorns than either Montana or Idaho. As populations continue to increase on Antelope Island and the Desert Bighorn nursery herd complex, we look forward to working with our conservation partners to continue the augmentation and expansion of our sheep herds statewide.

This year Utah WSF will have a booth at the Sheep Show in January, in addition to the WHCE in February. If you are planning to attend either of those conventions, make sure to stop by the booth to say hello and talk sheep hunting, tag applications, and related topics. We will also offer horn plugging at the WHCE booth and at our banquet, which is scheduled for March 21, 2026 at the Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake City. If you were lucky enough to draw and harvest a sheep in Utah during the 2024 or 2025 season, feel free to bring your sheep horns to our WHCE booth or the banquet to get them plugged.

In 2025 Utah was the beneficiary of 38 Desert Bighorns from the Valley of Fire in Nevada, which were captured in June and moved to the new nursery herd facility to augment that population. The Nevada capture and transplant work completed last summer was the largest sheep capture ever completed in North America. KUIU and GSCO deserve recognition for funding Nevada's expenses of the capture work, which totaled approximately \$300,000. Additionally, a significant amount of capture work is planned for this winter throughout the state. In total, approximately 122 Utah Bighorns will be captured, collared, and disease tested. The units being tested include the Kaiparowits (40), Pine Valley (26), Flaming Gorge (25), Henry Mountains (10), and Pilot Mountains (10). These captures will increase the ability of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to evaluate herd health and unit-specific management plans, set tag numbers, track Bighorn movements, and monitor disease events.

This year Utah WSF submitted multiple requests for grant-in-aid funding and received in excess of \$122,500 for on-the-ground project work. We would like to recognize the Wild Sheep Foundation, the Marc C. and Deborah H. Bingham Foundation, Howe Foundation, Iowa FNAWS, DSC, Eastern WSF, and Gary and Kathy Sorensen for supporting wild sheep conservation in Utah.

As always, we would like to thank our conservation partners, especially Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, who help Utah WSF in pursuit of its mission statement. I would also like to thank the Utah WSF Board of for their support, Executive Director Hadli Sorenson for her hard work and dedication and, once again, thank our membership for making our organization one to be proud of.

—Respectfully, Travis Jensen

President, Utah WSF



# Message From The Executive Director

Hadli Sorenson

**It is with tremendous pride and gratitude that I reflect on the past year with the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation.** In 2025, our organization reached new heights—quite literally—and it has been inspiring to witness the passion, dedication, and unity that continue to drive our mission forward. Being part of this foundation during such an exciting time of growth has been one of the greatest honors of my career.

This year, we saw remarkable expansion within our community. Our banquet was one of our most successful yet, and we are thrilled to elevate the experience even further by bringing our next event to the Grand America. This move not only symbolizes our growth, but also our commitment to raising the bar in everything we do. We've climbed to a new peak, and the view from here is just the beginning.

Another milestone was hosting our first annual golf tournament at Soldier Hollow Golf Course. The event was a tremendous success—filled with camaraderie, friendly competition, and overwhelming support for our mission. We also connected with many of you at our socials and sheep viewings throughout the year, experiences that truly strengthened our sense of community. Getting to know our members on a deeper level continues to be one of the most rewarding aspects of my role.

On a personal note, I had the opportunity to tag along on my first sheep hunt this year. Seeing the process firsthand—from the rugged terrain to the conservation-driven decisions made in the field—was nothing short of incredible. It reminded me why our work matters and how deeply rooted our community is in the stewardship of Utah's wild sheep.

As we move forward, I am energized by the momentum we have built together. Our growth is not just measured in numbers, but in the passion, involvement, and shared commitment of every member, donor, volunteer, and partner who believes in this mission. The future of Utah's wild sheep is brighter than ever, and I am grateful to stand alongside all of you as we continue to protect these remarkable animals and the landscapes they call home.

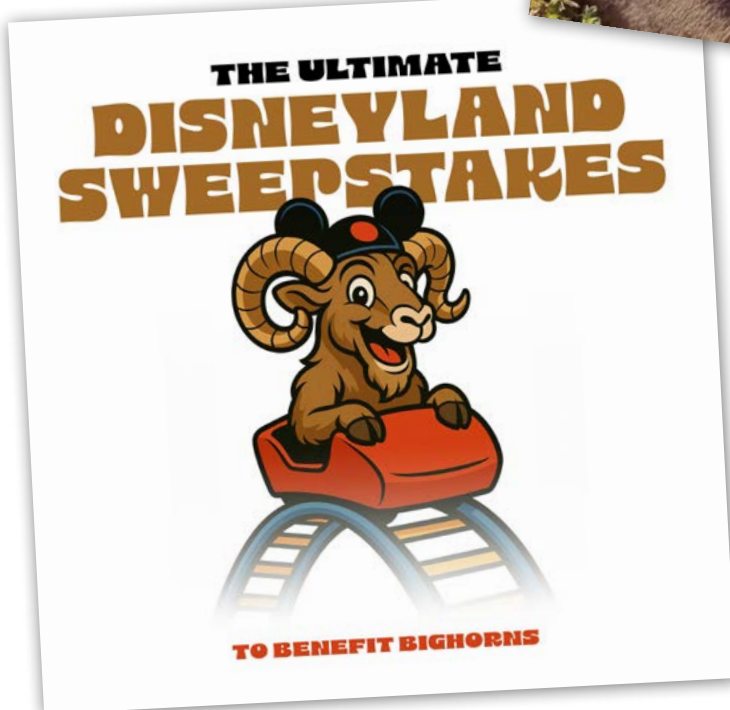
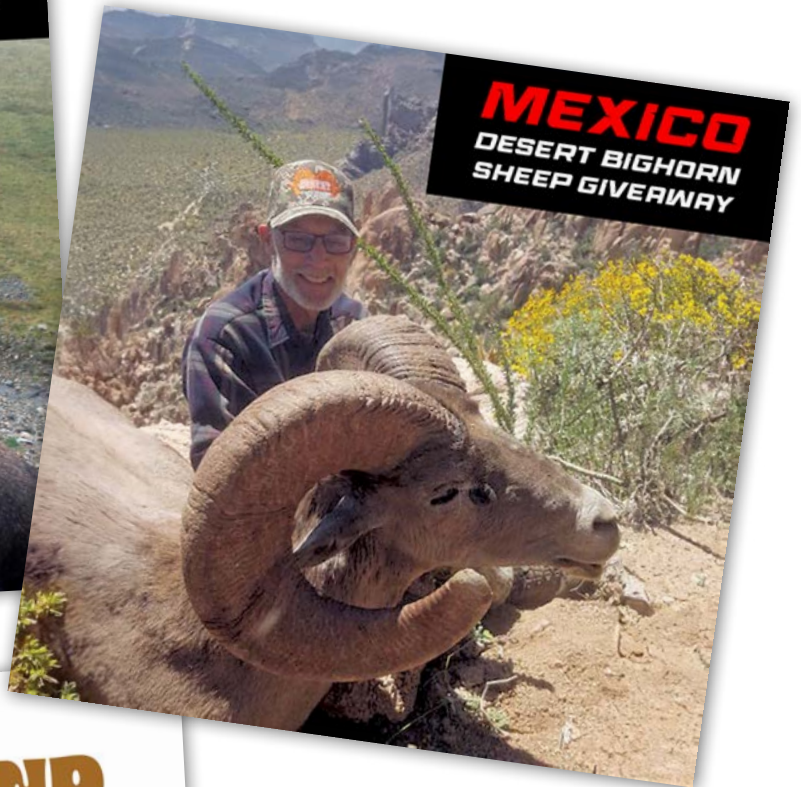
Thank you for your unwavering support. I look forward to everything we will accomplish together in the year ahead.

—Hadli Sorenson

Executive Director, Utah Wild Sheep Foundation



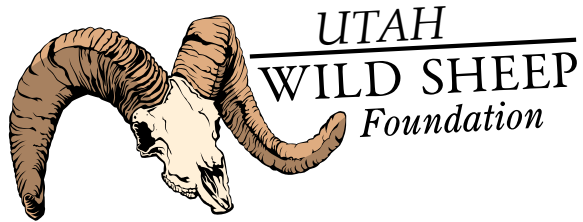
# WIN BIG!



Scan for Tickets

Proceeds benefit the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation.

For full details visit [utahwsf.org](http://utahwsf.org)



## **Committee Volunteers and Board of Director Nominations**

The Board of Directors of Utah WSF is looking for experienced, motivated individuals that are interested in volunteering their time to facilitating wild sheep conservation in Utah. As a result, the Board would like to reach out to our membership in order to solicit nominations for committee members and potential future Board members.

Areas of opportunity include:

- Banquet and fundraising
- Membership support, social media and outreach
- Magazine development
- Apparel and point of sale support
- Projects and volunteer coordination
- Games, sweepstakes and event oversight
- Financial advisory, Endowment fund and Legacy Society support

An individual can nominate himself or herself or be nominated by another. All nominees will be provided a formal questionnaire that outlines volunteer expectations, areas of interest, career, hunting and conservation background, etc. Please email our President, Travis Jenson at [tjenson@xmission.com](mailto:tjenson@xmission.com) with potential nominations.

# Utah WSF Officers and Directors



**Travis Jensen**  
PRESIDENT



**Hadli Sorenson**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Swen Mortenson**  
TREASURER



**Gordon Tattersall**  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD,  
DIRECTOR AND CO-CHAIR  
BANQUET & FUNDRAISING  
COMMITTEE



**Greg King**  
ASSISTANT CHAIRMAN OF  
THE BOARD, DIRECTOR  
AND CO-CHAIR FINANCIAL  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE &  
BANQUET/FUNDRAISING  
COMMITTEE MEMBER



**Dave Myrup**  
DIRECTOR AND CO-CHAIR  
FINANCIAL ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE



**Mike Fowlks**  
DIRECTOR AND LEGISLATIVE  
AFFAIRS LIASON,  
CONSERVATION PROJECTS  
AND BANQUET/FUNDRAISER  
COMMITTEE MEMBER



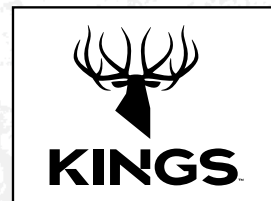
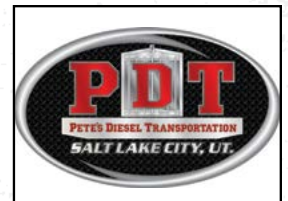
**Keele Johnson**  
DIRECTOR AND CO-CHAIR  
CONSERVATION PROJECTS  
COMMITTEE

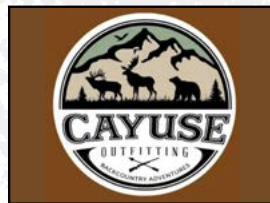
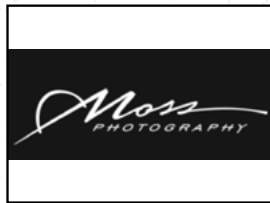


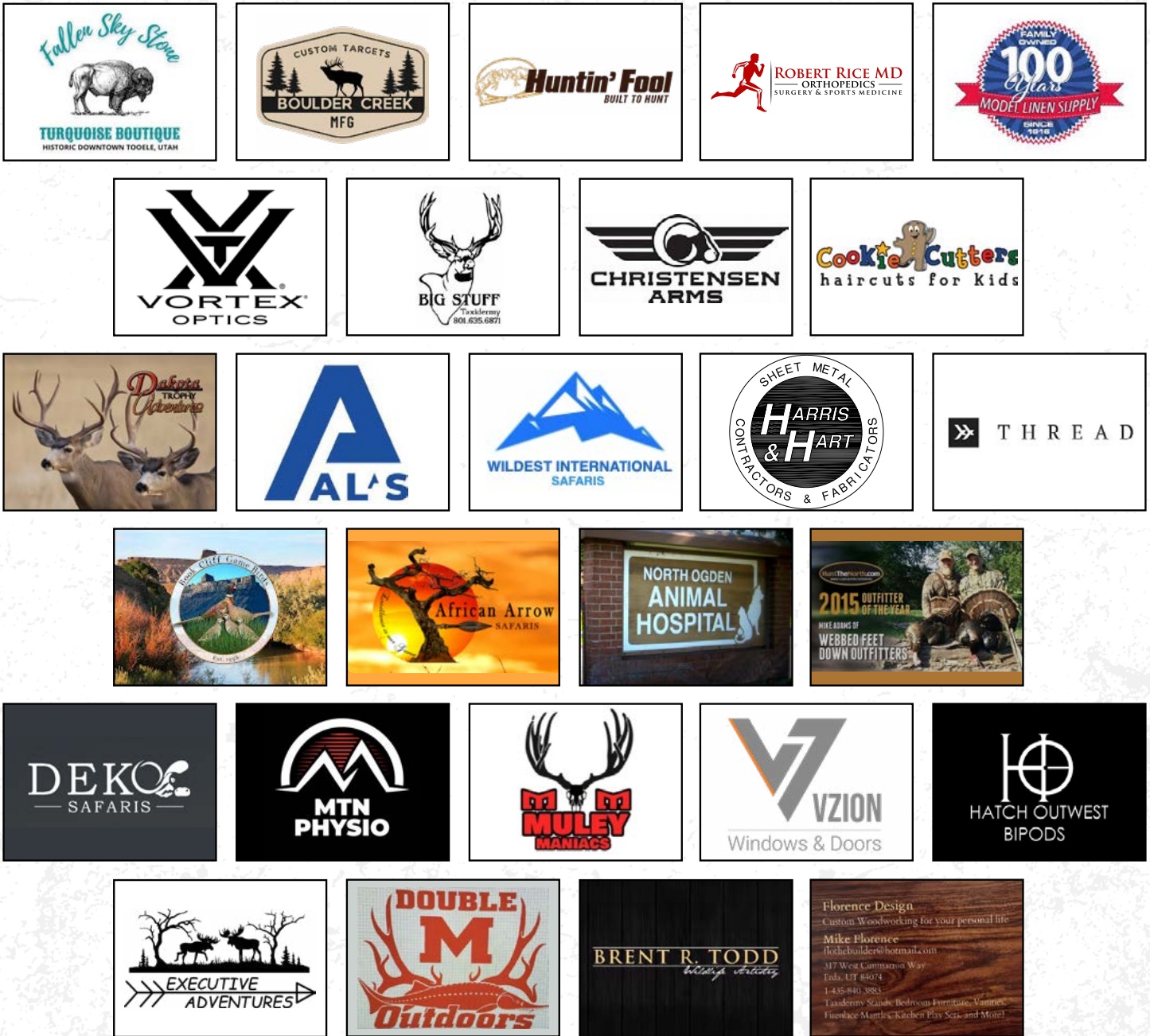
**Kent "Duke" Boyington**  
DIRECTOR AND CO-CHAIR  
CONSERVATION PROJECTS  
COMMITTEE

# Support Our Sponsors

Thank you for your patronage of the companies that generously contribute to Utah WSF, in support of Utah's Wild Sheep program.







## Banquet Sponsors

**Kevin Hunt • Gary Sorensen • Bruce Ingelby • Dallas Smith • Richard Curtis • Duane Jenson • Greg King • Tracy Valdez • Dain Armstrong • Dave Billings • Neil Hullinger • Tracy Rawle • Marc & Debbie Bingham • Pat White • KIP & SUE SLAUGH**



# A LEGACY OF SERVICE, A VISION FOR HEALTH

The Marc C. and Deborah H. Bingham Foundation has long been dedicated to strengthening communities through thoughtful, purpose-driven giving. Guided by a commitment to lasting impact, the Foundation supports initiatives that uplift individuals, protect families, and invest in future generations, focusing on three pillars: Education, Healthcare, and Wildlife Conservation, rooted in service and stewardship.

The Bingham Family Clinic is a natural extension of this legacy and a living expression of the Foundation's medical charitable giving. Established to serve the uninsured with dignity and compassion, the Clinic transforms values into action, delivering healing, prevention, and hope to neighbors in need.

Leading this effort are Kirk Woodward, M.D., and his wife, Sherilee, whose professional expertise and personal dedication drive the Clinic's mission forward. Deeply aligned with the Foundation's pillars, they are incorporating education into the Clinic's model through partnerships with institutions of higher learning that provide real-world work experiences. The Woodward's believe that caring for people and strengthening families builds resilient communities, and that access to healthcare is essential to growth and stability. Together, the Foundation, the Clinic, and its leaders share a unified vision: ensuring compassion, responsibility, and service continue to shape a healthier, stronger future for the community they love.



Just as healthy wildlife herds rely on stewardship, balance, and long-term commitment, a healthy community depends on access to compassionate medical care, especially for those who fall through the cracks. The Bingham Family Clinic serves uninsured individuals and families who do not qualify for government assistance and cannot afford private insurance. By providing quality, dignified care, the Clinic offers more than medical visits, it offers a lifeline. Early diagnosis replaces emergency crisis, parents stay healthy enough to work, children are able to learn, and families gain the stability they need to move forward.

The Clinic's vision is a community where no one delays care due to fear or finances, where prevention replaces suffering, and where neighbors care for neighbors. That vision is made possible through generosity. Every gift to the Bingham Family Clinic is an investment in hope. Just as conservation protects future generations, your support ensures access to care and a healthier community for years to come.



501(c)(3)

35th Annual  
**Utah WSF Banquet**

**Saturday, March 21st, 2026**  
**5pm Doors Open & Social Hour - 6pm Dinner**

The Grand America Hotel, Salt Lake City



**Early Bird Drawing for a Rifle**

When You Purchase Your Tickets by March 1st!

**Over 70 firearms available to  
win or purchase**

**Desert Sheep Hunt Heads or Tails Game**

For Everyone in Attendance!

**8 Sheep Hunts to Win, Draw or Bid On**

Plus... Bonus Moose, Elk, & Rocky Mountain Goat Tags

Purchase tickets at [utahwsf.org](http://utahwsf.org) or contact:  
 Hadli Sorenson at (435) 840-0786, [hadlisorenson@gmail.com](mailto:hadlisorenson@gmail.com)



**AUCTION TAGS**

(Anyone can bid)

- Hunt #1 - Box Elder, Newfoundland Mtns (Late) California Bighorn Sheep
- Hunt #2 - Fillmore, Oak Creek (Late) California Bighorn Sheep
- Hunt #3 - Kaiparowits West Desert Bighorn Sheep
- Hunt #4 - Pine Valley, Beaver Dam Desert Bighorn Sheep
- Hunt #5 - San Rafael South Desert Bighorn Sheep

**DRAWING TAGS**

- Sweepstakes Hunts:**
- Bighorn Sheep hunt in Señora Mexico with Extreme Mexico Desert Outfitters
  - Stone Sheep hunt in British Columbia in with Stone and Folding Mountain Outfitters
  - Dall Sheep hunt with Arctic Red River Outfitters

**ADDITIONAL AUCTION HUNTS**

**Moose Hunt** with Blue Stone Guiding and Adventures LTD in British Columbia. **Nebo Mountain Goat. Bull Elk Central Mountains, Manti-Choice of Any Legal Weapon**  
 Turkey, Black Bear, Mexico, Argentina & So African Hunts



**NEW**  
**Heads or Tails**  
**Sheep Hunt**  
**Giveaway!**

General door prize, Life Member door prize and Corporate table prizes will all be drawn



**GET TICKETS ONLINE!**  
[www.UTAHWSF.org](http://www.UTAHWSF.org)  
 Check Online for Ticket Availability

This event will sell out!  
 Seating is limited. Purchase tickets in advance online.

**Utah WSF Ticket Order Form**

**BANQUET PACKAGES**

- \$400 – 1 sheep ticket, one year membership, dinner for 2, 5 raffle tickets
- \$500 – 3 Sheep tickets, one year membership, dinner for 2, 10 raffle tickets
- \$700 – 5 sheep tickets, one year membership, dinner for 2, 20 raffle tickets
- \$1600 – Family table, One Year Membership, Dinner for 6, and 20 Sheep Tickets, 50 Raffle Tickets
- \$2500 – Corporate Table, Dinner for 10, 40 Sheep Tickets and 100 Raffle Tickets

- \$175 1 Dinner Package for 1
- \$325 2 Dinner Packages for 2 with a One Year Membership and \$50 for a youth dinner ticket
- \$100 1 Youth Dinner # of Youth =

**ADDITIONAL SHEEP TICKET PRICES**

- \$100 = 1 Ticket
- \$250 = 3 Tickets
- \$500 = 8 Tickets
- \$1,000 = 20 Tickets

**DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIP AND DONATIONS IN LIEU OF ATTENDANCE**

- \$250 Raffle Item Sponsor
- \$500 Raffle Item/Gun Sponsor
- \$1,000 Premium Raffle Item/Gun Sponsor

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_ Visa/MC/AmEx # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Code \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to:**  
 Utah WSF, 2292 S. Redwood Road, West Valley City, UT 84119  
 Or purchase tickets online at [utahwsf.org](http://utahwsf.org)  
 Questions? Contact Travis Jenson (801) 641-5453

Join Us, for a Complementary  
Utah WSF

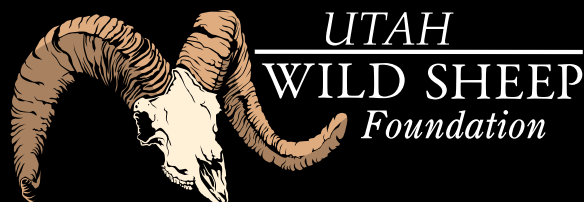
# MEMBER BREAKFAST

Saturday February 14, 2026

8:00-9:00 am

Western Hunting & Conservation Expo

To receive the room number  
RSVP to Hadli Sorenson, 435-840-0786



# 2026



## July 31st

Soldier Hollow Golf Course  
8 am Shotgun Start

36 Teams - 4 Man Scramble  
\*Lunch & Swag bags for all Golfers

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To register call 435-840-0786  
or email [hadlisoorenson@gmail.com](mailto:hadlisoorenson@gmail.com)

# UWSF

## Lifetime Members

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- |                        |                             |                     |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Don Mace             | 34 Darryl Williams          | 67 Jim Winjum       |
| 2 Wayne Shelton        | 35 Kevin Hurley             | 68 Dallas Smith     |
| 3 Ken Jones            | 36 Brad Turner              | 69 Marcus Gores     |
| 4 Ralph Kramer*        | 37 Brad Morlock             | 70 Cory Jackson     |
| 5 Danny Butler         | 38 Bud Toliver              | 71 Matthew Mellon   |
| 6 Lee Howard*          | 39 Ashley Woolstenhulme     | 72 Brenton Scott    |
| 7 Dennis Lower*        | 40 Kyle Meintzer            | 73 Randy Johnson    |
| 8 Glen Gold*           | 41 Jace Guymon              | 74 Shad Pyper       |
| 9 Kevin Hatfield       | 42 Doug Sayer               | 75 Greg King        |
| 10 Russel Phillips     | 43 Shad Hulse               | 76 Bob Friel        |
| 11 Garth Hardy         | 44 April Hulse              | 77 Rob Kopecky      |
| 12 Anne Dodgson*       | 45 Herb Meyer*              | 78 Glen Pyne        |
| 13 Frank Scott         | 46 Chad Fraughton           | 79 Peter Burchfield |
| 14 William W. Dodgson* | 47 Tracy Valdez             | 80 Randy Martin     |
| 15 Robert Farrell      | 48 Adam Bronson             | 81 Boyd Corry       |
| 16 Denny Farnsworth    | 49 Josh Butcher             | 82 Marc Bingham     |
| 17 Shawn Hardy         | 50 Pat White                | 83 Kalan Lemon      |
| 18 Mike Fisher         | 51 Nathan Somero            | 84 Wade Lemon       |
| 19 Shane Hardy         | 52 Tim Raver                | 85 Jim Warner       |
| 20 Merlynn Jones       | 53 Swen Mortenson           | 86 Cory Connin      |
| 21 Tom Mower*          | 54 Steve Harris             | 87 Kyle Stelter     |
| 22 Derek Mower         | 55 Alan Hayes               | 88 Mike Barney      |
| 23 Mark Butler         | 56 Nick Negrini             | 89 Keele Johnson    |
| 24 Jeff Jones          | 57 Bruce Billings           | 90 Brian Dillemath  |
| 25 Travis Jenson       | 58 Dave Billings            | 91 Charles Kelly    |
| 26 Duane Jenson        | 59 Rich Papierto            | 92 Helen Schwantje  |
| 27 Smith Jenson        | 60 Steve "Quiz" Quisenberry | 93 Eric Mackay      |
| 28 Dick Christensen    | 61 Craig Mitton             | 94 Trevor King      |
| 29 Pat Warr Jr.        | 62 Pat O'Neill              | 95 Ryan Thomas      |
| 30 Terry Marcum        | 63 Dallan Carter            | 96 Charles Greene   |
| 31 Pat Warr Sr.        | 64 Craig Nakamoto           | 97 Jigger Janisch   |
| 32 Dan Burton          | 65 Jason Radakovich         |                     |
| 33 Eric Pope           | 66 Charlie Monson           |                     |



# MEMBERSHIP DRIVE SPECIAL



**\$8,356 Value**

**JOIN UTAH WSF AND BE  
ENTERED TO WIN!!!**



- Swaro NL Pure 14 x 52
- TA binocular Tripod adapter
- ATX 85 MM scope
- Muley Maniac Carbon Tripod and Pan Head

# 2025/2026 Utah WSF Conservation Permit Funding



Through the Utah DWR WRI project funding program, Utah WSF committed \$542,012.50 to 22 projects for the 2026 fiscal year. Total conservation permit project funding for 2026 will be in excess of \$827,012.50. A few of the projects funded include:

- North Slope Uintahs habitat improvement—\$75,000
- Burnt Beaver habitat improvement—\$100,000
- 2026 BHS captures—\$25,000
- Statewide Sheep Outreach Coordinator position—\$65,000
- Southern Region guzzler support, mini-excavator—\$70,000
- Utah DWR predator control program—\$150,000

Through the Utah DWR WRI project funding program, Utah WSF committed \$603,430 to 21 conservation-related projects for the 2025 fiscal year. Total conservation permit project funding for 2025 was \$997,343.32. A few of the projects funded included:

- Guzzler installation and maintenance—\$161,640
- Bighorn sheep captures, in-state—\$60,000
- Mountain goat captures, in-state—\$18,000
- Migration initiative, bison and pronghorn captures—\$15,000
- Habitat improvement projects benefiting sheep, mountain goats, mule deer, elk, pronghorn, and upland game—\$381,290
- Contribution to purchase a new boom truck required by the Utah DWR for habitat work throughout the state—\$150,000
- Interagency Bighorn Sheep Outreach Coordinator—\$65,000
- Nevada DBS helicopter capture work—\$40,850.50
- Nash Wash/Horse Pasture Fence Upgrade—\$30,000



*High Country Horns Taxidermy*  
EST. 1998



*Paul Pennie*  
*(801)361-1890*

# LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY



Become a Legacy Society Member



**Contact Gregory King at 801-360-5948,  
Hadli Sorenson at 435-840-0786 or  
Travis Jenson at 801-641-5453 with  
questions or to participate.**

[utahwsf.org/legacysociety.htm](http://utahwsf.org/legacysociety.htm)



## Legacy Society Members

1	Dallas Smith	Bronze
2	Ryan Foutz	Bronze
3	Travis Jenson	Bronze
4	Dave Myrup	Copper
5	Shad & April Hulse	Bronze
6	Gregory King	Silver
7	Hood Family Trust	Bronze
8	Gary & Kathy Sorensen	Gold
9	Kip & Sue Slaugh	Gold
10	Lee Howard	Copper
11	Bruce Engelby	Bronze
12	Tolliver Family	Bronze

The Utah Wild Sheep Foundation Legacy Society was created in 2022 as a way for Utah WSF supporters to contribute to the organization, and the pursuit of its mission statement, beyond the levels offered by regular or life memberships.

The Utah Wild Sheep Foundation Legacy Society has five Benefactor Levels enabling tax deductible, donor-directed gifts starting at \$500 per year. Donations may be directed to the Utah WSF Endowment Fund or to fund specific Utah WSF projects. Legacy Society members may join at any level and apply any previous level of donation to the next level at any time during or subsequent to their donation being made. Legacy Society members will be recognized with gifts recognizing their contribution to the society.

### **BENEFACTOR LEVELS:**

• Copper	\$2,500
• Bronze	\$5,000
• Silver	\$10,000
• Gold	\$25,000
• Diamond Legacy	\$50,000+

### **DONATIONS MAY BE DIRECTED AS FOLLOWS:**

- Endowment Fund
- Specific Utah WSF project
- Greatest area of need

The Utah WSF Endowment Fund Policy statement is available on our website at [www.utahwsf.org](http://www.utahwsf.org) Utah Wild Sheep Foundation is a 501(c)3 non profit organization and any contribution made to the organization is fully tax deductible.

Marketable securities may be donated which allows an individual to avoid capital gains and still receive the full value of the donation as a charitable gift. For those members over 70.5 years of age, mandatory IRA distributions may also be utilized for donation purposes, which are also fully tax deductible.

**Contact Gregory King at 801-360-5948, Hadli Sorenson at 435-840-0786 or Travis Jenson at 801-641-5453 with questions or to participate.**



# Utah WSF Endowment Fund

**In 2018 the Utah WSF Endowment Fund was established.** This process included the creation of an Endowment Fund Policy Statement, establishment of an independent financial board and the retention of a professional financial advisor.

2020 was the perfect example of why an endowment fund is critical to the future of Utah WSF. Without the ability to host a banquet our organization lost an entire year of fundraising revenue. As a result, we were forced to be very conservative in our utilization of retained revenue.

Our endowment fund is limited by policy to using the earnings from the fund for operating expenses. Contributions are invested according to policy and are not distributed. Disbursements from the fund are derived from earnings and must be approved by both the independent financial board and the Board of Directors of Utah WSF.

Beginning with a modest principal balance of \$120,000 we have been able to grow the account

to a current balance in excess of \$312,500. Over the next 3-5 years the goal of the foundation is to reach \$1,000,000 in contributions. This goal will guarantee Utah WSF the ability to operate and complete critical wild sheep projects on an annual basis, ensuring the future of wild sheep in Utah for years to come.

How can you help? While cash contributions are always accepted, we can also accept appreciated stock contributions. Donating appreciated stocks allows an individual to avoid capital gains and still get the full value of the donation as a charitable gift. For our more seasoned members (over age 70 and 1/2), mandatory distributions from an IRA can be donated as fully tax-deductible charitable gifts.

Contact Greg King, Utah WSF Board Member (801) 360-5948 or Travis Jenson, President Utah WSF (801) 641-5453 with questions or to participate.

—Respectfully, Greg King  
Utah WSF Board Member



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BASE LAYERS | INSULATION | OUTERWEAR | PACKS | SLEEP SYSTEMS | BOOTS | ACCESSORIES



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ULTRALIGHT HUNTING

# 2025 Utah WSF Guzzler Projects



**2025 was a busy water project year for Utah WSF.** In addition to funding multiple guzzler builds on the Stansbury Mountains, we partnered with the Utah DWR/DNR on double guzzler builds on the Newfoundland Mountains, Mount Nebo, and the Mineral Mountains. In total, Utah WSF funded and installed a total of 9 guzzlers on sheep units throughout the state in 2025. The Utah WSF water trailer also had a busy season hauling water to thirsty Desert Bighorns on the Pine Valley, Virgin River unit.

We are excited about the deployment of solar-powered, satellite-supported water monitoring systems (Ranchbots) on existing guzzlers to allow for real-time monitoring of guzzler water levels. By the time you are reading this magazine, we will have 10 Ranchbots installed on the Potash, Pine Valley, Mineral Mountains, Range Creek, Newfoundland Mountains, Antelope Island, and other sheep units.

In addition to working with the Utah DWR/DNR on expanding guzzler inspection, maintenance, and improvement throughout the state, we recently

funded the purchase of a mini-excavator in the Southern Region. This new piece of equipment will allow the region to expand guzzler work for sheep, deer, elk, and countless other large and small game animals.

We would like to thank the Utah DWR/DNR for being a truly amazing conservation partner. Additionally, we would like to thank our funding partners: Wild Sheep Foundation, Iowa FNAWS, Eastern WSF, DSC, the Marc C. and Deborah H. Bingham Foundation, Howe Foundation, and Gary and Kathy Sorensen for helping fund these great projects and assisting Utah WSF in pursuit of its mission statement.

If you are interested in volunteering with Utah WSF on these types of projects, make sure to follow our social media sites for volunteer opportunities going forward.

—Travis Jenson  
President, Utah WSF



## NEWFOUNDLAND MOUNTAINS GUZZLER INSTALLATION



**Nebo Guzzler Project**



### Ranchbot Technology for Wild Sheep



### Mineral Mountains Double Guzzler Project

# 2025 Utah WSF Annual Fundraising Banquet

Utah WSF continues its upward trajectory, and the 2025 Annual Fundraising Banquet proved once again what can be accomplished through the dedication of our officers, directors, volunteers, and loyal membership. This year's banquet sold out the Utah State Fairpark with 500 members in attendance, not including banquet volunteers, directors, or officers—our largest turnout to date at this venue.

The growth didn't stop there. The 2025 banquet set a new fundraising record, surpassing our 2024 total of \$235,000 and reaching an incredible \$300,000 in banquet-only revenue. This milestone reflects the strong support of our members and the continued momentum of Utah WSF's conservation mission.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that the 2026 Utah WSF Banquet will be moving to the Grand America Hotel, allowing us to host—and expect to sell out—700 attendees. This move represents the next step in our growth as we continue our goal of becoming the best single-night conservation event in Utah.

The 2026 event will feature an expanded lineup of hunts, guns, and gear, including new and engaging games such as the Wall of Guns, showcasing more than 25 firearms available to win, in addition to our raffles and other opportunities. In total, our gun order exceeded 70 firearms, offering members more chances than ever before to take home something special while supporting wild sheep conservation.

And if that wasn't enough to justify a bigger and better venue, Utah WSF will also give away a Desert Bighorn Sheep permit through a no-purchase-necessary Heads or Tails game, creating one of the most exciting and memorable moments of the evening.

Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, and supported the 2025 banquet. Your commitment directly helps keep sheep on Utah's mountains. We look forward to seeing you in 2026—get your tickets early, and join us as we continue to climb to new heights.





Full Curl Recipients





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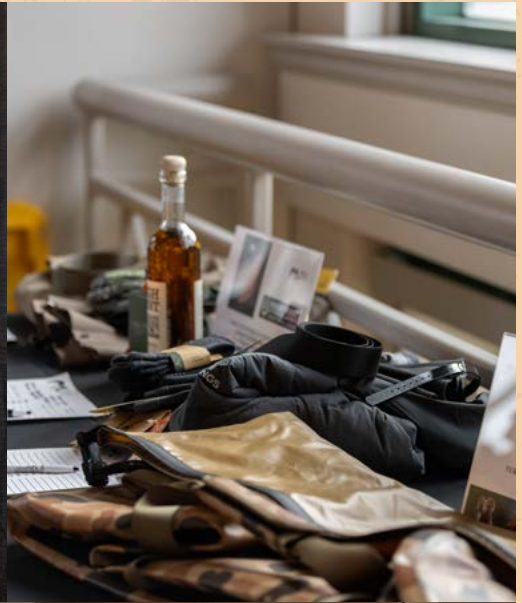
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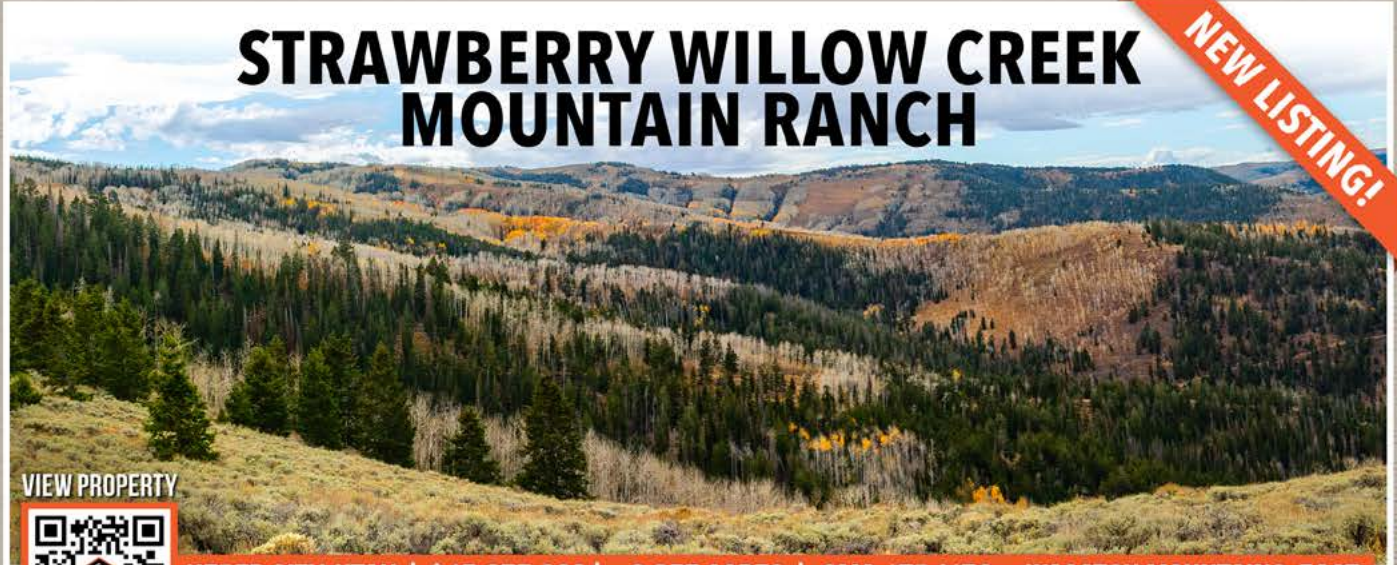
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# Outreach Coordinator

Phil Crowther



My name is Phil Crowther. I live in Tremonton, Utah, and I have worked for the Utah Department of Agriculture since 1999. I am currently the Deputy Director over the Predator Program for the State of Utah.

Over the years, I have had the pleasure and opportunity to work with both agriculture and livestock producers, as well as with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, resolving wildlife issues. In early 2023, I started as the Bighorn Sheep Outreach Coordinator in conjunction with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation to help protect the growth of indigenous wild sheep. Protecting both wild and domestic sheep populations from intermingling and preventing the spread of disease is the goal of the program.

Because of such amazing partners with UWSF, SFW, DWR, and the Utah Woolgrowers Association, I have found success working with domestic sheep producers, from testing for disease to fencing projects to old-fashioned gathering of strays on horseback.

Over the past few years, I have also had the opportunity to help with the transplanting of Desert Bighorn Sheep from Nevada into our nursery herds in Tabiona and, most recently, at Promontory. I have been involved with supplying

supplemental feed during the winter months, as well as predator control protecting the Bighorns within the nursery.

I have a passion for both livestock and wildlife. I have always raised horses and enjoy breeding and training them. I get out and hunt deer, elk, and predators as often as I can. As of yet, I haven't drawn a Bighorn sheep tag and look forward with anticipation to the day when that becomes a reality. I have been able to collar and tag Bighorn rams and have felt their power holding their horns. I have also been fortunate to find a few deadhead rams over the years but look forward to the day when I get to harvest my first ram. So, for now, I am still in the less-than-one club.





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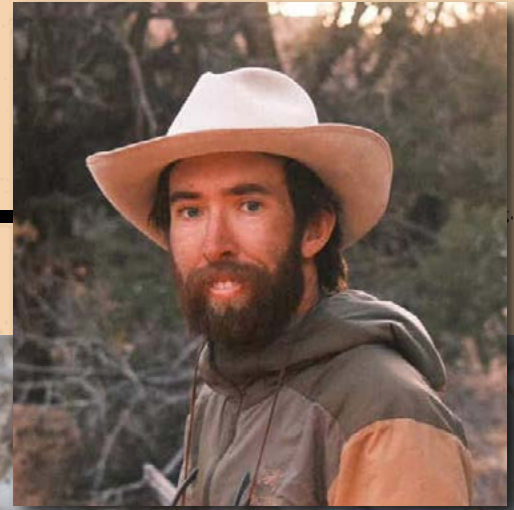


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# Bruised Knees and Falling Out of Trees

—By Jake Bleggi



**My childhood was spent exploring, wandering, and getting into trouble.** On a sunny day in March, after being cooped up all winter, a few friends and I decided we were going to scramble up the closest mountain and look for caves that had been rumored to be in the area. Once we got to the base, we ditched our bikes in the bushes and began to hike. The terrain was steep and unforgiving. Eventually, we hit a point where we were cliffed out in every direction. After a short scan of the area, we found a crevasse that we could climb our way up. I went first, paying close attention to my foot and handholds. As a young kid, I pictured a fall from

this cliff resulting in myself tomahawking down the rocky hillside, only stopping once I hit the bottom. Slowly, but surely, I made my way up. Once I hit the top and got my footing, I caught my breath and looked up. I was standing face to face with a mature ram. All at once, shock, fear, and surprise almost sent me backward off the cliff I had just topped out on. Panicked, I rushed behind the closest rock and hid. I had never seen a Bighorn sheep; I didn't even know that they lived in this area, and yet somehow I had found myself 15 feet from one. Once I settled down, I crept my head around the corner to see if he was still there. He was almost unfazed, feeding



on a small patch of grass growing through the rocky hillside. I just sat there and observed. This was the start of what has turned into a lifelong obsession.

As a man, I've dove deep into the world of photography. I've been all over the world in the pursuit of photography and adventure, from the rivers of Columbia and Argentina to cycling across Japan. Yet somehow, every winter I find myself back on that same hillside where I found those sheep as a kid. I've familiarized myself with the herd, tracked their patterns year after year, and watched young sheep turn into rams worthy of harvesting on a tag that takes over 20 years to draw.

Last year, it all came to a pinnacle point in my documentation of these sheep. I made a phone call, similar to the one I made to my friends as a

kid, but this time the recipients were two close friends who share a similar passion for sheep as me. "Clouds are looking good; this could be perfect conditions to get some good photos of those rams we've been keeping tabs on." That was all it took, and they were in. We started the day moseying around and glassing a few hillsides. We found a few decent rams, but not exactly what we were looking for. We had a decision to make: leave the rams we had just found and continue down the road, risking the chance of turning up our target rams, or start hiking. The choice didn't come easy because our weather window was quickly closing. We decided that risking it for the rams we were originally after was worth the chance of coming up empty-handed that day.

We were instantly rewarded in our decision. After



15 minutes of glassing, we found our target ram and a few other 6-7 year old rams. We parked the truck and sprinted uphill to get in position. After a 30-minute death march, we got to the sheep. The herd was a healthy mix of ewes, lambs, and rams, totaling about 25 sheep. There were 3 in particular that caught our eye: a 9-year-old with massive bases that was probably broomed out, as well as 2 slightly younger rams. The trio was holding tight, making sure not to give up any ground to one another. After about 20 minutes of snapping photos, we could feel the tension among the three begin to build until, behind a rock, something changed. Suddenly, we heard a “BANG” louder than a gunshot. It caught all of us off guard, and nobody grabbed a photo. Quickly, we repositioned to get a better angle on

the spar. We got to where we could see what was going on and realized it was the younger rams sparring. The older ram caught wind of what was happening and slowly made his way up the hill to the ewes.

The two rams continued to clash heads for the next 30 minutes, and we sat there in awe, capturing pictures we had dreamed about for years. The mountainside started to sock in, and snow began to fall. We were underprepared for the elements, but we couldn't force ourselves to leave. I noticed a thick layer of snow had started to build up on the two rams' backs. I turned to my friends and said, “If they spar again, that snow buildup is going to fly forward and explode against the dark background.” As I finished my sentence, the sheep began to rear



back. I pulled the camera to my eye and heard my shutter click in sync with the boom that echoed through the canyon. Hands shaking, I set my camera in my lap. I suddenly understood that I had just taken the best photograph of my life—perhaps the best I ever would. The moment unfolded exactly as it had in my head. All of the time I’ve spent in life chasing these creatures was rewarded tenfold in that moment. After that shot, I put my camera in my bag, knowing that I couldn’t top what I had just accomplished. I then just lived in the moment, listened to the sheep spar, and let the snow softly fall on top of me for the remainder of the afternoon.

Throughout the remainder of the winter, I continued to check in on the herd. I rarely left my truck to take photos; I was just taking notes and keeping tabs. I noticed one of the smaller rams started with a subtle cough. Making sure that I wasn’t just seeing things, I returned day after day. The cough got worse and quickly spread until one morning a ping on my phone came in. One of my friends had found the ram dead. Knowing that I had spent a lot of time

documenting and checking in on these sheep, I was one of the first people that came to mind when he made his discovery. He reported it to the DNR, and later that day they headed up to retrieve it. I was at the trailhead when they made their way down. I’d been close to this sheep dozens of times over the winter. Looking at the dead ram that didn’t reach an age at which it could be harvested and appreciated was a low point in the year. Knowing the sickness that had taken this sheep would likely be detrimental to the herd was devastating. Slowly, I watched the herd thin out over the remainder of the winter. Watching this herd grow over the years to what it had become, only to be knocked right back down to the numbers at which I first found them, was heartbreaking.

I’ll always find comfort in knowing that the hardworking people at the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation are spending time and money every day to make sure herds like this have the support to bounce back—so maybe one day another kid can find himself in a similar situation to mine.

# A Tribute to Lee Howard

Marc Bingham

**Lee Howard will be deeply missed.** His passing last year marked the loss of not only a leader, but a foundational figure whose vision helped shape what the Utah Wild Sheep Organization has become today.

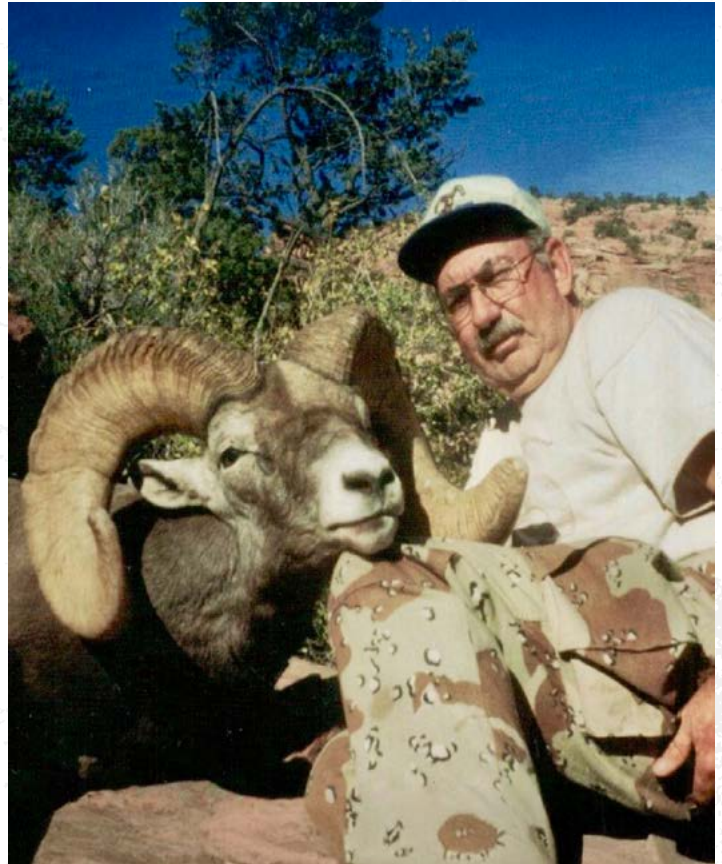
I first met Lee one year after Fred Morris and Don Peay founded the Utah chapter of what would become the Wild Sheep Foundation. As a sheep hunter, my passion made it impossible not to become involved in such a dedicated group. At that time, the chapter was small, and the first banquet drew roughly 18 new members. Today, the chapter exceeds 500 members, a testament to the groundwork Lee helped establish.

Lee was the person who stepped forward, took control, and guided the chapter into maturity. He had a clear understanding of how conservation, opportunity, and community were connected. He recognized early on that access to sheep hunting permits was auctioned for several hundred thousand dollars just to get a permit to hunt. Wild Sheep are considered to be the number one trophy animals of all hunters.

Lee understood the future depended on youth. He believed young hunters were the next generation of conservationists, and he made sure they felt welcomed and valued. He encouraged youth attendance at banquets and championed special drawings specifically for them, ensuring they had a seat at the table and a reason to stay engaged.

Lee was deeply involved in protecting wild sheep health. Knowing wild sheep do not mix with domestic sheep due to disease risk, he worked closely with wildlife agencies in Idaho, Utah, and Oregon to help transfer grazing allotments from sheep to cattle. These efforts were not always visible, but they were critical—and they had lasting impact.

Early on, Lee and I attended a wild sheep society in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada. During the meeting, they reported that excess sheep needed to be removed from one of the areas because of too many sheep for the carrying capacity, which could cause a die off. Lee was instrumental in getting those excess animals to Utah to start the Wasatch herd.



Under Lee's leadership, sheep hunting in Utah grew in both demand and prestige. Today, drawing a permit can take upwards of 24 years, a reflection of healthy populations, careful management, and the value placed on the resource—outcomes Lee helped make possible.

While Lee's leadership will be missed, the organization is strong, and new leadership continues to carry it forward to the next level. That strength exists because Lee built a foundation rooted in integrity, foresight, and dedication.

His influence lives on—in the herds on the mountain, the young hunters stepping into conservation, and the community he helped grow from a handful of members into a thriving force for wild sheep.

Lee Howard's legacy is not just remembered. It endures.



# Antelope Island & Nursery Herd Update

Travis Jenson, President Utah WSF



## Both Antelope Island and the Desert Bighorn nursery herd on Promontory Point continue to be bright spots for Utah's wild sheep program.

The Promontory facility is owned and funded by SFW, with management of the resource handled by the Utah DWR. This past June, members of the Utah DWR, SFW, and Utah WSF traveled to Valley of Fire State Park in Nevada to assist in two separate Desert Bighorn sheep captures. In total, 38 Nevada sheep were captured and relocated to the nursery herd facility in northern Utah. This transplant was part of the single largest Bighorn sheep translocation ever completed in North America and was completed due to poor habitat conditions resulting from severe drought in southern Nevada. Special thanks to NDOW, the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn, KUIU, GSCO, and our Utah conservation partners for making this transplant a success.

Conversations regarding Utah's Bighorn sheep nursery herds have been primarily focused on the

Promontory facility for the last few years. However, the Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep on Antelope Island are also doing very well. As many of you know, the Utah DWR and Antelope Island State Park authorized the reopening of sheep hunting on the island in 2025, with two fantastic rams being harvested. As the population continues to grow on the island, additional public permits will be issued, with a maximum of 6 total tags being offered, 5 of which will be issued in the public draw. We are very excited about this new development and look forward to the island being managed consistent with the Statewide BHS Management Plan.

As populations continue to expand, the Utah DWR is working to identify the best locations for potential transplants from both locations. We anticipate those transplants to begin as early as 2026/2027. Locations for potential transplants include Fremont Island and Mount Nebo for RMB, and Snow Canyon and the upper Escalante River system for DBS.



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# Bighorn Sheep Management in Utah —2025 Utah DWR Update

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Rusty Robinson, Utah DWR

**In 2025, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR), with the help of the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation and other partners, was able to make great strides in Bighorn sheep management.** This year the UDWR continued its disease monitoring and collaring programs by capturing over 100 Bighorn sheep. This winter, the Division plans to capture, test, and collar an additional 100 Bighorns on seven units. Some captures have already occurred and will continue over the next few weeks. The GPS collars fitted on Bighorns are equipped with mortality alerts and act as an early warning sign to detect problems associated with disease or predation.

This summer, the UDWR partnered with the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation and the Nevada Department of Wildlife to translocate 38 Bighorn sheep from Valley of Fire, Nevada, to the Desert Bighorn nursery facility on Promontory Point. The 38 Bighorns added to the existing population and gave the nursery herd a much-needed boost. Despite a setback this summer with a bluetongue outbreak, it is estimated the facility will hold approximately 115 sheep after lambing this spring. Plans are in place to transplant the first batch of nursery sheep in the fall/winter of 2026/2027. The Promontory facility is approximately 1,000 acres of steep, rocky slopes with open viewsheds, natural springs, and nutritious forage. It is surrounded by a state-of-the-art high fence and has low predator densities. It is an ideal location to keep these sheep protected from disease for future generations and provide the source stock for transplants for years to come.

The Interagency Bighorn Outreach Coordinator position, funded by the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation, was established in 2023 and is a collaborative

partnership with the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. The position is tasked with seeking out domestic sheep and goat producers in proximity to occupied and unoccupied Bighorn sheep habitat and working with producers to reduce the risk of disease transmission while providing mutual benefit to producers and their livestock. Because of this position, many solutions have been reached to maintain spatial separation, including fencing projects, livestock relocation, and stray sheep roundups. This position has proven extremely valuable for the health of Bighorn sheep as well as establishing positive relationships with the agricultural community.

In 2025, the UDWR reestablished the hunt on Antelope Island in order to provide additional hunt opportunity but also to lower ram:ewe ratios, which have been shown to prevent wandering rams and subsequent disease spread. The number one objective on Antelope Island is to preserve a healthy population of sheep in order to facilitate transplants across the state of Utah.

There are currently around 3,000 Desert Bighorn sheep and 1,700 Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep in Utah. Despite the challenges that face Bighorn sheep, they continually bounce back in spite of setbacks. Utah remains at the cutting edge of Bighorn research and management and is fully invested in the conservation of Bighorn sheep throughout the state. Without organizations like the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation and passionate individuals who invest their time, money, and energy, this would not be possible. The UDWR wishes to thank all who care about the future of Bighorn sheep in Utah. The future of Bighorn sheep is bright, and we value our continued partnership with the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation.



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# Full Curl Recipients



**Brady Jardine**



**The completion of my Grand Slam of Wild Sheep is a dream come true for me.** In 2012, as I was walking through a sporting goods store, I saw a taxidermy mount of the four North American sheep together. I took a picture of it and sent it to my wife, saying it was my new “hunting life goal”.

My first sheep hunt took place at Arctic Red in 2016 where I took a beautiful 13-year-old Dall sheep. I was hoping it would get the sheep hunting bug out of my system, but boy was I wrong! I was hooked.

I then took a stud 12-year-old Fannin sheep in the Yukon in 2019.

In January 2022, I killed a 178” Desert sheep in Mexico. Both my dad and oldest brother were able to be a part of that experience which made it really special for me.

In September of 2022, I was able to finish phase three of my Grand Slam by taking a beautiful dark-caped 38” Stone sheep in northern British Columbia.

The final leg of my journey was completed in September of 2023, where I was fortunate to take a stud Rocky Mountain Bighorn in the Kootenay Mountains of British Columbia. Of all of my sheep hunts, these mountains were the most rugged, nasty, and beautiful.

It’s hard to explain the draw of sheep hunting to those who have never experienced it. My best attempt is my grand slam took me to four of the most beautiful, rugged places on this earth. I’m able to see and feel God’s love for me when I’m in these kinds of places. It’s true freedom. It’s where I’m happiest. I’m now one Desert sheep away from finishing my second slam. Hopefully, I can find myself on the sheep mountains soon!

# Clint Adams



**Grand Slam #2316 started 3.5 years ago in the mountains of Sonora chasing a Desert sheep on a last-minute hunting opportunity.** I was able to harvest my beautiful Desert on day 2 of the hunt.

That fall, I went to the mountains of the Alaska Range to pursue my Dall sheep. This hunt pushed all of my limits, mentally, emotionally, and physically. On day 7 of a 10-day hunt, and after being dogged for 3 days, the fog parted in the valley below us for just 15 seconds while we sat on a ridgeline. Out of nowhere, a magnificent ram was standing on a rock shale mound. Fog rolled back in, and when we got the next break so we could see, there were five sheep and one no-brainer legal ram. Sneaking down through the fog to get to 400 yards was a stalk I'll never forget!

The following fall, I had my Stone sheep hunt booked up in BC with one of the best in the game. Blair Miller, with Stone & Folding Mountain. Blair has a first-class operation. On day 1 of my hunt, I had the Stone sheep of my dreams!

Last, is the most stigmatized sheep hunt. Chasing the Bighorn in the Rockies of Alberta. I'll leave the operation nameless as his area is simply incredible and we want to keep it that way for future slam chasers. I was able to double up on two old warrior rams with a newly acquainted friend Kyle, and both of us harvested our "Slam Ram" 30 seconds apart. Talk about the pinnacle of memories. Sharing a moment with a fellow sheep hunter, with both of us chasing our North American Sheep Slam and to complete it side by side. What a blessing!

# Cooper Perkins



**Growing up, hunting with my dad instilled a deep love for the outdoors and a passion for working hard and playing hard.** Watching others embark on incredible hunts—taking down giant game and elusive sheep—lit a fire in me.

In 2018, I attended a hunting banquet where Jason Hairston, founder of KUIU, shared his story of a sheep hunt. He said two words that would stick with me forever: “Don’t wait.” That moment changed everything.

At the time, I didn’t have the resources to make it happen, but I doubled down on my work ethic, pouring everything into my personal and professional life to fund this dream. By 2021, I was ready to book my first sheep hunt—a Dall sheep hunt in Alaska with Big Game Backcountry Outfitters, owned by Riley Pitts and his wife.

The adventure began with a bang: I took down a grizzly bear on day two and, on day four, harvested a massive Dall sheep. I was hooked.

A month later I stumbled upon an auction for a Desert Bighorn sheep hunt in Sonora, Mexico. The price was steep, but I thought, “Why not?” In the spring of 2022, I headed to Sonora with my dad by my side. Neither of us spoke Spanish, and the desert landscape was a far cry from Alaska, but the experience was unforgettable. On the first day, I harvested a beautiful Desert Bighorn. The next day, we celebrated with lobster and Tecates, soaking in the moment together.

A year later, in the winter of 2022, I struck up a friendship with Alberta outfitter Landen Collings, who encouraged me to pursue a Rocky Mountain Bighorn. Before I knew it, my third hunt was booked.

In mid-September I jumped on a plane to Alberta. The hunt was grueling—12 days of cold, hard miles, with no luck. I returned home disappointed but hopeful. Weeks later, Landen called with an opening. Within two days, I was back in camp. After a long ride and a day snowed in, we finally spotted a shooter ram. On that day, I harvested my Rocky Mountain Bighorn, completing my 3/4 Slam in 2023.

I was determined to finish what I started. After researching outfitters, I booked a Stone sheep hunt with Blair Miller of Stone and Folding Mountain Outfitters for September.

My dad eagerly joined me for this final adventure. Together, we ventured to British Columbia, ready to grind it out. The hunt was a rollercoaster of emotions and beautiful landscapes, countless miles, and close calls. On day 12, it all came together. I harvested my Stone sheep with my dad by my side. Four rams in 4 years, something I never thought was possible.

Sheep hunting is more than a physical challenge; it’s a test of mental toughness and an everyday grind to create the opportunity. I’m endlessly grateful to everyone who supported me on this journey. To anyone dreaming of their own epic adventure, take my advice: “Don’t wait.” Work hard, push limits, and make it happen.

# R Gayle Holman



**Mountains, hunting and hiking have always been my first love.** I have applied for every big game hunting permit in Utah that I was eligible to draw since I was old enough to put in. In 1999, I drew a Desert Bighorn sheep hunt in the North San Rafael unit. With the aid of Brad Turner, Ben Gardner, and LaMont “Blackie” Blackham, I was able to take my first Bighorn sheep.

My Fannin sheep was taken in the Yukon Territory with Pete Jensen Outfitting in August of 2010. I had hunted with the Jensens for ten days in 2009 without success. Though we saw well over 100 sheep, none measured up to my guide’s requirements. The weather was very inclement, raining for ten solid days. The Jensens made it possible for me to return the following year to see if our luck might change, and fortunately it did! This was a horseback hunt and on the first day out, hunting a different area than the previous year, we found a good “shooter”. I took the ram at 175 yards with a Tikka T3 chambered in 300 short mag. I also took a 400-inch plus mountain caribou on this hunt.

We avoided tragedy when a wolf entered the shed where the cape and head were being stored, and dragged it out of the shed where another of Jensen’s guides put the wolf to rest.

My Dall sheep was taken in Alaska in July 2011 in the St. Elias National Park and Preserve with Ultima Thule Outfitters. My guide was Bill. I won the tag sponsored by Ultima Thule Outfitters in a drawing at the Full Curl Society luncheon held at the Western Hunting and Conservation Expo in Salt Lake.

The St. Elias National Park and Preserve is the largest national park in the United States. It is mostly a glacial park. It hosts many Europeans coming for glacial climbing. Access to the lodge is by plane.

The outfitter had three or four planes outfitted with balloon tires and/or skis to transport hunters and climbers to hunting areas or glaciers.

My ram was taken in cliffs directly above the lodge in a very steep area. The ram was spotted in an area impossible for retrieval. After waiting hours for the ram to move to an area more favorable to retrieval, I shot him at 176 yards at a near-vertical trajectory from above. The outfitter would not allow me to personally retrieve the ram. Rather, he employed professional climbers with ropes, helmets, etc. to get the animal out of the cliffs.

My youngest son, Paul, accompanied me on this terrific adventure. My rifle was a Tikka T3 300 short mag.

My Rocky Mountain Bighorn Ram was taken November 9, 2023, on the West Wasatch unit in Utah. I was self-guided but had expert help from friends and locals who were well acquainted with the hunting area. The West Wasatch unit is very near my hometown, and the kill site was about 40 miles from my home. Scouting was mostly done from parking lots in the valley floor, with spotting scopes and binoculars.

Of significant note on this hunt was the fact that I suffered a severe fall on the first day of the hunt, tearing ligaments in my left leg and ankle, making it extremely difficult and painful to walk. I shot my ram in a steep area about 175 yards above me near Rock Canyon with my Tikka T3, 300 short mag. We kept track of the ram for nine days following my fall, hoping we could get him in an acceptable position to harvest. This proved to be an enjoyable time glassing him as he traversed the mountain following his ewes. Much credit goes to friends who assisted in this pursuit.

# Josh Harris



**My journey began in 2007 with a Dall sheep hunt in Alaska, an experience that tested my endurance, mental toughness, and passion for the wild.** This hunt was in the Eastern Alaska Range, a remote, rugged landscape. The hunt was grueling—steep terrain, heavy packs, and unpredictable weather. After 13 days of glassing and stalking, we finally located a group of rams with a legal full curl. On day 14, after two careful and exhausting approaches, I made my shot. The feeling of accomplishment was indescribable.

The journey to my Stone sheep took two years, 34 hunting days, and over 350 miles on horseback. The first year, despite relentless effort we ended the hunt without a harvest. The second year, we pushed deeper into uncharted territory. After another grueling 100 miles on horseback and days of meticulous glassing, we finally located a mature ram. Lying prone at 250 yards, I took the shot, and my long journey came to an emotional end.

Hunting Desert Bighorn sheep in Northern Sonora, Mexico, was an adventure of camaraderie and challenge. We spent days glassing carefully observing rams. After locating a mature ram, we put him to bed, returning at dawn to relocate and begin our stalk. Closing in at 500 yards, I steadied myself, took the shot, and my ram was down. The moment was filled with emotion—high-fives, chest bumps, and shared joy among friends.

The final leg of my Grand Slam, the Rocky Mountain Bighorn, was a dream hunt. After years of anticipation, I stepped into the mountains prepared for a grueling adventure. However, the hunt unfolded unexpectedly quickly. On day one, we spotted a mature ram in an ideal location. We put him to bed and went back in on day two. The wind and terrain worked in our favor, and we executed a careful stalk. At 450 yards, I lined up my shot and sealed the deal. The realization of completing the Grand Slam in such a short yet thrilling hunt was surreal. The beauty of the mountains, the camaraderie, and the culmination of years of preparation made it an unforgettable experience.

Looking back, the Grand Slam was more than harvesting four rams—it was about the experiences, landscapes, and lessons learned along the way. The mountains humbled me, deepened my respect for the wild, and strengthened my spirit. I am profoundly grateful to my family, guides, and friends who supported me through this journey. Their encouragement, wisdom, and camaraderie made this dream a reality.

To those who aspire to achieve the Grand Slam, know that the journey will demand everything from you—but in return, it will give you memories, experiences, and a profound connection to nature that will last a lifetime.

# Kip Slauch



**In 1996, I decided to start my adventures in Bighorn sheep hunting.** I booked a Stone sheep hunt in the Dease Lake area of British Columbia with Ross Elliot. I spent 21 days in a constant downpour rainstorm. After several scouting attempts, we were unsuccessful and found no sheep suitable to take. Needless to say, my first sheep hunt was looking to be my last one for a while.

I was wrong; I jumped right back into sheep hunting in August 1997. I headed to the Turnagain River area of British Columbia to hunt Stone sheep with Eugene Egler of Turnagain Outfitters. This hunt was much different than my first Stone sheep hunt. I was able to take a beautiful Stone ram on day one of the hunt. This left me with a few days to hunt a few other species, including caribou, goat, and moose.

My sheep journey continued the next year. In August 1998, I was fortunate to hunt Dall sheep in the McKenzie Mountains area of the Northwest Territories. I hunted with Dave Dutchik, owner and operator of Redstone Trophy Hunts. After flying into the hunt area, it wasn't until day seven that I was able to find and take a nice Dall ram. This was a full horseback hunt. Don't let anyone tell you it's easier to ride than hike. Even though I had experience with horses, I don't think I have ever been that sore. After taking my ram, I had

a few days of the hunt left, so I spent the time looking for and taking a caribou. This hunt not only produced a nice ram, but also a lifelong friendship with the Dutchik family. I have returned several times to hunt with Redstone Trophy Hunts until Dave's retirement. Dave and I are still friends today.

It was a few years after my last sheep hunt before I headed out again for my next sheep. In March 2010, I got the opportunity to hunt Desert Bighorn in Sonora, Mexico, just north of Hermosillo, Mexico. I hunted with Best of Mexico Hunts. Enrique Salmón and Gary Anderson were my guides for this hunt. It was a late-season hunt, and we drove from Salt Lake all the way to Sonora. That was an interesting experience. There were a lot of rams. I saw multiple good rams before taking the one I got. A friend also came along and hunted as well. We both left with good rams.

About five years later, after 22 years of applying and accumulating 22 points, I drew a Utah Rocky Mountain Bighorn tag. I drew the Rattlesnake unit. I contracted Adam Bronson to help guide me for this final sheep. Some friends and family came along for this hunt. After three days of hunting, I took a nice ram. To be honest, this was probably the most exciting and satisfying sheep hunt of all.



# My Red Rock Ram

Cover Story — By Jana Carter

For years and years my husband, Jason, carefully managed my points portfolio so that someday, when the kids were older and finances better, we would be

able to have some awesome experiences together. Our youngest turned 18 this year, and you may think that was the catalyst for putting my name in the hat to actually



Ram Jana Passed



Another Solid Ram

draw a sheep tag; but, truth be known, I think the application was submitted out of fear. Earlier in the year, I had a pinched nerve that had me acting like I had one foot in the grave. I think all the alarms went off in Jason's head and he thought it was now or never. With 27 sheep points (just shy of enough to guarantee a Kaiparowits East tag), he entered my application, hoping I might get lucky. When the results were posted, we were surprised to see that I'd drawn the tag!

Waiting for the hunt to start was a lot of fun. The whole family was looking forward to helping. As time allowed, the kids and I all took turns going with Jason to scout. Jason cleared his schedule for the opener in September and the month of October to give us plenty of time. You never know what challenges a hunt might bring, and I was glad we had a long season just in case we needed it.

Our first day in the field was a Thursday. Our kids were working, so it was just me and Jason in the unit. We spent that day glassing the higher elevations but saw only one ram late in the day. The ram

was about 2 miles away; he looked old and heavy, but he was too far away to be sure he was worth considering. We would need to get a closer look.

Our good friend, Josh Jensen, came to hunt with us on Friday, so we tasked him with tracking down the ram we'd seen the night before. He hiked into the area where the ram had been and spent the day watching him, but he couldn't get any closer than we had gotten, so we were still unsure of what he was. Meanwhile, Jason and I took to another part of the unit and didn't see a single ram.

On Saturday, a couple of our kids came and we decided that Jason and I would hike to the cliffs above the ram that Josh had watched the day before. Josh would glass from the same location he had previously and the kids would come in from the opposite direction. We hoped by covering the area from all angles, we would be able to get a good look at the ram. Jason and I hiked several miles, across what looked like the surface of the moon, to get close to the ram and his ewes, then sat in 95° weather with no shade for the rest of the day. We



had seen a couple of the ram's ewes early in the morning and watched them disappear beneath a ledge below us. We assumed the ram and the other sheep were under that rim and would eventually come back into view. Josh was on one glassing point and the kids were on another, but no one saw the ram.

Late in the day, Jason and I hiked closer to the rim we thought the ram was residing beneath, but we couldn't see him. Josh left his perch and drove around the mountain and below the cliffs so he could glass up under the rim. We were disappointed to find that the sheep were nowhere to be seen. We had spent all day waiting on sheep that had slipped away.

We returned home late Saturday night and spent Sunday at home as well. Then at 2 a.m. Monday morning, we headed back to the unit. Arriving at our intended location before dawn, we loaded our backpacks and waited for the sun.

As soon as dawn began to break, we started hiking along the base of the towering red rock cliffs, stopping periodically to glass the rolling white sandstone and sage brush flats that stood out from the red desert floor. It was a beautiful morning and the temperature couldn't have been better. With the long hunting season this tag offered, there was no pressure to rush things, so we thoroughly enjoyed every minute. We chatted and hiked and glassed as the temperatures rose. Midday, we stopped in the shade of the massive red walls for lunch and a reprieve from the sun before continuing our search. Although the temperatures soared into the 90s, and we saw only one ram and three ewes in the 10 miles we hiked, it was a nearly perfect day, from dawn to dusk.

Reaching the truck at dark, we decided we'd stay right where we were until morning. After a quick shower under a 5-gallon water jug and a Mountain House dinner, we rolled out our canvas cutters



in the back of the truck and slept soundly. The temperature was ideal, with only the slightest breeze—a great night to be sleeping out.

We woke the next morning, repacked the truck, shared a quick breakfast and drove to the very end of the unit. Having seen sheep in this area during summer scouting, we were slightly baffled by the few sheep the previous day had produced. We questioned whether there was even a legitimate population of sheep in this part of the unit and wondered if it was just too early in the season for them to be in this lower elevation. We set up to glass at a great vantage point and, for half an hour, we saw nothing. Just about the time we were ready to move on, I spotted a lone ewe. We watched her for a bit, expecting others would join her, but eventually, she disappeared over the rise and didn't return. Panning over the vast sandstone hills one more time, we were surprised to spot two other lone ewes. Certain they were not really alone, we concluded that there were plenty of sheep in the area—the terrain just offered a lot of escapement. Suddenly, a gunshot echoed from the hills of the adjacent unit—some lucky soul had found a ram to tag. Satisfied for the time being, we turned the

truck around heading for home to attend to some unavoidable responsibilities that evening.

As we drove back the way we had come, Jason was the first to spot a ram and three ewes racing across the sage brush flat of the neighboring unit. We halted the truck and watched through binoculars as the four sheep came right to us. He was a decent ram and we continued to watch as they crossed the road 300 yards in front of us and slowed their pace as they entered our unit. The hunter who shot must have missed or taken another ram that was with them. After 15 or 20 minutes of observation, we moved on, thinking we may return to this area toward the end of the season, if we had not filled our tag by then.

Wednesday was another beautiful day. We didn't see a lot of sheep in the morning, but did see one pretty good ram coming down off the top of a red sand cliff. He dove off the top coming down what appeared to be an impassibly steep incline. As he moved without hesitation, it was a sight to see, one you wouldn't believe if you hadn't been there. Old and heavy, he was an impressive ram. He joined a group of ewes and a small ram feeding in the bottom.



We were entertained for some time as we watched their interactions. We likely would have taken this ram if it weren't for the significant brooming that had shortened his horns substantially.

Later that afternoon, we saw several sheep, mostly ewes, but also a few small rams. Then, right before dark, as the sunlight was beginning to fade, we saw a ram and a few ewes looking down on us from a big rock butte. He didn't stay around long and, in the dim light, he was difficult to judge. We decided we'd try to find him again in the morning.

That night, as we cooked our Mountain House

dinners, we called our kids via Starlink to give them the daily update. Recounting the events of the day and the potential morning would bring, made for lively conversation. They were planning to come out again on the weekend, so their interest and enthusiasm added a little more excitement to the whole experience. Finally, we rolled out our beds for another night. The weather was beautiful, the moon was full and the stars were abundant—it was awesome!

In the morning, the ram we'd found at dark was right where we'd last seen him. Standing at the top of the butte, we watched as he and his band



of ewes made their way down the steep face to the grassy sand below. He was a good ram. A strong representative of the unit. Not a giant, but a great ram with a good look to him. Jason took some video, and we analyzed him closely, trying to decide if we should take him or keep looking for something bigger. Ultimately, we decided to hold off.

As we left the group behind, Jason sent a video to our son, Shaun, and a couple other friends, including his Epic Outdoors partner, Adam Bronson. We were both second-guessing our decision when Shaun called Jason. "Are you crazy? Go kill him!" he said. "He's a great ram, there are not a lot better in the unit." He was a great ram and I would absolutely shoot him if it were the last day of the hunt—so Shaun was right—why wait? Jason and I discussed it a bit more and decided to go back.

After locating the ram again, we moved to a good location for the shot, but the sheep were partially hidden by some large boulders. We set up and patiently waited, knowing that eventually, they would leave the grassy flat and go back up the rock face they'd come down.

As predicted, it wasn't long before they started up the cliffs. Jason was watching through his spotting scope and I monitored their movement through

the scope of my rifle. After a few ewes began their ascent, the ram followed. He climbed halfway up the face before pausing. He then turned broadside. It took me a minute to get him in the scope, finally getting everything lined up, I gently put pressure on the trigger; just as the gun went off, the ram began to turn. The shot was a solid hit, but rather than penetrating his chest, it took out his front shoulder.

We gathered our gear and went after him. Reaching the top of the hill next to the one he'd traversed, we hiked to the edge and could see him lying in a sandstone depression. We were relieved. With a final shot, he was down! What a great outcome to a terrific experience! I was a little sad to have the hunt end so soon—we'd had such a good time. And while we would have liked to have had the kids there for the harvest, Jason and I had a blast just hunting together. I'm super grateful for a happy ending and for the time Josh Jensen, Shaun and Ashley spent helping us.

It was a terrific experience. Jason is the best there is. I would literally traverse the planet with him. He is so well prepared; he literally thinks of and plans for every unexpected situation. He's beyond competent and made the experience more than just a hunt, it was an awesome adventure!

# A Second Chance ROCKY

By Gordon Tattersall

**As Bruce Capes, a local taxidermist, and I worked our way through the loose shale rock on a very steep hillside, we were racing the sun, trying to get into an ideal shooting position before the morning sun broke over the mountain top and limited our visibility.** The ram that Greg Bird had found the evening before and again that morning stepped out from behind a large boulder that he had been lying behind. The ram was unaware of our presence, with his focus being on the ewes that he was tending. When we finally got into a desirable shooting position, the ram presented himself at 284 yards. As luck would have it, the sun was just breaking over the mountain top, shining directly

into our eyes, making it very difficult to see through spotting scopes and binoculars, let alone a rifle scope. We had lost our race with the sun. Now, there were many questions running through my mind. First of all, how long would I have to wait to get a shot without my visibility being impaired by the sun? Also, would the ram stick around long enough for a clear shot, as well as many other questions waiting to be answered.

My pursuit of a Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep in my home state of Utah began many years ago, and in 2020, I finally drew a Rocky tag. I spent many days and hours scouting and trying to locate one specific ram. However, three weeks prior to opening



day, I had the unfortunate event of stepping wrong while going down some stairs and broke my foot—a nightmare for anyone who draws a highly coveted tag. After a few weeks of therapy, I tried to see if I could hike the hills with a broken foot, but it was not going to happen. As a result, I ended up turning my tag back to the Division of Wildlife. That was a difficult decision to make, but it was definitely the right one.

That brings us to 2025, where I was fortunate to again draw a Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep tag on the Nebo unit.

Prior to the start of the season, I spent many days and hours looking over areas that I was familiar with, as well as scouting new areas where sheep would reside during the rutting season. I also had a lot of help from individuals who knew the area very



well and had been on a number of sheep hunts on the unit.

Opening morning was November 1, and it was unusually warm, just like it had been most of the fall. The ewes and rams had not moved into their typical rutting grounds, and the sheep were spread throughout the unit. However, we did manage to see about a dozen sheep on the opener, with a couple of smaller rams. As the first week progressed, we were experiencing the same luck that we had found on opening day; we continued to see sheep, but the bigger rams had not joined the ewes.

Finally, after a week of hunting, Greg Bird—an individual who has guided many sheep hunters and has worked at preserving and expanding sheep herds in Utah—found a good ram that was rutting a number of ewes. This particular ram would take a lot of work to get into a good shooting position, but it would be doable. Unfortunately, it was getting late in the evening, and the decision was made to try to relocate the ram the following morning. That same evening, Tyler Strong, a local young man who knows the sheep well on the unit, found another possible shooter as well. Access to this ram was excellent, which was good for a 62-year-old guy. But again, it was getting too late in the evening to

make a play on this ram. As a result, we had two rams to consider chasing on the next day's hunt.

The next morning proved to be very eventful. Greg decided to go and look for the ram that he had found the previous evening, and I went to see if I could find the ram Tyler had seen the night before. As luck would have it, I was able to find the ram right away, but he had moved up the mountain close to a mile. As we were watching this ram, I received word from Greg that he had found the ram that he had seen the night before and that it was 400-500 yards lower on the mountain. Considering where both rams were located, we decided to go back, meet up with Greg, and pursue that ram.

After making a game plan, Bruce and I started pursuing the ram while my good friends stayed back, watching the event unfold. That takes us back to the beginning of the article.

Bruce and I worked ourselves into a great shooting position, but again, the sun was shining directly into our eyes, and all we could do was wait. The waiting seemed like an eternity, but it was actually only a few minutes, and it was long enough for the sun to reach a point where we could make a play on the ram. A few moments later, I had the ram in



my sights with the crosshairs just behind his front shoulder. I gently squeezed the trigger, and the sheep was down. It was an awesome and humbling experience. Not only had I harvested my fourth sheep, but it was a ram in my home state.

I want to thank all of the individuals who helped me on this hunt and made this experience possible

(Ben Peay, Bruce Capes, Greg Bird, Tyler Strong, Mike Sperry, Brett Hendricks, Owen Boyer, Greg King, Trevor King, and Marc Bingham). I would also like to thank the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, and the Utah Division of Wildlife for helping make this sheep hunt an awesome experience.

# The Year of the Ram

By Kole Koncar

**“A sheep hunter is branded by the mountains he climbs, the grueling days where success seems impossible, and by the moments he fights the overpowering urge to quit.”** —Unknown

I’ve been fortunate to go on many amazing hunting adventures, but none have compared to my 2025 Desert Sheep hunt. It was my Year of the Ram.

My hunt really started last March. I had enough bonus points to draw several Desert sheep units in Utah, so I called my old friend Travis Jenson to discuss the options. Travis, President of the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation, asked me what I wanted out of this hunt, and after nearly 30 years of dreaming about it, I was fairly specific. First and foremost, I wanted

an old ram. I didn’t care about size or score—just an old, battle-hardened, beat-up, dominant ram with most of his life in the rear-view mirror. Next, I told Travis I didn’t want an easy hunt. I wanted to challenge myself mentally and physically. He asked, “How hard?” I said, “Hard. Nothing easy. I owe it to myself and all the sheep hunters before me to really have to work for this.” Without hesitation, he said, “Put in for the Dirty Devil. It’s one of the most scenic places you’ll ever see, and you will work your tail off for a sheep.” Perfect. I put in for the draw. I knew I should draw the tag, but for some extra luck, after 20+ years of driving Chevy trucks, I went out and bought a Ram.

On May 15th I received an email from the state saying



I was successful. After texting family and friends, I got a message from my daughter Sid giving me some of the best advice anyone has ever given me: “Fall in love with the process. Focus on the amazing journey and don’t become obsessed with the end goal.” Thanks, Sid—you really helped me keep this adventure in perspective.

I exercise nearly every day, so I’m in better shape than most 53-year-olds, but I was nowhere near the sheep shape I needed to be. I immediately added hiking the trails above my house in Draper with a 30-pound vest twice a week and planned long, hard hikes to summit Nebo, Pfeifferhorn, Box Elder, and finally Lone Peak just a few weeks before the hunt. I really enjoyed my training sessions. I only took a

couple of days off and completely drove my wife crazy by bringing the 30-pound vest everywhere we went.

The hunt opened on September 13th, and I felt as ready as I could be. I’d made a couple of trips down beforehand, but my plan was to let it cool off a bit and focus my hunting mid-October through the end of the hunt on November 10th. I was joined on my first trip by my wife Carrie and my daughter Sidnie. I wouldn’t consider them big hunters, but they’re always up for an outdoor adventure and have taken some decent animals over the years. It was mostly a “get to know the area” trip, but the scenery, hiking, and camping were amazing.



My next trip was planned as a 10-day hunt with various friends and family joining at different times. Unfortunately, due to heavy October rain, we couldn't cross the Dirty Devil River, which limited where we could hunt. I was really excited to hunt with my son Kole ("Beef"), who had been in Michigan for school and football for the past five years, and we hadn't hunted together since 2019 when he drew a Paunsaugunt management deer tag. At the front end of this trip, I was joined by my wife and good friends Rod Cobia, Travis Jenson, and Jake Ward. Jake spotted the first ram I truly passed on. He was a beautiful ram, and Travis estimated him at 6 years old. Carrie wasn't thrilled when I said I wanted an older ram—she's seen me pass too many animals over the years, and sometimes it has bitten me. I don't pass animals because I want to kill the

biggest one on the unit; I just love being in the field and don't want the hunt to end.

The second half of the trip I was joined by my cousin Dave, his son Nicky, Sid, Beef, and my youngest, Kash. Dave is four days older than I am, and we've been best buddies since birth. (A story for another day, but we even married sisters.) Nicky is my hiking buddy who always pushes me to keep up. Kash and I have always had a special connection through hunting. We're always looking to get out and chase something around.

It was a tough 10 days. I really expected to see more sheep. Sheep hunting is a mind game; going days without seeing sheep will beat you up mentally. We passed a couple of young rams and even saw a shooter, but we kept getting rimmed out and



couldn't get to him. It happened a few times during the hunt, but sheep are amazing animals and how they get to certain places is mind-blowing.

My third and final hunt would be the last 11 days of the season. I was joined by my nephew Nate Taylor, Dean Gernaat, Dave, Nicky, Beef, Kash, Joe Long, and Wade Orton. The first few days were slow, but Nate brought his Starlink, so we enjoyed some amazing World Series games. We hiked 15 miles on Game 7 day, so we went to bed without watching the extra innings (wimps!). That day we passed a decent ram I aged at 6, and we saw a group of ewes with a banana head, so we planned to return in a few days in case a mature ram joined them.

Tuesday, November 4th, will be a day I'll never forget. Maybe it was the time change messing with

me, but I was sure Nate, Beef, and I could hike into the bottom of a canyon and out before dark. With Dave, Kash, and Dean glassing above us, off we went. It was the first (and only) time I've walked a beaver wash—insane. It's like hunting Desert sheep at a duck club. We pushed for miles through nine-foot-tall wetlands. At one point it took us 54 minutes to hike one mile. We passed a small ram, but darkness was coming fast, and I was getting nervous. We found a canyon with trees—rare for the unit—and lots of deadfall, so I told Nate we'd better sleep there. He wasn't thrilled at first, but he realized how dangerous it would be to hike out in the dark. I'm not sure what bothered me more: the fresh lion tracks near camp or the giant green sand spider that came out as we built the fire. Beef had two warm beers in his pack, so we shared those and

some jerky—quite the bonding moment. I kept the fire going all night, and we hiked out in the morning. The hike out was sketchy at best, so I'm glad we waited for daylight. We were beat (my sleep score was 20), so we just glassed the rest of the day and saw no sheep.

The plan was to go big on Thursday, November 6th—hunt day 20 for me. It would be a 20+ mile day, heading past the ewe group from earlier and into the next canyon. Dave and Wade would glass in front of us from across the canyon, 2+ miles away. Nate, Beef, Kash, and I left the side-by-side around 5:45 a.m. Two hours later, Dave called and said there were three rams fighting over four ewes ahead of us: one monster ram, one nice ram, and one average ram. Dave and Wade watched them crash into each other, hearing the “crack” seconds later. They saw 23 sheep that day, and both said it was the most memorable day they've ever had in the field.

To Dave, it looked like we should be able to reach the rams quickly, but he didn't realize it was miles away and up 1,000 vertical feet, down 1,000, repeat. By the time we got to where the rams had been, it was almost noon, and Dave hadn't seen them in a few hours. We glassed down the canyons and found a ewe with the average ram. The others had to be close. Ten minutes later, a ewe stepped out below me, then another, then another—and then, wow. A giant ram. A top-end ram for this unit. An amazing animal.

I climbed onto a rock, found him in my scope, and waited. It was a steep but manageable shot. The ewes were broadside, but he faced me forever. Then he turned broadside—but behind a rock, with only his enormous horns visible. My adrenaline was off the charts. Finally, he stepped out. Beef called out, “171 yards,” and I squeezed the trigger. Dave looked at his watch: 12:27 p.m.

My heart sank. I shot over him. I couldn't believe it. The boys said they'd never seen me like that. I had to step away and gather myself. It was the lowest point of my hunting career. After 20 days, this was the first ram I truly wanted, and I was certain my chance was gone.

In 2014, when Nate drew a Pahvant elk tag, he missed a giant bull. I told him, “Come on, let's go find another one.” Now he said it back to me. He ended up killing a smaller but beautiful 360” bull that he loves. A special thanks to Nate for coming down from Boise to help me on my hunt. He really pushed me hard and having him there meant a lot.

I told Nate we should head back to rest up for the next day. Half-joking I said, “You may have to carry

me—my legs are Jell-O.” Literally one second later Dave called: he spotted a really nice ram in a box canyon to the east. “He looks old and beat up like you want.” I figured he must have joined the ewe group from earlier. I hadn't seen the ram myself, just a ewe and the young ram, but I trusted Dave.

We hiked toward them. At 2,000 yards out, a ewe busted us—those eyes are unreal—so we hid in the shade for 15 minutes and waited for her to feed again. Then we dropped 1,000 feet and climbed straight up 1,000 on noisy shale. I was sure they'd be gone, but if they weren't, they couldn't escape that box canyon.

We reached the plateau and peeked over. No sheep. We climbed up fully and I set up on my sticks. Ten minutes passed. Nothing. Then I caught movement to my right—sheep. Ewe, ewe, banana head... holy crap—old ram. Crack. I fired. Dave looked at his watch: 4:27 p.m.

Ram down!

In exactly four hours, I went from the lowest point of my hunting career to the highest. When we reached the ram, I turned into an emotional wreck. After nearly 30 years of dreaming, the training, the scouting, the family and friends—I think it all came out. I cried for at least 15 minutes.

The ram was exactly what I wanted: a tough old sucker beat to hell. Broomed 3-4 inches, a hammered nose, big chunks missing from his horns. I aged him at 10. I couldn't have been happier. Sometimes things really do happen for reasons beyond our control.

We began the 8-mile pack-out—exhausted but relieved we didn't have to come back the next day. Nate, Beef, and Kash carried most of the weight. Dave met us at the side-by-side with water. It was nearly midnight when we reached camp, where Travis and Beef's girlfriend Jules were waiting. Travis was like a kid in a candy store, examining the ram and giving us a sheep education. He aged my ram at 11. Nate opened a bottle of Blanton's Single Barrel, and we sat around the fire toasting the beautiful yellow-horned sheep and laughing about the crazy hunt.

Looking back, I always think of something Travis said around the campfire: “Kole, you got the full experience. Most people only dream of experiencing what you just did.”

I certainly did—and I wouldn't change a thing.

Thank you to everyone who helped me fulfill my dream of hunting wild sheep. I love all you crazies very much.



# A ONCE IN A LIFETIME

Sage Pendleton

# Start



**UNSUCCESSFUL.** That's a word that is all too familiar to most of us who hunt out here in the West. Years and years of applications usually come back with the same disappointing yet expected answer. Someone out there did get lucky, though, and our daughter, Sage, seems to have the best luck in our family.

After turning 12 in January this year, she finally had the opportunity to apply in our home state of Utah, and that first opportunity came at Hunt Expo in Salt Lake. Like every year, we all picked the \$5 hunts that we were most interested in which included all the once-in-a-lifetime species. We enjoyed the expo and went on with our normal busy lives but everything changed when those draw results came out a week later.

I found myself at home working when I got a call from my wife. She was very emotional and could hardly speak. I tried to calm her down and I immediately thought she had been in some kind of car accident and I was trying to figure out what was going on. "Have you checked the Expo draw results?" she gasped. Dumbfounded, I said I hadn't even thought about them. "You need to check them!" Now my heart rate picked up as obviously there was something crazy on that list that she had seen. I scrolled and scrolled and recognized a few names, and then I saw it. Sage Pendleton - Desert Bighorn Sheep! Now I understood her dramatics and couldn't believe what I was seeing. Sage had just drawn her Utah Desert Bighorn Sheep tag on the very first application she had ever submitted in



Utah. She has never had the privilege to open up an email to read the word UNSUCCESSFUL yet and had a coveted sheep tag in her pocket!

Big plans were made and lots of research happened in the first months afterwards. We immediately started making trips out to the unit that we knew almost nothing about. We covered all the main road access points and were even able to see several ewes and lambs while driving around in the summer. We never saw a ram though and as the hunt approached we had a very good plan to slow play the first month and wait for the rut to get going before we were to get too serious about shooting a ram. However, our carefully thought-out hunt itinerary didn't go as planned.

Opening weekend, we found ourselves still exploring and covering new roads and country that we hadn't been in. Day 1, we got hammered by hail and rain and had to deal with flash floods and washed out roads. We were able to see our first rams of the year though and on Day 2 we hiked into a spot and had an incredible up close encounter with a mature ram at 80 yards. Seeing he was not a shooter for opening week she easily passed and enjoyed the experience.

Day 3 found us on a new road in the middle of the day and I stopped the side-by-side at an intersection to look at the map. "There's some sheep!" my wife exclaimed and sure enough we had a small band of rams there in front of us. At quick glance I immediately saw one ram in particular had



very good mass. After discussing it for 20 minutes or so, we decided to hike up and follow the rams to get a better look at them and get a frontal view of the heavy ram. A mile later we stood on the edge of a slot canyon with no sheep in sight. I kept moving along the edge to see if I could spot tracks in the sand below when I bumped the sheep. We watched them run up the opposite side of the canyon and stand on the edge. We got our first look at the heavy ram and he was very majestic looking. He stood out not just in horn size but body size and the other rams looked to him to let them know what to do. When he decided to leave, they all left.

Sage and I sat there on the rocks for over an hour contemplating, talking, crying in frustration, confused on what to do. She loved the look of that ram and obviously he was mature and a trophy but she didn't want to shoot him because she didn't want the hunt to be over. We had talked about hunting for weeks and looking over lots of rams and watching the rut happen and all of that and here we were on day 3 with a beautiful ram in front of us and we didn't know what to do. It was a proud Dad moment for me because I could tell that the hunt meant more than the kill to her. She's always made me proud in her decision making when it comes to



hunting but in this moment I had to break the ice. I told her that it was ok to shoot early in a hunt and we could still come back out and help our friend on his hunt and make it a challenge to try and find a bigger ram than this. I explained that hunting is never a guarantee that you'll get the biggest animal on the unit but in the end "You will never not be happy with this ram." With that reassurance, we crossed the canyon to try and pick up their tracks to begin following them again.

Tracking and still-hunting are special skills that take lots of patience and we got a full taste of it all as we tracked them slowly for over 4 miles. They never bedded, just kept meandering and at one point we saw one ram track separate from the others and go down a canyon. We stayed with the group hoping the odds would be in our favor and at last light we put our eyes on them again from outside shooting distance. The ram stood there and posed for us as the light faded to nothing in my spotting scope and we started the hike back to the road.

We decided to try and find him again in the morning and as luck would have it, they were in the same area the next morning. Not knowing how they would react to us, we played the wind and our movement very carefully and inched our way closer. We got

caught in an open flat as they fed towards us and spent hours laying there looking up at the sheep bedded 200 yards from us. Due to grasses and terrain, we couldn't get a shot. When they got up, they came towards us but the struggles continued with getting a solid rest and clear lane of shooting. They came within bow range and after seeing our blatant movements, they decided to take off. Once they dropped into the canyon, we grabbed our gear and headed up to the top of the ridge to see where they would come out. Luckily they popped out on the other side and looked back at us. Sage finally had a clear lane to lay down and shoot across while I set up the scope to record. Once he gave her a clear opportunity, it was all over for him.

I live for moments like this to share my passion for hunting and nature with my family. We have definitely been blessed with experiences that we work hard for and don't take for granted. Grandpa even made the hike out to us with some of our kids and we had the whole family there for the recovery. I'm grateful for my wife and kids and that we can do all of these things as a family. I know that Sage will remember this hunt for the next 70+ years and I hope that luck is on our side each and every year in getting tags, hunts, and trips booked to spend quality family time in the outdoors.

# HIGHS AND LOWS OF A SHEEP HUNT

By Bill Buridge



**One of the biggest days every year is putting in my application for Utah's big game hunts.** Each year, I labor over which units to apply for. It was a little easier to apply this year because I couldn't apply for a limited entry deer tag since I drew a Paunsaugunt tag last year. So, I applied for a limited entry elk tag, a Zion deer tag (that is automatic with my lifetime license), and a Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep tag for the Oak Creek Fillmore unit, which I can remember people saying was not too difficult for harvesting a ram. Toward the end of May, we all started checking our credit cards to see if there had been any charges by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR). One by one, my sons Bill and Brian, and I painstakingly and slowly reviewed our emails from the DWR. My son Bill in Virginia was the first; no luck. Brian was next with the same result.

Of the "Three Amigos", I was the last to check. I slowly looked at my results and, not too surprisingly, Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep-UNSUCCESSFUL. Limited entry elk, the same. I was disappointed primarily because at the age of 82, my future years of being able to hunt a Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep are probably limited.

Summer was good, especially with the rebound in the kokanee salmon population and improved fishing success at Flaming Gorge, where we spend many of our summer months. However, I would miss the fishing for most of August since my wife and I were going on a trip to Rome and spending three weeks on a cruise ship in the Mediterranean Sea; my wife's dream of a lifetime. While on the cruise ship one evening upon returning to our room, I looked at

my phone and saw a voicemail from the Utah DWR. The voicemail said that if I wanted a Bighorn sheep tag for the Oak Creek-Fillmore Unit to notify them by August 25th. My first thought was that it was a prank from one of my buddies. I called the DWR and it was legit. I was thousands of miles from Utah in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea with no land in sight and I got a once-in-a-lifetime coveted tag for a Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep. Someone turned it in and I was next in line. I was lucky to see that message since my friends and family will tell you that I don't check my phone messages regularly.

We returned to our Ogden home from our trip in late August and all I could think about was my sheep hunt. I was euphoric about hunting a "Rocky". The October 4th season opener did not leave me too much time to prepare. One of the first things I did was purchase a new rifle scope with a red dot reticle to help my aging eyes. My 6.5 Creedmoor was sighted in at about two inches high at 100 yards and I was placing bullets inside each other at the range. I was walking and hiking several miles a day, but I was concerned about not being able to handle the steep mountains the Oak Creeks are known for. I also pride myself on being in good physical condition, but on February 5th, 2019, that all changed. That fateful day while alone in Manila, Utah, a building that was under construction blew over during a windstorm landing on top of me. After an ambulance ride to Rock Springs, WY, a Life-Flight to the University of Utah hospital, and having to be brought back to life several times, the University of Utah Medical Center became my home. My back had been broken in two places, my femur broken, my ribs crushed, my lungs collapsed, and my liver lacerated. I was released in a wheelchair a little over a month later. Fortunately, I am still able to enjoy all my outdoor pursuits with just a few physical limitations. At this point, I don't know if my aches and pains are due to my accident or just the aging process an 82-year-old experiences.

Even though I spent about seven years as the public lands representative on Utah's Board of Big Game Control touring every nook and cranny of Utah, I was not familiar with the Fillmore-Oak Creek unit other than its reputation as being physically tough. One year I applied there for a limited entry mule deer buck tag but was not drawn; everyone told me

that I was fortunate that I didn't draw because of its rough country. I never applied there again, until now. I needed to learn more about the country I would be hunting, so about three weeks before the hunt, I drove down to the unit to familiarize myself with the area. A friend went with me because my wife did not want me to go alone. We arrived at the town of Oak Creek at first light. We drove up the canyon anxiously glassing and scouring the lower slopes for sheep. We went to the top of Oak Creek

Canyon as far as we could, only seeing a few does and fawns but no sheep. We drove several side roads with similar results. We talked to several campers and individuals scouting for deer, and when asking them about sheep, their responses were not encouraging. We thought that perhaps driving down the canyon would give us a better vantage, but we saw no sheep. Near the bottom of the

canyon, we saw a young man glassing the hillside with a spotting scope. I wasn't sure how he would react when I infringed on his space and asked, "What are you seeing?" To my surprise and with lots of excitement in his voice, he responded, "This is terrific!" as he was watching a small group of Bighorns near the top of the canyon slopes. I couldn't see them in my binoculars or spotting scope; I could barely see them through his. He showed us another small group further up the canyon. They were also in a very remote, steep, inaccessible location. The young man then accompanied us up to the mouth of Cascade Canyon where we glassed for an hour, spotting a small group of sheep at the very top of the canyon. All three of us pondered how we could access those sheep, and we concluded that maybe the best idea was to find a way to gain elevation other than hiking up from the bottom. When I returned to Ogden, I was pretty bummed, wondering about my physical ability to harvest a ram in the daunting ruggedness of the Oak Creek unit.

Time is a great healer. A few days later my doldrums and spirits were transformed into enthusiastic optimism. I was going to spend a day scouting with my son, Brian. Sheep hunters comprise a wonderful fraternity. We contacted everyone we could think of for advice from taxidermists and an outfitter, Forest Service wildland firefighters, and especially DWR biologists and conservation officers. They were all extremely helpful and perhaps even more

"If the DWR told you that you could turn your tag back in, would you?' Without any hesitation, I said, "Definitely."



important, encouraging. Our “hot tip” was to glass from a fairly high elevation site on the north side of the canyon. At first light, we traveled to that location with my son’s UTV and glassed for several hours but spotted no sheep. Going back down, we ran into a group of muzzleloader deer hunters; it was their last day, and they hadn’t shot a deer, and the only sheep they saw had been a month ago. Again, my euphoria began to wane. We ran into more deer hunters and they said they hadn’t seen many sheep but did watch a mature ram on the east side of the Oak Creek range. After talking to them, we went up the Fools Creek Road to its end and up Dry Fork spending considerable time glassing without seeing any sheep. The country looked great but again, no sheep. We went back to Ogden not feeling very optimistic, especially with the October 4th season opener quickly approaching.

A few more calls after getting back home, especially to the DWR, provided some encouragement. They said we are in the right places and to spend as much time as possible “behind the glass”. Others said that if you are patient, some rams will often come down to the bottom of the canyon to water. Northern Utah received record rains both on October 3rd and on October 4th, the season opener. We decided to skip the opener and instead leave Ogden early on Sunday the 5th prepared to spend at least four days hunting. My other son Bill would be driving to Utah from Virginia to spend the second week with us. We decided to stay in a motel in Delta (15-20 minutes away) since we also wanted to watch the Phillies and Dodgers play in the postseason playoffs.

Brian and I took off early Sunday with all of our gear, lots of food, and the UTV. We were optimistic because we were going to check out Cow Canyon where the deer hunters had previously seen a pretty decent ram on the east side of the Oak Creeks. The Oak Creeks received some rain, but nothing like the monsoonal moisture we received in Ogden. We had driven a long way across some sagebrush flats before reaching the Oak Creek foothills. We unloaded the UTV and headed up Cow Canyon. The road was getting rougher and rockier the further up we went; however, the upper basin looked promising. When we couldn’t go any further, we hiked up to a ridgeline and glassed for about an hour. We tried hiking further up the canyon but couldn’t make it very far due to a rock wall and waterfall. We decided to head back to Oak City and glass the western side before darkness set in.

When we got to Oak City, we still had adequate light to glass the country above Cascade Spring and we were able to find some sheep up high. But again, the challenge would be “How are we going to get up there?” Driving up Oak Canyon in diminishing light, Brian spotted a decent ram right on the skyline. I was excited; finally, I was able to get a good look at a ram with binoculars. Knowing it was going to be a tough hike to get to that ram, we formulated a plan to start hiking first thing in the morning. Once again, my spirits were lifted even though the Dodgers beat the Phillies and our traditional first meal of fried chicken was terrible (there was enough breading on that bucket of soggy chicken to coat a hundred chickens).

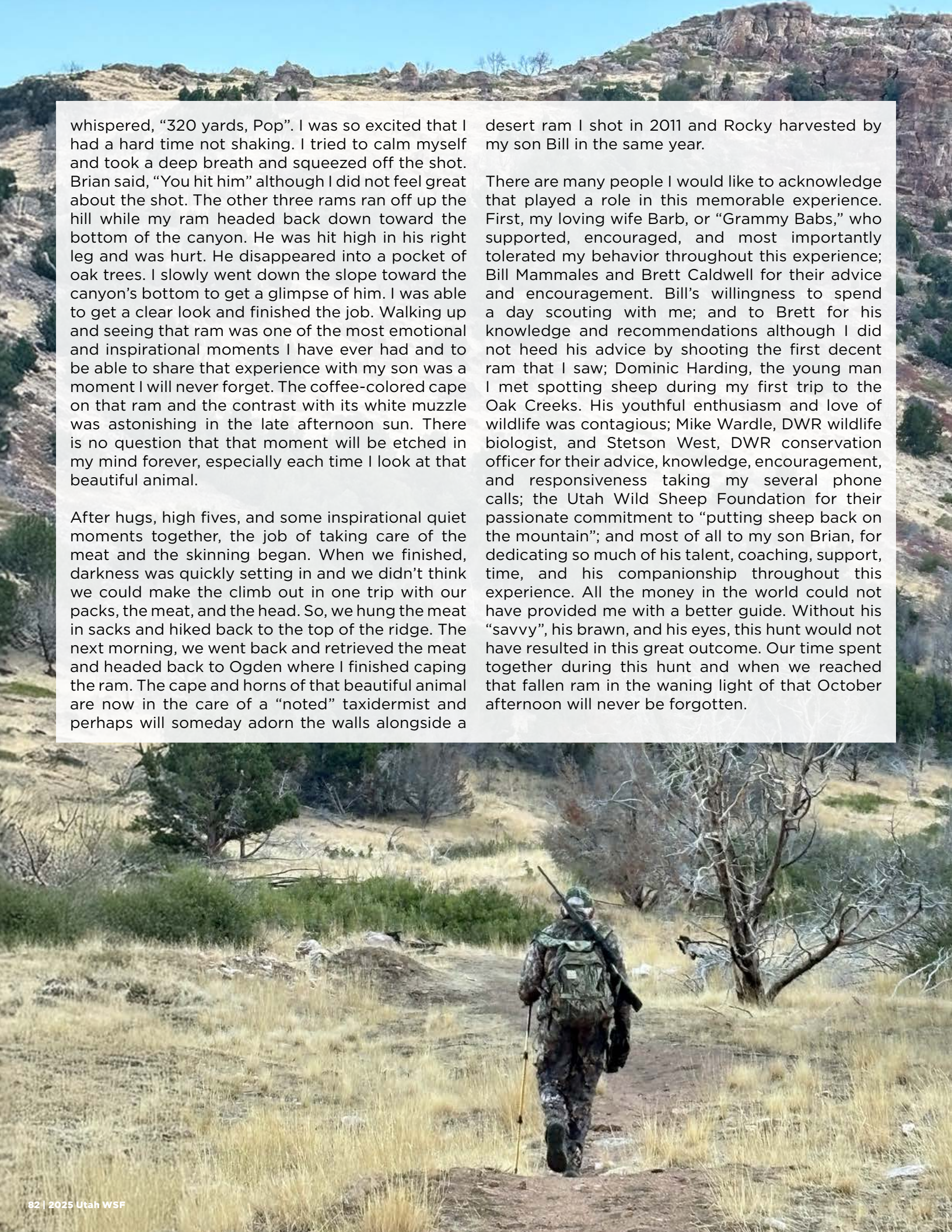


As planned, at first light the next morning we began our climb. After almost two hours of hiking, we took a break. My son Brian, who has spent most of his career as a wildland firefighter with the US Forest Service, continued up the mountain to see if he could spot the ram we saw the previous night. He returned after about an hour and a half and said that we were still a long way from where we saw that ram the previous night. Also, he did not see any sign of sheep. He suggested we turn around and head back to the truck where we relaxed, ate some lunch, and pondered our next move. Quite frankly, that climb was tough on my old broken body.

It is amazing how some food and rest can revitalize a person mentally and physically. Our next move was to take the UTV up to the same high vantage point where we spent considerable time looking during one of our scouting trips. It was a very clear afternoon with a slight breeze and a spectacular vista with the sun shining on Fools Peak. We glassed for several hours without seeing any sheep. Even if we spotted sheep, accessing them would likely be difficult considering the country we were glassing. Although it was emphasized by everyone that I needed to spend as much time glassing as possible, my patience was running out. I was ready to do

something else. About that time, Brian approached me and said, "If the DWR told you that you could turn your tag back in, would you?" Without any hesitation, I said, "Definitely." Not only because the hunting was difficult, but because I was starting to feel bad about keeping my son Brian away from his family for who knows how long and my entire family was insistent that I not hunt alone. Also, my other son Bill was driving all the way out from Virginia to hunt with us the second week and I was pretty pessimistic about the prospects of success. Although it was only two days into the hunt, I was beginning to feel some pressure.

We were done glassing at that spot so we put the spotting scopes away and took off down the ridge feeling somewhat stymied. Five days of scouting and hunting under my belt and not seeing an accessible ram. After going less than 50 yards, my son excitedly indicated there were four rams below us in the bottom of the canyon. They were starting to make their way up the opposite side. I was so excited that I momentarily forgot my rifle. Finally, with rifle and tripod, I got into a shooting position. I had some difficulty spotting them right away; however, when I finally found them, we both agreed that the last ram of the bunch was the biggest. Brian

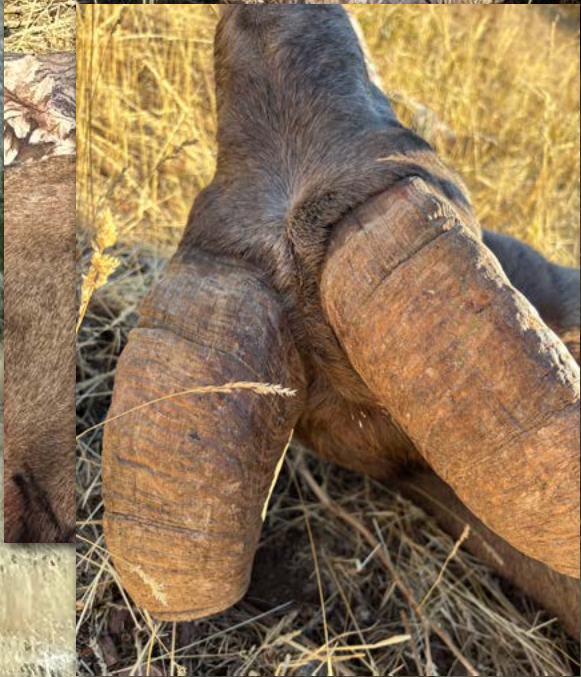
A hiker in camouflage gear is walking away on a dirt trail in a desert landscape. The hiker is carrying a large backpack and a rifle. The trail is surrounded by dry grass and sparse trees. In the background, there are rocky hills under a clear blue sky.

whispered, “320 yards, Pop”. I was so excited that I had a hard time not shaking. I tried to calm myself and took a deep breath and squeezed off the shot. Brian said, “You hit him” although I did not feel great about the shot. The other three rams ran off up the hill while my ram headed back down toward the bottom of the canyon. He was hit high in his right leg and was hurt. He disappeared into a pocket of oak trees. I slowly went down the slope toward the canyon’s bottom to get a glimpse of him. I was able to get a clear look and finished the job. Walking up and seeing that ram was one of the most emotional and inspirational moments I have ever had and to be able to share that experience with my son was a moment I will never forget. The coffee-colored cape on that ram and the contrast with its white muzzle was astonishing in the late afternoon sun. There is no question that that moment will be etched in my mind forever, especially each time I look at that beautiful animal.

After hugs, high fives, and some inspirational quiet moments together, the job of taking care of the meat and the skinning began. When we finished, darkness was quickly setting in and we didn’t think we could make the climb out in one trip with our packs, the meat, and the head. So, we hung the meat in sacks and hiked back to the top of the ridge. The next morning, we went back and retrieved the meat and headed back to Ogden where I finished caping the ram. The cape and horns of that beautiful animal are now in the care of a “noted” taxidermist and perhaps will someday adorn the walls alongside a

desert ram I shot in 2011 and Rocky harvested by my son Bill in the same year.

There are many people I would like to acknowledge that played a role in this memorable experience. First, my loving wife Barb, or “Grammy Babs,” who supported, encouraged, and most importantly tolerated my behavior throughout this experience; Bill Mammals and Brett Caldwell for their advice and encouragement. Bill’s willingness to spend a day scouting with me; and to Brett for his knowledge and recommendations although I did not heed his advice by shooting the first decent ram that I saw; Dominic Harding, the young man I met spotting sheep during my first trip to the Oak Creeks. His youthful enthusiasm and love of wildlife was contagious; Mike Wardle, DWR wildlife biologist, and Stetson West, DWR conservation officer for their advice, knowledge, encouragement, and responsiveness taking my several phone calls; the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation for their passionate commitment to “putting sheep back on the mountain”; and most of all to my son Brian, for dedicating so much of his talent, coaching, support, time, and his companionship throughout this experience. All the money in the world could not have provided me with a better guide. Without his “savvy”, his brawn, and his eyes, this hunt would not have resulted in this great outcome. Our time spent together during this hunt and when we reached that fallen ram in the waning light of that October afternoon will never be forgotten.



# Trophy Takers

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In each issue of Utah Wild Sheep Foundation Magazine, the Utah WSF highlights its members' success on the mountain. In many ways, these photos are what results from the countless hours and financial donations of Bighorn sheep conservationists who contribute to Utah's growing Bighorn sheep populations.

Congratulations to all Utah WSF members who have recently taken sheep. We look forward to your success in the year to come.

If you have photos of a successful sheep hunt in Utah or elsewhere, you can submit them to us via email at [tjenson@xmission.com](mailto:tjenson@xmission.com).

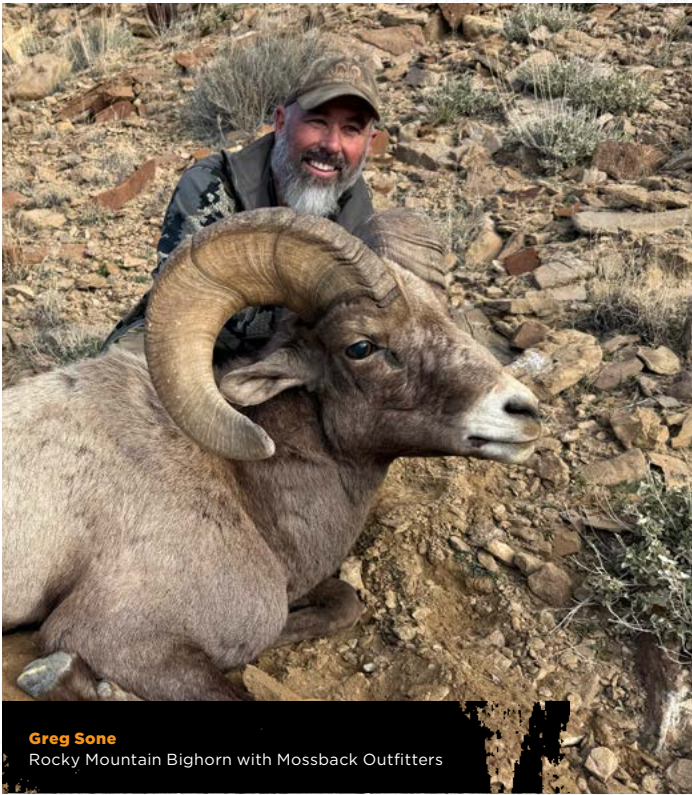
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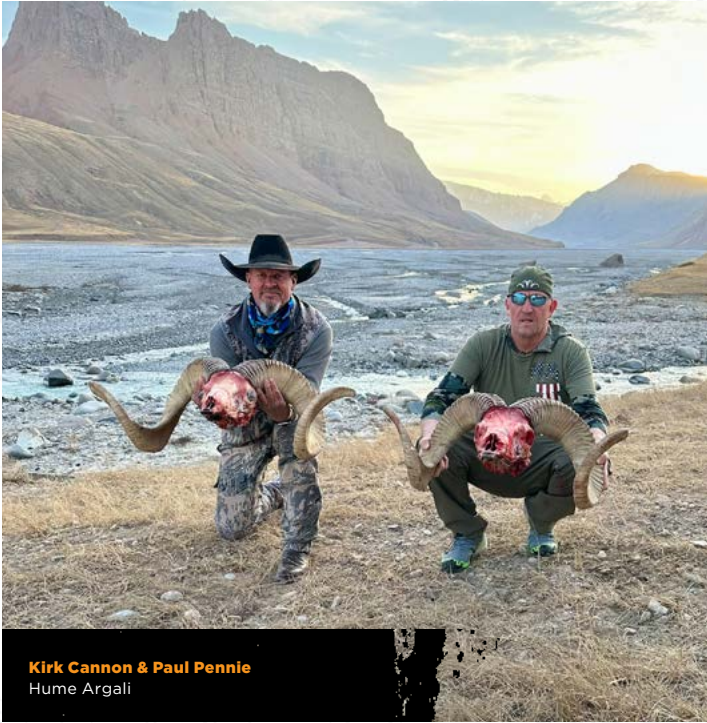
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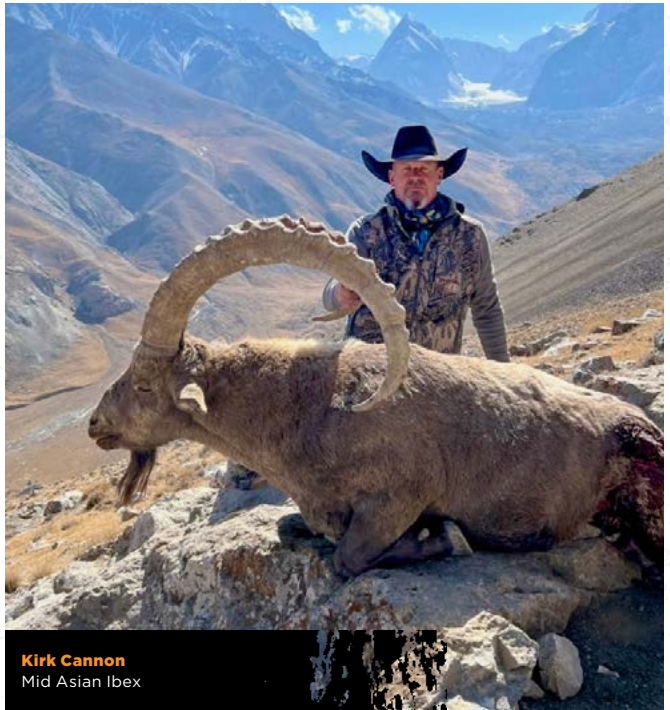
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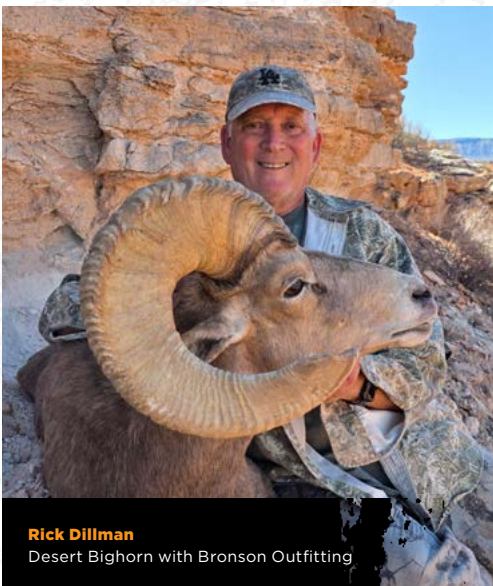
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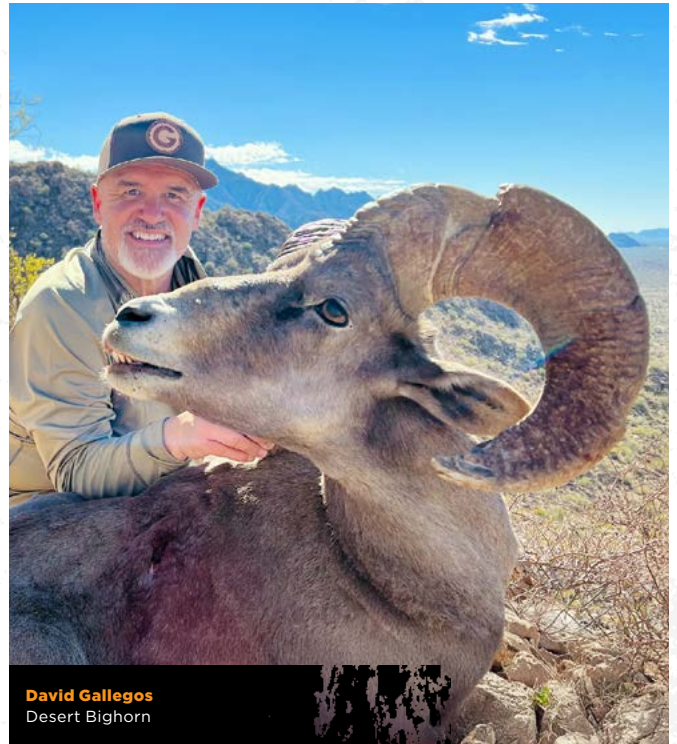
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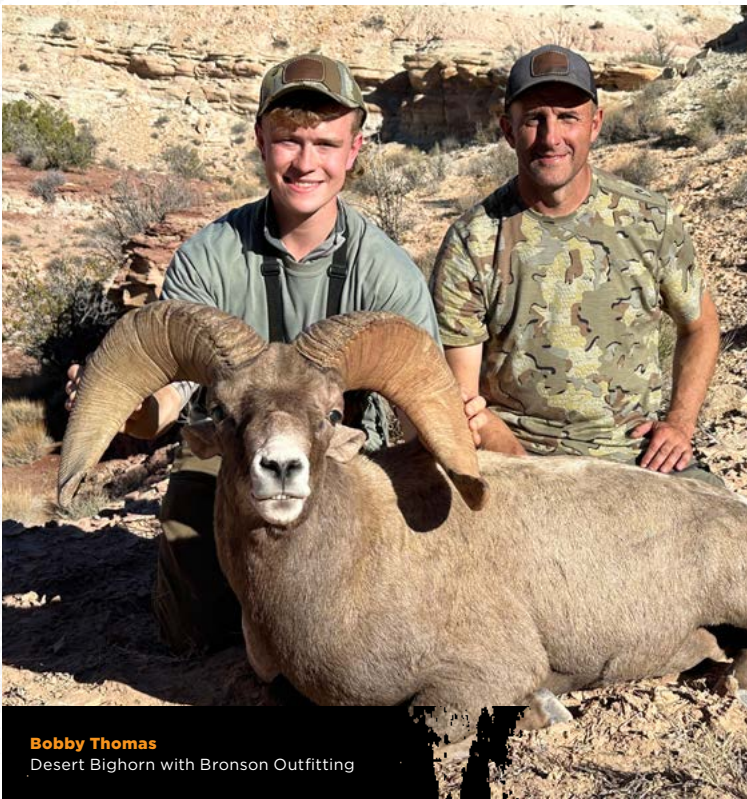
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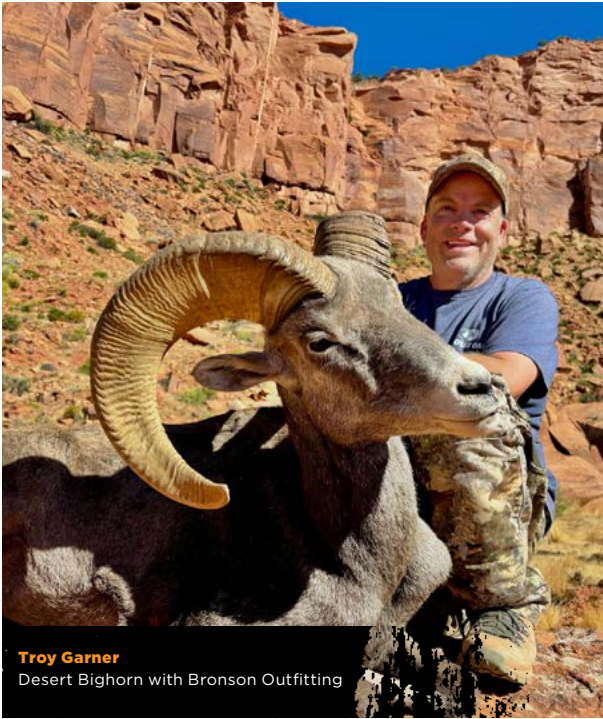
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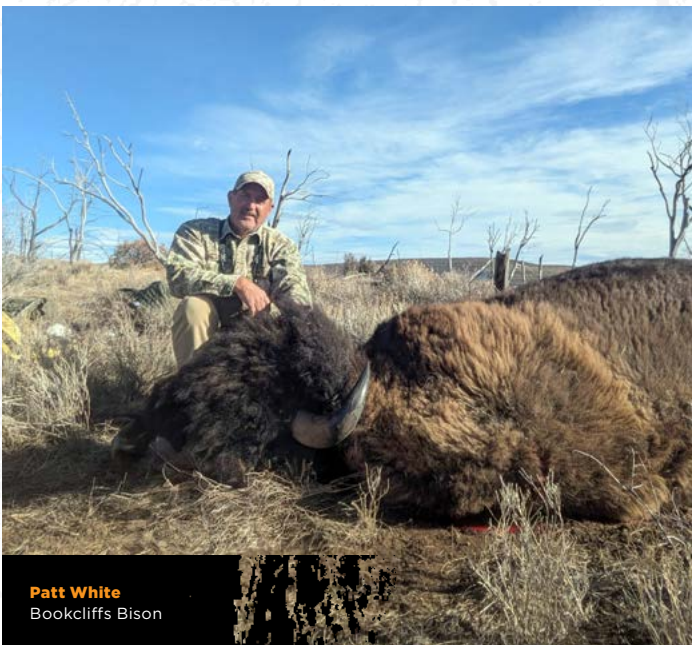
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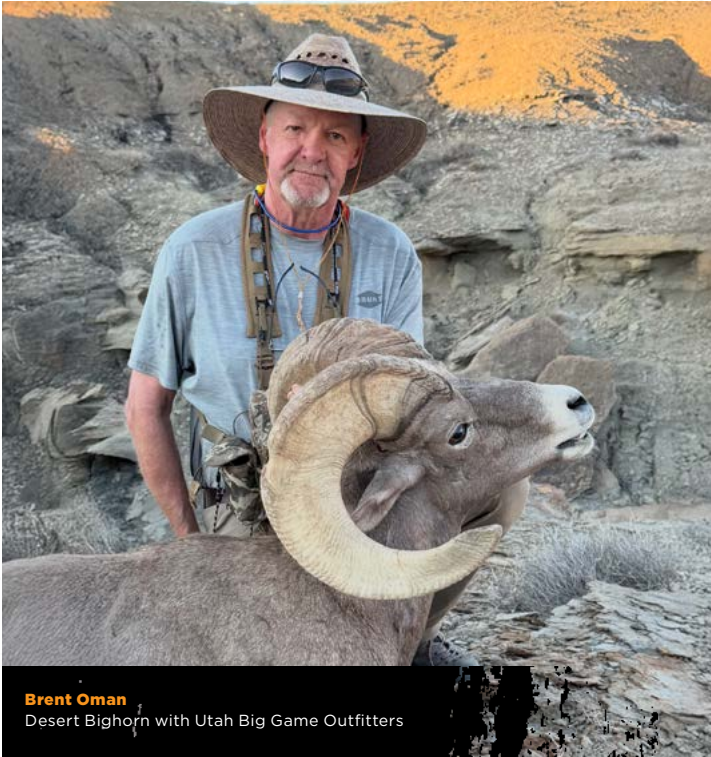
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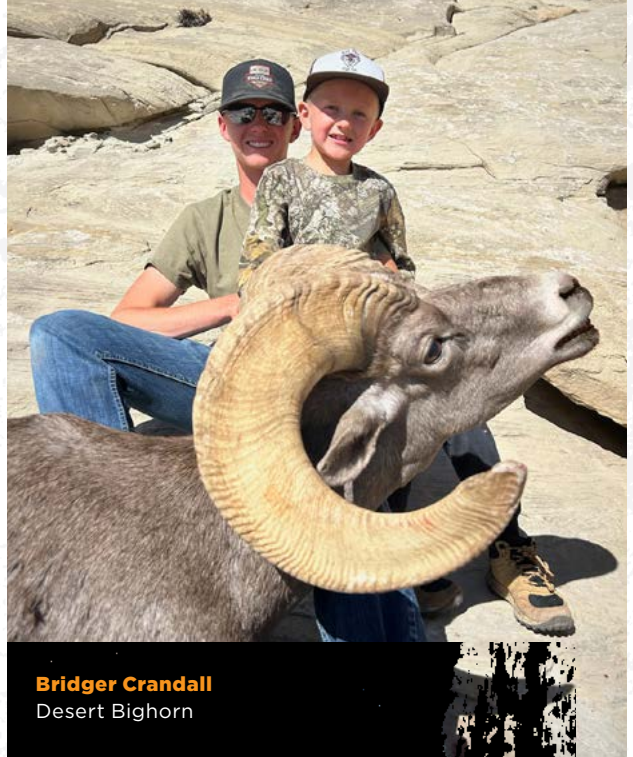
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**High Desert Wild Sheep Guides**



**George Bierman**  
California Bighorn with Bronson Outfitting



**Tracy Jacobsen**  
Rocky Mtn Bighorn



**Brian Thomsen**  
Dall Sheep



**Grant Bradshaw**  
Desert Bighorn

# HORN PLUGGING



Congratulations on drawing your 2025 Utah bighorn sheep permit! Utah Wild Sheep Foundation is offering a volunteer horn plugging program.

If you would like to get your sheep horns plugged, please visit the Utah WSF web page [www.utahwsf.org/plugs](http://www.utahwsf.org/plugs)





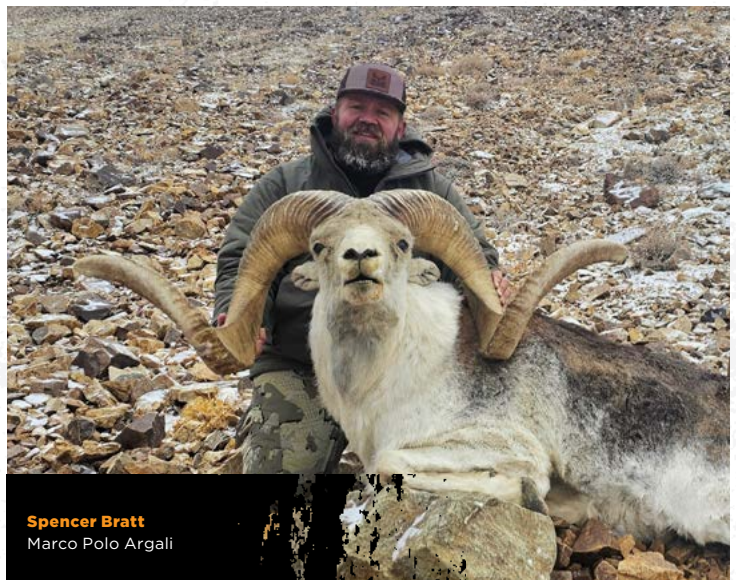
**Nile Sorenson**  
California Bighorn



**Spencer Bratt**  
Altai Ibex



**Todd Day**  
Desert Bighorn Sheep



**Spencer Bratt**  
Marco Polo Argali



**Randy Fehr**  
California Bighorn with Bronson Outfitting



**Malynda Labrum**  
Mtn Goat



**Marc Shaft**  
Desert Bighorn with Bronson Outfitting

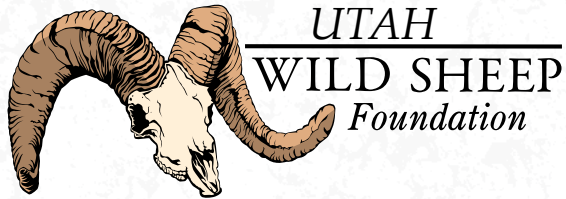


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Help protect the future of wild sheep in Utah!

# Save The Date

2026 Utah WSF Banquet Fundraiser  
March 21, 2026

Get your tickets now, seating is limited and has sold out the last two years.



Scan code or visit [utahwsf.org](http://utahwsf.org)



Announcing a new location for our annual banquet!  
The Grand America Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah