SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

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Dedicated to study and promote the conservation, propagation and preservation of the wild sheep of North America.

January - February 1982

SANTA ROSA MOUNTAIN BIGHORN PROJECT

Report No. 3

On October 31, 1981, Research Team Leader James R. DeForge reported that during the period from September first to the end of October the Society's research team had spent 42 days and 68 man-days in the field on this project.

"All collared animals have been observed frequently and appear healthy. Sightings and telemetry readings are being plotted on maps daily. On October 14, DeForge had joined Fish and Game personnel in a helicopter flight over the study area for the annual Fish and Game bighorn count. Additionally, Fish and Game provided research team members with 2½ hours of fixed wing time over the study area on October 20. Normal telemetry readings were received on all animals except channel 2 ewe. She has since been visually observed, but her radio collar is inoperative.

The only healthy lamb(female) remaining in the herd is approximately 7 months old as of October 31. The sick female lamb born about the first week of August has been closely followed since first observed on August 29. She continues to show signs of illness, including violent coughing and at times weakness. Close monitoring will continue on this animal. A third lamb has shown up in the study area. This approximately eight month old ram lamb appears to be without a mother and under no parental care. He also appears ill, as the last two times he was seen he had a darkened chin, presumably from caked dirt or scabs, and saliva was dripping rapidly from his mouth.

The rut continues. The majority of rams are still found in company with the ewes. Observations are being recorded on rutting behaviour. Two interesting rams in the area are:

1. A seven year old ram, captured by Dr. Jack Turner and Joan Payson in 1977 (collar#7) has an injured left rear leg that causes a limp, apparantly an old injury as he is reported to have limped for the last three years.
2. A large older ram with very blackened horns and black on the inside of the legs, giving rise to speculation that he might have come from a burned area (the closest of which isin the San Jacinto Mountains): has what appears to be lesions on the frontal area of the head suggestive of chronic frontal sinusitis.

The two captive-born bighorn rams from the Living Desert Reserve were resampled and revaccinated against bluetongue and parainfluenza-3 in preparation for release into the wild. They remain under observation at the University of California Philip L. Boyd Deep Canyon Research Center.

The permanent vegetational transects have been counted for the second three month period as part of nutitional composition and fecal pellets collected for botanical composition. Although slight precipitation has occurred twice in the study area, neither was enough to cause any increase in stream flow, any filling of tinajas, or any greening up of the vegetation. The animals seem to be heavily dependent during this dry period on riparian vegetation in canyon bottoms.

This project is a cooperative effort between the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep and the California Department of Fish and Game. The Society's research efforts have been funded by the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep and by fund raising efforts of the Society. Additionallly the Society appreciates the assistance and cooperation of the Living Desert Reserve and its Director Karen Sausman, the UCR Philip Boyd Deep Canyon Research Center, and Mike Dunn for access to his road. Society research team members include James R. DeForge, Joan E. Scott, Charles Jenner, D.V.M.; Pete Cyrog, D.V.M.; Steve Segreto, Dick Graham, Glenn Sudmeier, Mike Dee, Bill Phifer and Claudia Collier.

ROADS----ROADS---ROADS--ROADS---ROADS ---ROADS ---ROADS ---ROADS

The roadway granted by the U.S. Forest Service up Cattle Canyon in the Angeles National Forest is before the U.S. District Court for decision. At the present time it appears that any decison made by the Court is another year away.

MINING PLAN APPROVED FOR WILDERNESS AREA

"Approval of a plan of operations for Keystone Nos. 1 and 2 lode claims in Wilderness Study Area 122, Inyo Mountains, has been announced by Gerry Hillier, BLM's California Desert District Manager.

The claims were located in 1941 and currently are operated by Douglas McFarland. They cover the site of the former Keynot gold mine east of Lone Pine.

The plan of operations, submitted under the Bureau's 3802 (mining in WSAs) regulations, was thoroughly scrutinized prior to approval, Hiller said. Public interest and participation augmented the decision making process. The property was examined and the claims found to be valid by the Ridgecrest Resource Area Geologist.

Several means of access were studied by an interdisciplinary BLM team to determine the most feasible entry to the site. After access by helicopter, tram and various surface routes were evaluated, a vehicle road to the claims was approved.

Thirteen stipulations accompanying the plan approval help assure that operations will cause minimal environmental damage in accordance with the law.....The stipulations include mitigation required for archeological values, protection of bristlecone pines wherever possible and reclamation of the road. To insure that all required reclamation will occur, a $40,000 bond has been required prior to commencment of operations.

An environmental impact statement was not required because the McFarland plan is not a federal action wich significantly affects the quality of the human environment, Hillier said."

NOTE: Nowhere in this article is there any mention of the fact that the proposed roadway would be through important desert bighorn sheep habitat or the fact that this road would have severe adverse impacts on this herd. Nor is there any reference to the bighorn sheep at all. Nor does this report give the location of this road. It is hoped that the BLM advisory personnel have taken cognizence of this severe conflict and have routed the roadway around instead of through this bighorn habitat as originally proposed.
Report in BLM NEWSBEAT issue of January 1982.

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REPORT FROM DRY MOUNTAINS

A recent inspection trip into the Dry Mountains of northern Saline Valley found that the tanks were 80% full of water and the drinker was working as it should. Biologists of the California Department of Fish and Game while making this inspection trip also read the pellet transects of the are in an effort to determine sheep use. The use of the area by bighorn sheep has been so heavy that pellet groups could not be distinguished one from another in one of these plots. This is very gratifying.

Dick Weaver sent in the above report and also noted that he had been recently invited by Steve Hall of the San Bernardino National Forest to participate in a San Gorgonio Mountain and White water drainage helicopter survey of the area by a helicopter flight. There had been no census counts for bighorn sheep made in this area during the past ten-year period. The DFG and Forest Service really have had no idea how this herd of bighorn have been doing in this period of time. Dick says: "I'm pleased to say we found 41 bighorns. It looks like this group of bighorn sheep are doing very well. The area could use some fire to improve forage and grasses.

NOTE: The prescribed use of fire as a tool for range improvement has been demonstrated in many areas of the western states and over a long period of years. Many of the brush species have grown so tall that the herbivores can no longer reach the succulent tip growth in feeding efforts. Fire stimulates the stump sprouting of these browse species, adds new sources of nutrients to the soils for plant food needed by the grasses and forbs. Bighorns like deer move into these burned areas from nearby unburned ares to feed on this new growth.

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BURRO FILM READY FOR DISTRIBUTION

Bill Neill, Chairman of the Sierra Club's Desert Committee has announced, September 30, 1981, that the S.C.'s REgional Conservation Committee and the Board of Directors has approved for release it's film titled, "Burros on the Desert". The film is available for either sale or rental from Sierra Club, 2410 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeleles, Cal. 90057. Sale price of thw film is $270.00, provided two or more purchase orders can be filled at one printing. Rental charges are set at $10. per showing or a minimum charge of $25. for the first week with succeeding weeks billed at an additional $10. per week. Charges include shipping container.

"Burros on the Desert" was shown to the Desert Bighorn Council last April during the meetings held at Kerrville, Texas and was well received, in it's unfinished condition.

While this Editor could find no information in the film that those of us who have spent a lot of time in the desert and have observed the ravages created by the feral burros on the desert environment, yet, to those people who have not been close observers of these desert conditions the film should open their eyes to the conditions that do exist and also to the critical need that there be strong management measures undertaken by the land management agencies to correct this despoilation that is so widely taking place on these fragile desert areas.

Should anyone wish to contact Bill Neill by telephone he can be reached at home at: (213) 912 - 5917 or at the Union Oil Research Center, P.O. Box 76, Brea, Ca. 92621 telephone: (714) 528 - 7201

The film length is about 43 minutes, including a recently added silent trailer which cites the capture program at Grand Canyon and gives the BLM address for adoption information.

Our good friend Dick Weaver has also sent along a copy of a bill being proposed by a Jim Clapp a friend of Cleveland Amory. This proposal is an effort to make it even more difficult for the land management agencies to manage the resources of the lands under their jurisdiction. He seeks to amend the so-called Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971 (which is a real 'can-of-worms'), by making the Bureau of Land Managment the only federal agency with any management authority and responsible for all federal lands.

The 4th Draft copy of the above proposal does not carry the name of any Congressman who would sponsor such a bill. This matter must be carefully watched, and if introduced into the Congress, then we must organize a strong opposition to it. Undoubtedly, there will be some well-meaning Representative who will fall for the pleas Jim Clapp and his "Clapp Trap".

One proviso is that "The Secretary shall offer such humanely captured wild horses and burros to qualified individuals for a period of thirty days free of charge except for medical and transportation cost if the animal is transported from the center where it was prepared for adoption to a distant adoption facility." QUESTION: why should the tax payers of the U.S. have to support the efforts of the Fund for Animals?

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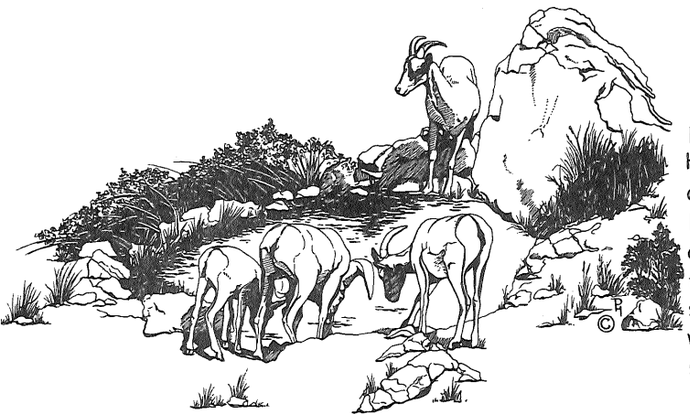

A BRISTOL AND CHUCKWALLA MTS. REPORT

Bob Campbell reports, in mid-October. Bob like so many others of us has been very busy. He says: "I've been working too much lately and did not perform a count this summer. On July 4th I went into the Bristol Mts. and found one-half cup of available water at Hyten Spring; the natural tank nearby was full of sand. No sign of recent sheep habitation in that part of the range. Two weeks ago I was in Willie Wash, the large canyon south of Ship Creek in the Chuckwalla Mts., and I came upon an old DFG windmill there. The windmill was functioning but not actually pumping water. There was about a gallon of water in the concrete tank. One coyote and 20 to 30 quail were seen. Some sheep are in the area, but not frequenting the tank.

Bob also said that the L.A. Times reporter had recently been in the Old Woman Mountains with Vern Bleich of the DFG and made an inspection trip of facilities in that mountain and had then written an excellent report concerning it. NOTE: If someone has saved the clipping of this article the Editor would appreciate seeing it---and will return it. Lew.

This report of Bob Campbell highlights the importance of getting out into the desert and the inspection of our various and widely scattered water installations and improvements and the then getting the needed corrections made. Here Bob has found two items that need correction and should become repair and rehabillitation projects to be completed during this present winter season. HOW MANY HAVE NOT BEEN FOUND?
Perhaps a Gabion-type diversion wall would keep the natural tank from refilling with sand after another heavy rainstorm. Hopefully the windmill will need only to have new pump washers and foot valve installed.

THANKS BOB.

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STATUS OF BIGHORN ON WHEELER RIDGE

The above titled report by Tom Blankinshp, Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Biologist at Bishop, California under dateline of December 18, 1981. Tom reports:
"I recently checked the three functioning telemetry collars on bighorn on Wheeler Ridge. A total of 23 sheep were seen, including 9 ewes, 6 lambs, 3 yearling rams, and 5 adult rams. (Some of these ewes may have been yearlings).

Group composition and specific locations are as follows:

Location	Ewes	Lambs	Yearling rams	Adult rams	Collar numbers
½ mile NNW of Union Carbide Mine; Elevation :8,800 ft.	5	3	2	2	#2 (functioning` 1.3 (not functioning)
1 Mile NNW of Wells Meadow; Elev. 6,800 ft.	3	2	1	3	#5 (functioning)
2½ miles NW of Wells Meadow: elev. 7,500 ft.	1	1	--	--	#6 (functioning)

Of significance is that only three telemetry collars are still working. A year from now it is likely that none will be working. While the groups of sheep near the mine are predictable and relatively easy to observe, observation of the others will be very difficult.

All sheep seen looked in good condition. The lambs seemed quite large.

Obviously, the total of 23 bighorn sighted may not be the total population on Wheeler Ridge. A few others may exist there.

Considering that 19 were released, and that unusual accidents eliminated at least two adults and three of the four lambs born the first year, this population of at least 23 is very encouraging.

Report courtesy of Dick Weaver, Calif. D.F.G.

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There are still six (6) water projects that are scheduled for completion this spring season. If you can participate contact Glenn W. Sudmeier, Water Project Coodinator at Star Route Box 4 -C, Hesperia, California 92345 or better yet telephone him at: (714) 389 - 2498

January 16, 1982 - Sheephole Mountains. The tenaja relied upon for many years is no longer a dependable water source. This project must and is being funded by the Society. The Safari Club International--- San Diego Chapter is furnishing a $2,000. grant to the Society for this waterhole project. Total cost is to be about $5,000. Your TAX FREE donations to the John Lowery Desert Waterhole Improvement Fund---(see page eight) will be used for this and for similar needed projects.

February 6, 1982 a project in Riverside County
February 27, 1982 Coxcomb Mts. --South
March 20, 1982 Nopah Range North,
April 17, 1982 Whipple Mts. West
May 8, 1982 Whipple Mts. East.
Also:
March 17-18,1982 Wild Sheep and Goat Conference in Fort Collins, Colorado. For specifics contact Dr. James Bailey, Program Chairman, Dep't Fisheries and Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colo. 80523. Ph.: (303) 491 - 5002
April 7 & 8, 1981---the 26th Annual Meeting of the Desert Bighorn Council in the Anza Borrego Desert State Park. On the 9th there is to be a field trip into sheep habitat. April being a very popular season of the year on the desert and if you need room reservations, then you are advised not to delay making motel reservations. Society members are urged to attend and learn first-hand what is new concerning our beleagured desert bighorn sheep.

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BURROS ON NAVAL WEAPONS CENTER

The Department of the Navy has distributed it's Final Environmental Impact Statement cocnerning it's project Feral Burro Management Program.

The Naval Weapons Center at China Lake, California had initiated an interim emergency plan in March 1980. To date, 1,000 feral burros have been removed from the emergency removal area, which is along principle roadways and airplane landing runways where they had posed very severe hazards to naval personnel. On 20 October 1981 the navy and two animal protection groups negotiated an out-of-court settlement for the continued removal of burros that enter the interim emergency area. This agreement will end on 1 January 1982. It can be extended, but the Navy expects their long term management plan to be in effect by that date. At this point, the interim emergency removal program will merge with the larger management action.

The F.E.I.S. list four alternatives: a. Removal of all burros by direct reduction (shooting, using hired marksmen); b. Removal of all burros by live trapping and direct reduction combined in those areas where live capture by trapping is ineffective; c. Partial retention of burros on Naval Weapons Center lands; d. No action.

Of these four alternatives the Navy has chosen the Alternative B--Removal of all burros by live trapping and direct reduction where it is ineffective or impossible.

Furthermore, the Navy , having had a lot of criticism of it's allowing domestic cattle grazing on parts of the NWC it has made arrangement to remove the cattle grazing allotments within NWC boundaries until an intensive grazing management plan is completed by the BLM and until the Navy has had the opportunity to evaluate the plan.

EDITORIAL OPINION: The removal of cattle grazing allotments on the NWC should be on a permanent basis. Letter from the Sportsmen's Council of Central California supports this view, and does support the enactment of the Alternative B.

The Navy also recognizes that with thousands of burros roaming the BLM lands adjacent to the NWC that there is certain to be burros entering these NWC lands. The Navy plans to monitor these encroachments and to remove these trespassing burros.

The Navy estimates that the burro population of the NWC to be from 3,500 to 5,700 animals

that are concentrated in six distinct herds--as determined in 1980 by direct aerial census, visibility factor and subsequent reductions incorporated. Of the animals removed, 258 were live captured by the BLM, 13 were live captured by animal protection groups and 649 were reduced directly by contract civilian marksmen. A number of motor vehicle accidnts caused by burros and the dangerously high potential for aircraft/burro collisions initiated this emergency action.

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THE BIGHORN SHEEP OF THE NOPAH RANGE

The Northern part of the Nopah Range is to be the scene of a water development project this coming March 20, 1982.

A report by Vernon Bleich a DFG Biologist from Hemet was released on November 23, 1981. Bleich reports that in 1972 the wildlife biologists of the Californa Department of Fish and Game estimated the population of Nelson bighorn sheep in the Nopah Range of eastern Inyo County at about 11 animals.

Today, almost 10 years later, there are beleived to be a minimum of 50 bighorns on the range. Why have these sheep made such a dramatic increase?

Bleich states that "There appears to have been a strong response to the addition of a permanent source of water on the Range." His reference is to a wildlife water storage and drinker system installed in the mountains in March 1977 by the DFG's Volunteer Desert Water and Wildlife Survey. (meaning the cooperative efforts of the DFG and the volunteer labor forces of the Society and it's many cooperators). The system consists of a concrete and rock catchment for water runoff, a series of three 1,600 gallon storage tanks and a float-valve device that makes water available as needed in a small trough. It is typical of the many such water supply systems set up at desert locations thus far by the DFG and citizen volunteers.

The Nopah Range location was chosen as a result of a 1972 survey of the area by Dick Weaver and John Hall of the Department of Fish and Game. At that time there was no permanent water in the Nopah Range, and the bighorn sheep population was dependent on seasonal availability of water.

In 1978 a program was begun to update the DFG's knowledge of mountain sheep in the Nopah Range(and elesewhere) for the purpose of evaluating the effectivemeness of the artificial catchment. Results here and elsewhere have shown the water projects to be a notable success. "Sheep use is increasing dramatically in the vicinity of the Nopah catchment, and the population has increased substantially since the Weaver-Hall estimate in 1972," Bleich stated And he has the evidence to back it up. Bleich and his associates in the desert water program have used time-lapse photography to record use of the catchment by bighorns. The films show heavy use of the water by lambs, ewes and rams, and one film in 1979 suggested that as many as a dozen different sheep were using the catchment on a given day. Note: This type of photography has shown much the same results in many other locations where there had been no source of dependable water available during the long dry summer months.

Ground surveys along transects in the vicinity of the catchment confirmed the build-up and indicated use of the area has more than tripled since 1980, Bleich stated.

In May of 1981 observers aboard a DFG-chartered helicopter counted 23 bighorn sheep on the range, 12 of the sheep were ewes. Although only one lamb was observed it was noted that several of the ewes were obviously pregnant. One yearling was seen.

Another purpose of the May survey was the selection of three additional sites for the development of more artificial catchments in the Nopah Range. One of these is scheduled for March 20 as previously noted. It is hoped that by the addition of more water storage projects in this range that it will cause a dispersal of the sheep over a greater area and by so doing lessen the likelihood of a catastrophic disease wiping out the entire herd.

NOTE: If you wish to assist on this project March 20, 1982 then contact Glenn Sudmeier, at Star Route Box 4 - C , Hesperia, CA. 92345 or phone him at: (714) 389 - 2498

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BIG HATCHET -- BIGHORNS, OIL MEN COMPETE FOR RIGHTS

The El Paso Times issue of Sunday November 8, 1981 carried the front page story with the above headline under a dateline of Hachita, New Mexico. "Big Hatchet Peak, from any direction looks like just what it is - a nearly barren mass of rock sprinkled lightly with pinion and juniper.

But what you don't see, and may never see, is causing a quiet furor that might not be quelled until long after the matter has been settled in court. What you don't see are about 43 desert bighorns sheep grazing fitfully on what oil and gas producers consider to be one of the "hottest spots" going in oil and gas exploration. Standing between the bighorns and oil companies are the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and the federal Bureau of Land Management. The Game and Fish people would prefer that no one ever set foot on the land with the intent to disturb it and the animals living on it. But the BLM controls the land, and it must be a bit more reasonable. District Manager, BLM, Las Cruces, N.M. stated the BLM tries to stay within the restrctions of the state as well as the federal. The bighorn sheep area a very fragile resource and the BLM does not want to do anything it can stop from doing to disturb them. The BLM has set up a buffer zone of more than a mile around the mountain range--a zone that is being questioned and that soon will be changed. At the same time, oil and gas production has been given a high priority by both the Carter and Reagan administrations and New Mexico is feeling the pressure.

The mountain ranges in the "panhandle" of southwest New Mexico were formed eons ago and once were surrounded by a huge inland sea, says Andy Sandoval, Bighorn Sheep Project Supervisor for the State of new Mexico. The bighorn, one of several species of wild sheep that migrated to North America over the land bridges formed during an Ice Age about 14,000 years ago, first saw the range as a lush paradise. But all that changed. The water drained away,

the paradise dried up, and the herds of bighorn dwindled slowly, until by the early 1950s only about 125 to 150 of the sheep remained. In the late '50s severe drought and competition from mule deer and domestic livestock completed the destruction of the herd, leaving 20 hardy animals timidly munching grass in the southernmost portion of the 15-mile long range. These animals have also changed their patterns of grazing and confine themselves to only a small portion of their historic ranges which spread over several small mountains to the south and their intervening ridges.

Other problems related to the bighorns of New Mexcio have been reported on in several issues of T.S. this past few years. There are now about 43 bighorns in the Hatchet Mountains according to Sandoval. "These mountains are part of the so-called Overthrust Belt, a formation caused when the North American Plate cracked and was glued back together off-line, and which wanders across the United States starting in southern New Mexico. It slides across Arizona, makes a huge bend through California and Nevada, slashes through Utah and then makes as "S" curve through Wyoming, Idaho and Montana."..."oil men have been interested in the New Mexico portion of this Belt since the 1920s. But it is only during the last several years that major exploration work has taken place in the state, and the Big Hatchets are directly in line of these explorers.....Sandoval expects that the final disposition of this problem will be decided in the Courts and hopes that the courts will understand that the land and its inhabitants, which include several other even less visible members of state and federal endangered species lists must be protected. Several of the exploration teams have been denied access to the mountains because either their tests would cause too much of a disturbance or the tests require signs of humans to be left longer than the sheep can tolerate. During the early 1970s a clossup monitoring of the bighorns caused the herd serious problems. The herd was so disturbed that no lambs were born the next year.

It is hoped, of course, that this conflict of interest will be able to be solved with the oil interest exploration and possible production and those of the bighorns and their habitat and open space preserved.

(The above condensed from the newspaper article sent to the Editor by Society Secretary John E. O. Larronde).

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ANNUAL DINNER HELD DECEMBER 5th

The following brief report was sent to the Editor by Peter E. Cyrog, D.V.M. Dr. Cyrog is a member of the Research Team presently working in the Santa Rosa Mountains and trying to solve the problems associated with the causes of mortality among the bighorns of those mountains. Dr. Cyrog writes:

:On Saturday evening, December 5th, 73 people attended the annual Sheep Society Dinner in Palm Desert. During the cocktail hour a video tape of the November Bighorn capture and collaring by research team was shown. The tape was made by Society Director Dr. Peter Cyrog.

Those who didn't attend missed a deliciaous Roast Beef dinner at ehe Palm Desert Resort Country Club. Following dinner President "Doc" Lutz introduced Joan Scott who auctioned off two 'T' - shirts that were hand painted with a stunning picture of a bighorn sheep. The art work was done and presented to the Society by Patricia Kalatshan of the Living Desert Reserve. The two shirts sold for $160.

The auction was followed by a fascinating talk by Jim DeForge about the Bighorn Sheep Research Project in the Santa Rosa MOuntains. The research, only just beginning, suggests that this herd could be extinct within a few years. More money is needed to continue the research and hopefully come up with a management plan to revitalize the herd.

After the program the members and guests retired to the cocktail lounge for dancing and other entertainment."

In conclusion Dr. Cyrog states, "If you weren't there you missed an interesting and enjoyable evening."

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NOTE: The Living Desert Reserve is contributing much to the research efforts in the Santa Rosa Mountains. The Reserve would welcome new members. The Membership Chairman is Graham Dexter at P.O. Box 1775, Palm Desert, California 92261. Memberships range from LIfe at $1,000, Patron $500, Donor $250, Sustaining $100, Contributing $50, Family $24, Individual $15, and Junior $7.50

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Mrs. Marion Lutz & Dr. Loren L. Lutz (file photo)

L. to R. Jim DeForge, Dr. Charles W. Jenner and Mrs. Jenner, Dr. Lutz. (photo Dr. Peter E. Cyrog)

DR. LUTZ TAKES ON ANOTHER TASK

"The newly appointed California Desert District Multiple-Use Advisory Council held its first meeting November 13-14, 1981 in Riverside. Its task is to help i mplement the Desert Plan in a time of austere budgets.

The first day was taken up by BLM staff in briefing the council on District programs, plans, and progress. As District Manager Gerald Hillier pointed out, the programs are not confined to the California Desert alone, but include also the McCain Valley and Escondido Plans. Both these projects involve BLM managed lands in San Diego County, and illustrate the diversity and complexity of resource management problems within the "largest BLM distrct in the lower '48."

The Advisory Council elected Clayton A. Record as its Chairman and Dr. Loren L. Lutz, Vice Chairman. Record is one of two members of this council who also served on the California Desert Conservation Area Advisory Committee, was twice chairmanof that group. Dr. Lutz is likewise no newcomer to committee duty, having served on the old Riverside District Multiple-Use Advisory Council in 1975-1976....."

B.L.M. NEWSBEAT---January 1982.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

I dislike very much to at any time say or write anything which is or may be considered to be derogatory about an organization that is or claims to be a conservation organization. However:

How valid are the stated efforts of THE NATURE CONSERVANCY ? I have pondered this question. My reasons for asking this question are: In early October 1981 I received a request from TNC for a donation supposedly to be used for the purchase of some 7,700 acres of land in the Santa Rosa Mountains to establish a Santa Rosa Mountain Desert Bighorn Sheep Preserve. I wrote to Mr. Peter Seligman, Director of the California Field Office of The Nature Conservancy on October 30, 1981 requesting the location of the property; the amount of money needed for the purchase of the property; and what plans TNC had for the property if purchased. Receiving no reply I then wrote to the National office of TNC asking the same questions. Again receiving no reply I again wrote to Mr. Seligman on December 26, 1981 and repeated the request for information. These letters were written on stationery of the editor of THE SHEEPHERDER. To this date January 11, 1982 neither office of THE NATURE CONSERVANCY has even acknowledged my letters.

Lew Carpenter, Editor.

GOALS

The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep was created for the purpose of conservation, preservation, and proper management of the wild sheep of North America. Bighorn were numerous in North America at the beginning of the nineteenth century, numbering between 1.5 to 2 million animals with a much greater range than today. Today the bighorn numbers less than 40,000 in all of North America, and two subspecies, the Audubon Bighorn and the Texas Bighorn, have become extinct in this century. In an effort to promote better bighorn management, the Society supports the following:

1. Research into causes of declining bighorn numbers.
2. Development and maintenance of water resources for bighorn sheep.
3. Cooperative projects with state and federal agencies in sheep population surveys and related research.
4. Promotion of public awareness of bighorn needs through educational programs, slide presentations, and articles in scientific journals and popular publications.
5. Preservation of each bighorn population to maintain genetic diversity.
6. Preservation of bighorn sheep habitat.
7. Reintroduction of bighorn sheep into historic bighorn ranges.

Radio collared ewes supply researchers valuable insight into bighorn ecology.

(A portion of the current Memebership Brochure of the Society).

The bighorn were numerous in North America as shown in early indian rock art.

CURRENT PROJECTS

The Society supports its own team of research biologists and veterinarians investigating the reasons for bighorn decline. The team studies possible causes for decline, including:

- Diseases
- Competition from feral and domestic animals.
- Lack of water
- Habitat degradation and range reduction
- Environmental stresses
- Predation
- Nutrition
- Behavioral responses to environmental changes

The Society installs and maintains desert water guzzlers for wildlife. These projects are funded by both the California Department of Fish and Game and the Society, with volunteer manpower coordinated by the Society. Volunteers include Society members, college students, members of sportsmen's clubs, and others interested in helping wildlife. These guzzlers are installed in areas of critical need in order to maintain existing bighorn populations.

The Society cooperates with state and federal agencies in annual bighorn population surveys. We have placed as many as 170 volunteer observers in the field on a single day count. These counts enable managers to monitor reproductive success and population trends in order to make better management decisions.

Society members conduct annual summer waterhole counts in many bighorn ranges in order to assess population numbers.

HISTORY AND STATUS OF BARBARY SHEEP IN NEW MEXICO

Mr. Bruce L. Morrison, of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has written the above titled report appearing in the transaction of the Symposium held in November 1979.

"The Barbary sheep was first brought to New Mexico by a private party in 1941. In January of 1950, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish purchased four rams and eight ewes from Joe Knight of Picacho, and released them in Canadian River Gorge near Roy, New Mexico. In November of 1950, 26 ewes and 19 rams were obtained from the William Randolph Hearst Ranch in California and released in the Canadian River Gorge. Five years later, the San Juan County Wildlife Federation purchased 21 head of Barbary sheep from Mr. Louis Goebel of California and released them in Canyon Largo near Farmington.

Over the years, numerous sheep have escaped from the McKnight Ranch at Picacho, establishing wild populations in the Hondo Valley and Guadalupe Mountains. A sizeable herd has also established itself in the Mt Taylor area near Grant, New Mexico. In addition sightings of single sheep or small bands have been confirmed in other areas of the state. Current estimates place the New Mexico sheep population at approximately 1,750 animals."

In 1955 the State Legislature declared the Barbary sheep to be a game animal and gave the D. of G. & F. management responsibilities. Since then, 2,601 sportsmen have taken advantage of the opportunity to hunt this challenging big game animal, with many of them hunting the Barbary at every opportunity. As a result 1,008 have been harvested during the hunting seasons beginning in 1955 through the season of 1978. Twenty four permits were issued in 1955 and have reached a high of 411 permits in 1977.

During the 1979 season the Department expanded the hunting opportunity for the Barbary sheep in an attempt to reduce the populations in two areas, the Guadalupe Mountains of southeastern New Mexico and the Mt. Taylor area of west-central New Mexico, with the permit being valid concurrently with a persons deer license.

A five year management plan is presently being developed for the management of the Barbary sheep herds of the Canadian River, the Hondo Valley and the Canyon Largo. Here the herds will be managed to give the maximum recreational opportunity for the public. Barbary sheep outside these areas will be managed in a manner that will either reduce their numbers or eliminate them altogether.

In those areas where both Barbary sheep and desert bighorn sheep are present, the bighorn will receive management priority. Currently there are two areas of the state where both species are known to occur. These are the San Andres and Guadalupe Mountains, both is southern New Mexico. There were reports of five Barbary sheep in the San Andres Mts. Four of these were removed and were thoroughly examined for evidence of the scabies mite which has created a very serious threat to the bighorns of the San Andres Mts. These Barbary sheep were found to be free of the scabies mite. If additional hunting pressure does not alleviate the problems in these two areas, then more direct measures will have to be taken.

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DUES FOR 1982 ARE DUE

The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep like many other conservation organizations need funds to carry on its projects and activities. WE BGE YOUR SUPPORT.

There are many persons on our mailing list who are in arrears for 1981 and have been carried along on our mailing lists. There are others on the mailing list who are not members and do not contribute either financially or by sending material in to the Society for including in THE SHEEPHERDER. Many of these will probably be dropped from our mailing lists because of these reasons. Also, those persons who move and/or change their addresses without giving the Society a change of address may be dropped from future mailings. It now costs the Editor 37¢ to get a copy of THE SHEEPHERDER returned to his office by the Postal Service and then re-mailing is by Firts Class mail--another 20¢. Your 13¢ stamp on a change of address card would be an assistance in savings for better purposes.

DETACH

Application for Membership OR RENEWAL

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The kinds of memberships available are:

__ Annual	$25.00	
__ Student (must be full-time)	$10.00	
__ Life	$200.00	(may be paid in four equal installments)
__ Century	$500.00	(transferable)

All donations are tax deductible.

Also included is my contribution of $ _____ to help finance Bighorn Research Projects.
Also included is my contribution of $ _____ for Desert Waterhole Improvement (Lowery fund).
Enclosed you will find my check of money order for $ _____.

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