SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

Non-Profit Organization
401 North Garfield
Alhambra, California 91801
213-284-5113

PRESIDENT LOREN L LUTZ D D S

EDITOR
LEWIS E. CARPENTER
815 W. GETTYSBURG
FRESNO, CAL 93705
(209) 227-9140)

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

MARCH - APRIL 1983

SOCIETY BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep and membership meeting were held the evening of January 31, 1983 as was previously announced.

The following were elected to serve the year of 1983:

Officers:

Loren L. Lutz	President
Wayne A. Dickson	First Vice President
Rocklin L. Wooley	Second Vice President
John Larronde	Secretary
Shirley Vickrey	Treasurer

Directors:

Robert Campbell	G.E. David
Richard L. Graham	Charlton Kerr
John Larronde	Glenn Sudmeier
Ronald Vickrey	A.W. Wiedeman
Marvin Wood	

2. The annual fall dinner of the society will again be held at Michael's Restaurant. Bud Wiedeman will make the arrangements. The date is set for the evening of November 5, 1983.

3. Dr. Lutz stated the BLM will help with the sheep count in the Old Woman Mountains and in the New York Mountains. Dates are to be set. He also said that the F. & G. and U.S. Forestry may make the sheep count in the San Gabriels this year. Marvin Wood is in charge of the Big Game Guzzler work party in the Nopah Range April 23, 1983. The Sheep Society will host a BBQ Saturday night the 23rd. April 9 and 10th was set to improve the water-hole at Blue Springs. The San Jacinto sheep count was set for July 9, 10 &11, 1983.

Committee Appointments:

Lewis E. Carpenter	Editor of The Sheepherder
Glenn W. Sudmeier	Water hole Coordinator
Robert S. Campbell	Membership and Publicity
Thomas Clotfelter	Fund raising
G.E. David	Field trips
Loren Lutz & G.E. David	Legislation.

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WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

Project Leader Vernon Bleich of California Department of Fish and Game in his January 1983 report, as required under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, states that "A new apron was installed at one big game guzzler, that major repairs were completed at one big game guzzler and a total of seven big game guzzlers were inspected.
Again, all three project vehicles were in the shop for major repairs suring the report period.

An aerial survey of the Marble Mountains produced observations of a minimum of 83 individuals in that range. The aerial survey produced some amazing results. Over 100 animals were observed, and after eliminating possible duplications, a minimum of 83 individuals was determined to exist in that range. The previous population estimate had been 20. New lambs were seen on January 26, on a routine fly by of that range. These young animals had not been seen on January 15.
D.F.G. Director Charley Fullerton was provided an aerial tour of the Old Dad Peak/Kelso Peak area, as well as as the Marble Mountains big game guzzler project.

During the report period, members of the Volunteer Desert Water and Wildlife Survey contributed 171 man-days of labor and 12,948 vehicle miles to the project. The County of San Diego contributed $1,500 towards the completion of the Limestone Spring Project.

A sheep trap, measuring approximately 50 x 30 x 16 feet high was constructed at Old Dad Peak.

A 5,100 gallon catchment was installed in the Marble Mountains (January 15). One hundred feet of 2" galvanized pipe was installed to divert storm runoff into the water storage tanks. This project was designed to benefit a presumed tenuous population of mountain sheep. Aerial observations of over one hundred animals comprising, at a minimum, 82 individual animals indicates that this population is thriving.
During this effort, members of the Volunteer Desert Water and Wildlife Survey contributed 171 man-days of labor and 12,948 vehicle miles to the project.

The Limestone Spring project reported in the Nov.-Dec. issue of T.S. was completed with the building of a 15' x 28' rain apron in San Diego County. The installation is now full and operating normally.

Project personnel assisted BLM and southern unit personnel with an aerial survey of the Chuckwalla and Orocopia Mountains, and selected final sites for installation of big game guzzlers in those mountain ranges. (Project dates for these projects as was announced earlier were to be February 12 and 26 respectively. A project site has also been chosen for a water storage project in the Dry Mountains of Inyo County.

Project personnel are also doing their P-R work by giving slide shows to the Fish and Game Commissions of San Diego, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties and to the Varmit Callers Association. The County F. &. G. Commissions are the ones who have a say in the manner in which the Propag ation Funds are disbursed. These funds are derived from Courts imposed fines and levies against convicted violators of the Fish and Game Code of California. Statewide these funds amount to nearly a million dollars pdr year.

Bleich's report for December was mainly on projects not associated with mountain sheep, but was with other species of desert wildlfie. Although, maintenance and repairs were made to big game guzzlers in the Orocopia Mountains of Riverside County, the Clark Mt. guzzler in San Bernardino County and to the Kingston Peak facility.

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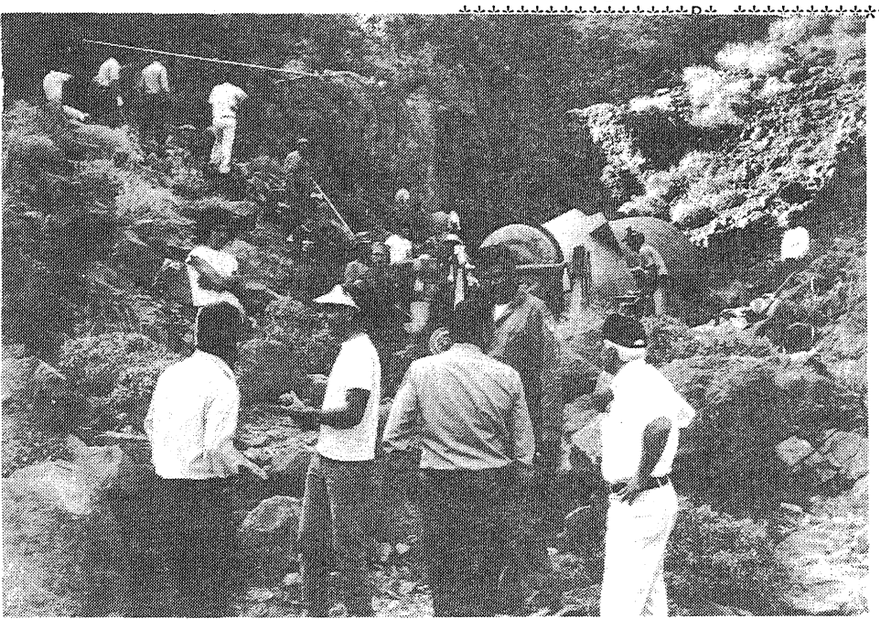

HELP FOR THIRSTY CRITTERS

The photo at the left shows a part of the work crew in the Marble Mts. of San Bernardino County as they prepare to pour concrete for the guzzler during the work day of January 15, 1983.

Among those present during this work day were: DFG Director E.C. Fullerton, Region 5 Manager Fred Worthley, Wildlife Biologist Vernon C. Bleich Associate Wildlife Biologist for Reg. 5, and in charge of the project, Roger Allemand of the DFG's Wildlife Management Branch and a part of the numbers of Volunteers who do the labor and are representatives of many organizations. DFG Photo by Sandra Wolfe.
Courtesy Dick Weaver.

March 12 & 13, 1983 Sheep count on the San Gabriel Mountains

March 26th in the Whipple Mts. Construct a new water storage facility.

April 6, 7, & 8, 1983 The Desert Bighorn Council meets in Silver City, New Mexico.

April 9th Another water storage project in the Whipple Mts, also on
April 9th some improvements to tbe Blue Springs installation of San Diego County. Call Dr. Lutz for specifics if you can participate.

April 23rd in the Nopah Range, a joint water storage project with the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep. Marvin Wood is ram-rodding this project. For specifics contact Marvin Wood at 19 Byron Drive, Lemoore, Calif. 93245 or phone 924 - 2252. Directions given to the Editor by Vern Bleich are: Go north fro m the town of Baker, Calif. on Hwy. 127 to Tecopa. Go east from Tecopa on the Old Spanish Trail about 10½ miles. Camp will be about 2½ miles east of Emigrant Pass View Point.
The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep is hosting a Bar-B-Que that evening after project completion.

May 7th in the Inyo Mts---to build a burro exclosure around a very important source of water for the bighorns.
May 14 & 15 In the Granite Mts. a water storage project.

June 25th The Southern Council of Conservation Clubs and the Society are holding a joint Hall-of-fame dinner. Among the honorees are Frank Tachmayr and Fred Huntington. See enclosure for details.

July 2, 3, & 4 Ann ual waterhole sheep count in the San Jacinto Mountains. Sheep in this mountain area have for some reason been decreasing in numbers the past few years. Contact Dr. Lutz for specifics and assignments.

Labor Day Weekend-- the Annual waterhole count in the Death Valley National Monument.

November 5, 1983 Annual dinner of the Society will be held again at Michael's Restaurant in Los Angeles. More on this later.

For further info. on projects contact: Leilani Park at ehe Calif. DFG, 350 Golden Shore, Long Beach, Calif 90802 ph. (213) 590 - 5158, between09:00 and17:00 Or contact Glenn Sudmeier at Star Route Box 4-C, Hesperia, Ca. 92345--ph.(619) 389 - 2498 OR contact: Vernon C. Bleich, DFG. REG.5, P.O. Box 1741, Hemet, Cal. 92343 Ph. (714) 925 - 5045

BIGHORNS ARE HOME AGAIN ON CINNABAR RANGE

So begins an article in the Livingston Enterprise December 30, 1982. Chris Cauble a staff writer continues: "Bighorns sheep in southern Park County (Montana) have done something no other sheep in North America are known to have done. They have colonized a new area. A herd of about 140 sheep now inhabit the Cinnabar Mountain area near Corwin Springs where no sheep were found only two decades ago.

The new herd is actually colonizing an area that was historical sheep winter range, but the original herd was wiped out by a combination of market hunting in the late 1800's, intense mining activity in the early 1900s, and subsistence hunting through the Great Depression.

The new herd, which began with a few animals in the mid-1960s, is the first documented case of sheep naturally expanding into new areas according to Jon Swenson, Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks of Livingston biologist. "Sheep are very traditional animals," Swenson said. He explained that bighorn sheep, once a herd has been wiped out by man's activites, disease or natural disasters, seldom recolonize the area, even though another herd is relatively nearby and could serve as a source for animals in a new herd."

Kim Keating a graduate student of Montana State University has recently been studying this Cinnabar herd. Keating has marked and radio collared a number of the members of this herd in the upper Yellowstone River area near the Cinnabar Mountain.

According to the findings of Keating sheep first started showing up on the old Cinnabar Mountain winter range about 1965. Eleven sheep were observed there in 1967. Since that time there has been a steady increase in the numbers of sheep in this herd.

Keating believes that a herd of bighorns in the Yellowstone National Park between the Tom Miner - Cinnabar Mountain on Mount Everts provided the first sheep for the new herd. During the mid-1960s the NPS officals were convinced that the park's elk population was too high, resulting in overgrazing and range damage. To reduce the elk herd, park rangers shot thousands of elk over a period of several years. Keating believes that the elk and sheep were competing for food, and once the elk population was reduced, the Everts sheep herd increased. Young sheep may have wandered onto the Cinnabar Mountain winter range from the Everts herd's summer range south of there inside the park.

During the winter the sheep are often seen just west of the Yellowstone River at Corwin Springs, either along the county road or on the hillside. Swenson has cautioned people to stay in their cars to avoid frightening the animals. Swenson says: "Winter is a stressful time and we don't need to add more stress.--- You can get good pictures from the road.

The Montana Department of Fish , Wildlife and Parks does permit hunting of bighorns in the southern sections of Park County. Resident permits are only $25. and are unlimited in numbers. Rams only are hunted and to be legal they must have reached a three-quarter horn curl. Successful hunters must register their kill within 48 hours and then when a quota (usually about five rams, is reached the season in the area is closed on a 48 hour basis, for the year. The larger harvest has come from the TOM Miner herd of bighorns with the Cinnabar herd contributing about 19% .

Source Newspaper articles--Ed Schneegas--U.S.Forest Service, Missoula. Mt.

NOTE: Obviously when Chris Cauble writes about the colonization of the Cinnabar Mt. area he is writng of those colonizations taking place in modern recorded history. He does not state anywhere that perhaps the shooting of the elk may have created enough noise to move any of the bighorns from where they were into habitat new to them. Shooting has been used as a tool in both Colorado and in Alberta by granting ewe permits for two purposes one of which was to reduce herd numbers and secondly in an effort to disperse overlarge ewe bands into nearby but unoccupied historical habitats. Whether or not this has been successful this editor has not learned.

Range Extension by mountain sheep

Valerius Geist, PHD, a Professor at the University of Calgary has achieved a great deal of respect for his studies and writings related to mountain sheep. He conducted four years of study among the bighorns of the Yukon, British Columbia and the Alberta Provinces of Canada. In his book "Mountain Sheep, a Study in Behavior and Evolution" he writes about this dispersal of sheep into areas not presently occupied by bighorns by saying:

"Today sheep live in the western United States in an artificial situation. As a result of man's activity much sheep habitat has been cleared of sheep, and relict sheep populations

now live close to vacant good habitat. This situation rarely if ever occurs under natural conditions. Normally, the slow disappearance of habitat, not man, brings about sheep extinction; so no vacant habitat lies close to any population. Sheep as a species have no meaningful response to this new situation but behave just as they must have done for the millions of years of the Pleistocene-- by confining their activity to the limited areas they now happen to inhabit. They have no means of finding and incorporating distant habitat into a population's realm readily.

Sheep follow along predictable, traditional pathways which confine them to a given area, and they would never be able to escape from that area if their system of leadership worked at top efficiencey. However, it does not, nor are the habits of older animals rigidly fixed. Since sheep have made almost no range extensions in North America in the past decades, we can only speculate how sheep colonize new ranges; but we know enough about sheep to make some educated guesses.

Since we know that introduced caprides, be they sheep, goats, or ibex, they spread as far as the habitat is open and continuous, it is evident that sheep can spread to an adjacent mountain range once the timber has disappeared from the valley. Then the habitat is continuous from the inhabited to the uninhabited range and sheep can move in freely.

It was noted earlier that some old sheep departed from the normal route they took. It is hence possible that a group of younger sheep might follow some oldster to a new area and form a population there. This possibility I consider most unlikely.

We do know that sheep can perform sudden, erratic movements. These have been observed in Asia, where they were correlated with catastrophic events, such as droughts. Some sheep moved as far as 500km, which is a remarkable distance indeed, and stayed in one case three years in a new area. There is little doubt that erratic immigration by part of a population could lead to colonization of new range by sheep.

There is a further method. Assuming that grasslands expand and sheep populations begin to increase in size and density and that the distances between occupied and unoccupied habitat decrease, the following is certain to happen: the ram populations increase and form larger concentrations in spring. When this happens many old and young rams find themselves on the same range. Now frequently a segregation by age classes takes place: the mature rams are more sedentary, while the younger rams roam in groups of their own. Such groups of playful, young rams periodically go on excursions into timbered valleys. I observed this a number of times on the Palliser Range. The young rams return in a great arc back to the familiar range.

If the distance between a ram concentration area and some unoccupied range is not large, say one mile, and only a narrow belt of dense timber separates them, it is conceivable that young rams may penetrate the timber and find themselves on the other side in open terrain. To mountain sheep a habitat apparantly is not home without a companion. Whereas the single young ram would not likely return to the patch of unoccupied habitat he found, the group of young rams may remember it as a habitat with companions and return again, stay longer, explore the new terrain, and incorporate it into next spring's excursions. Once some 2-year old ewes follow rams across, they may well choose this terrain as a secluded lambing area, and eventually lead other sheep across. For the present this is no more than a plausible, but unverified, hypothesis of how sheep colonize new terrain."

BURROS OF GRAND CANYON

The vegetative resources of the Grand Canyon National Park and the archeological sites which had been threatened and even damaged by the feral burros that had over-run the park should from now on be safe from despoilation by those feral animals, so says the wildlife resource specialist of the park.

There is only one burro remaining in the inner canyon area so far as they are aware of. There are a few burros down near the boundary with the Lake Mead Recreational area. There is fencing being installed at present along this boundary which will exclude any further trespass from outside the park. After this fencing is completed and if there are then any burros that may have wandered into the park they will be removed by whatever means are found to be necessary.

The Friends of Animals apparantly did do a good job of removing the burros. And the F.O.A. was far more successful than it was thought possible. In all they did remove 577 burros. It is believed that the F.O.A. was successful in disposing of most of these burros through the adoptive process. Some of the animals were then transferred to the disposal area being used by the F.O.A. for those burros obtained from the Bandelier National Monument of New Mexico. The Fund For Animals has not disclosed the total amount of money that it spent in the burro removal and disposal program for the Grand Canyon National Park. However, it is rumored that it did spend approximately $750,000. or about $1,300 per burro.

Costs to the Park Service associated with the burro removal process, including supervision of the capture and transfer of animals was $11,000 in 1982 and $52,000 in 1981. These expenditures did include helicopter rental fees used for all purposes including the removal of the last 21 burros that could not be live captured and were shot by park personnel.

Private individuals not with the N.P.S. or the F.O.A. captured and removed two burros.

OREGON SHEEP TRANSPLANT

Fifteen Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep have been captured by the Fish and Wildlife Department and transplanted to a new area in northeast Oregon. District Wildlife Biologist Vic Coggins of Enterprise said the sheep-- eight ewes and seven rams--were baited into a corral trap on the department's Lostine sheep range and were released in the Umatilla Forest.

There have been no bighorn sheep in the Wenaha drainage since the early 1900's, Coggins said. The department had the cooperation of the Umatilla National Forest in the project, and Coggins said the Washington Department of Game is also planning to release bighorn sheep in the portion of the Wenaha drainage in southeast Washington.

The transplant is part of continuing efforts to reestablish the Rocky Mountain subspecies of bighorn sheep back into suitable areas of its former range in northeast Oregon. This native animal was once found throughout the mountainous portions of the area, and in the Snake River Canyon. Competition with livestock, disease thought to have been introduced by domestic livestock and unrestricted harvest all combined to cause this species to decline and disappear. The last bighorn in northeast Oregon disappeared from the Lostine River Canyon between 1941 and 1945.

This subspecies was reintroduced to several areas beginning in 1971, and efforts continue to expand its range to suitable areas. Further attempts will be made next winter to trap and transplant more sheep to the Wenaha drainage, Coggins said. The livetrapping operation on the Lostine Range serves two purposes, that of providing animals for further transplant, and keeping the Lostine herd at a balanced level.

OREGON WILDLIFE magazine---February 1983.

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AUDUBON MOUNTAIN SHEEP

Robert G. Rollings, Wildlife Biologist, Devils Lake, North Dakota writing for the North Dakota Outdoors gives us some historical background of one of the subspecies of bighorn sheep that have become extinct. He states that: "The history of bighorn in North Dakota is in a small way like that of buffalo--a record of extermination. The original range of the bighorns in North Dakota included all of the very rough Badlands country along and west of the Missouri River. Lewis and Clark in 1805, Maximilian in 1833, and Audubon in 1843, on their trips up the Missouri, found Audubon bighorn sheep on the Badland's Bluff between the points where the Little Knife and White Earth rivers join the Missouri and in other locations along the river. Howard Eaton in the 1870's and Theodore Roosevelt in the 1880s killed bighorn sheep in the Badlands along the Little Missouri River but reported that the sheep were no longer abundant. Howard Eaton killed two bighorns in October 1879, on Bullion Butte and also captured a live ewe that was sent to the Philadelphia Zoological Gardens.

The last known kill was an old ram taken about 1905. This is the last record for Audubon bighorn sheep in North Dakota, although, there are later reports of kills of Audubon bighorn after that date in the Badlands of South Dakota.

In 1956, nine ewes and nine rams were imported from British Columbia, Canada, and released into western North Dakota. They were the California species of the Rocky Mountain bighorn. These animals survived and increased. In 1975, North Dakota had its first modern day season on bighorns. Only rams with 3/4 curl or better were shot. The last season in North Dakota was held in 1979. Forty-four rams were taken 1975 through 1979.

There has been some problem with reproduction in the bighorn sheep. "We get lamb production but many do not live to get intothe population. The Game and Fish Department is looking into this situation and hopefully the problem will be sound and we can again hunt bighorns in North Dakota."

North Dakota Outdoors, December 1982.

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NORTH DAKOTA REPORT

The January 1983 NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS magazine carries field reports of the status of the many wildlife species of that state.

Mr. Jack Smuelson of Mott reports concerning the bighorn sheep of North Dakota by writing that: "Eighty-six head of bighorns were observed on seven Badlands study areas during the 1982 fall aerial survey. These were classified as 16 rams, 50 ewes, two yearlings and 18 lambs. Yearlings are difficult to classify from a fixed wing aircraft, therefore, yearlings are many times classified as adult ewes, consequently, the lamb to ewe ratio is on the conservative side.

Twenty-one percent of bighorn population was classified as lambs which is above the ten year average indicating that production this past spring was pretty good.

Fecal samples collected this summer indicated that our bighorns still have lungworm problem s as larvae/gram figure is high which could be detrimental to lamb survival.

Trap and transplant efforts have been unsuccessful, so far, but will be continued for another season--hopefully this winter's try will result in a relocation.

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BIOLOGIST NAMED 'PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR'

Richard Weaver (left) accepts congratulations from Kent Smith (Planning Branch) on being named "Professional of the Year" by the Western Section of the Wildlife Society. Smith is the outgoing president of that group. (Photo by Pete Herbst)

Richard A. Weaver, wildlife biologist with DFG's Wildlife Management Branch in Sacramento, has been named "Professional of the Year" by the Western Section of the Wildlife Society. The award, known also as the Raymond F. Dasman Award, was given to Weaver for his outstanding work with bighorn sheep in California, and particularly for his efforts to gain public assistance and support for bighorn programs.

The award was presented at the recent annual meeting of the society and the California-Nevada Chapter of the American Fisheries Society in Anaheim.

Since he came to work for the DFG in 1949, Weaver has served in a variety of capacities, but he is best known for his work with bighorn sheep. In 1968 he began the statewide bighorn sheep study. After completing his field work on bighorn, he was reassigned to Sacramento where he continued work on bighorn and also initiated studies of California's black bear and mountain lion.

Recognized as an expert on bighorn sheep in California, Weaver is often sought as a consultant by other western states. He is a charter member and past President of the Desert Bighorn Council. He is a past recipient of the Shikar Safari Club International's Conservationist of the Year" award for his efforts to preserve and improve the status of bighorn sheep in California."

Reprint from--Calif's DFG--FISH AND GAME TODAY, Feb. 1983 issue

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VOLUNTEERS ON THE DESERT

In the July 1982 issue of NEWS BEAT a publication of the Bureau of Land Management lauded the volunteers who have been such a great force in the development of waters for wildlife in the deserts of California.

Vernon Bleich of the California Department of Fish and Game has lauded the efforts of the Volunteer Desert Water and Wildlife Survey for its untiring efforts in providing the vital water for all desert wildlife and especially that done for the bighorn sheep in particular.

There are also other volunteers doing a yeoman service on the desert as is noted in a recent BLM Information Bulletin for January 1983. This states:
" The California Desert District Volunteer Program is working. This has delighted District Manager Gerald E. Hillier. According to the record, 497 individuals have contributed nearly 19,000 hours of work to the BLM during FY82. The estimated value of the work, had it been done by government employeees would have been $164,000. The actual cost to the BLM was $207, Mostly administrative costs. Much is being done that otherwise would not have been done," said Hillier, "People are not only having fun, but they are learning, and getting the sense of satisfaction that only comes from doing something worthwhile--something that is a genuine contribution to the country." Volunteer projects are varied, and include doing reasearch for resource specialists, clerical assistance, on-the-ground improvements in sensitive areas such asAreas of Critical Environmental Concerns (ACEC's) , clean-up projects, and road improvements and repairs."

NOTE:

If you who read this are not a member of one ofthese volunteer groups----then why not "get with-it" and get physically involved. A WORD OF WARNING. This becomming a Volunteer can become habit forming----you are certain to enjoy it and receive a feeling of satisfaction for participation in a job well done. SO, Contact either Glenn Sudmeier or Vernon Bleich for explicit direction of how to get to the project site you have chosen for participation.

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KEYNOT MINE

Under pressure from the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Richard McFarland has withdrawn a proposal for a 9-mile road through wilderness areas to the crest of the Inyo Mountains Helicopters will be used to provide access.

Questions as to the validity of the claim remain open and are being pursued. The decision is important in that it establishes the credibility of conservation groups to be heard and to carry decisions to higher levels.

BURROS ON THE DESERT

This is the title of a documentary film sponsored by the Sierra Club Southern California Regional Conservation Committee. Consultants for the making of this documentary and the areas of primary concern were: of the Grand Canyon area--Steven Carothers, Ph.D, Research Ecologist Museum of Northern Arizona; Western Arizona--Robert Ohmart, Ph.D., Professor of Zoology, Arizona State University; Death Valley National Monument--Peter Sanchez, Resource Management Specialist, Death Valley National Monument; Impact on the Desert Tortoise--Kristin Berry, Ph.D., Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Bureau of Land Management; and the Impact on Bighorn Sheep--Richard Weaver, Wildlife Biologist, California Department of Fish and Game.

Financial sponsors in the making of the film were:

Shikar Safari International Foundation,
Desert Protective Council,
Boone and Crockett Club,
Sierra Club Foundation,
Desert Tortoise Council,
Desert Bighorn Council,
Safari Club International Conservation Fund,
Foundation for North American Wild Sheep,
Tucson Audubon Society,
Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep,
Angeles and Grand Canyon Chapters of Sierra Club,
Arizona Wildlife Federation.

BURROS ON THE DESERT is a 42 minute color film that also has a shorter version of 34 minutes. Rental rates are modest with a fee of $25.00 for two days use. Rentals may be obtained from Consolidated Media Service, 2355 C. Whitman Road, Concord, Calif. 94518

The film has been reviewed by the Desert Bighorn Council meeting in Kerrville, Texas in April 1980, and received comendations.

There has been a great deal of continuing controversy related to the removal or reduction of feral burros from the public lands of the western states during the past 15 years. If the public could only see the ravages caused to the desert environment by these burros it is beleived that the public would wholeheartedly support the removal of these non-native animals from the desert environment.

TAMARISK CONTROL -- ERADICATION

The tamarisk or salt cedar as it is frequently known apparantly came to the desert during the years of 1920 to 1940. At least that is the time it is judged to have appeared in the Death Valley National Monument.

Why the concern about the tamarisk? The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep together with the Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Fish and Game have spent many thousands of dollars to improve desert water sources and to build artificial water storage projects. The tamarisk is a water loving tree or shrub and is frequently found around or near to natural desert seeps and springs. At many of these small water sources the tamarisk is sucking up all or nearly all of the water developed at these places. When the tamarisk is removed the springs and seeps again begin to flow and to serve desert wildlife. We have seen this occur many times in many different places.

The Proposed Natural and Cultural Resources Management Plan and the Final Environmental Impact Statement of the Death Valley National Monument is making plans to eliminate exotic vegetation such as the tamarisk, russian thistle, palm trees and Hornwalt all of which are exotic plants---non-native. A newly developed herbicide known as Tordon RTU has proven effective when painted on the raw cut stumps of the tamarisk. The D.V.N.M. plans to use this procedure.

A letter from Bill Neill informs the editor that he is now taking on the removal of tamarisk from many desert water sources as a personal project. The herbicide Tordon is a product of the Dow Chemical Company and has a cost of $25.00 per gallon. One gallon of the chemical will treat about 600 trees. Neill in a letter to Glenn Sudmeier request a list of water sources that have been invaded by tamarisk, and that Glenn supply some man-power to cut these trees off and then apply the herbicide.

Glenn is only one man and the desert is a very large place. He cannot possibly know but a part of the water sources that have been encroached upon by the tamarisk. However there are many of the Society members who do get out into the desert from time to time and we can each make a listing of places where tamarisk has been noted. We can then in turn notify either Glenn Sudmeier at Star Route 4-C, Hesperia, California 92345 or drop a note to Bill Neill , c/o Union Oil Research, P.O. Box 76, Brea, Calif. 92621-----or send to me the editor and I will forward it.

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OWHYEE COUNTY, IDAHO RECEIVES ANOTHER TRANSPLANT

Twelve California bighorn sheep have been relocated in Owyhee County to start a new herd in the Bruneau River drainage, according to wildlife bureau chief Jerry Thiessen, Department of Fish and Game.

The transplant, completed in about one week, moved two rams, two yearling ewes and eight adult ewes from an existing population in the Deep Creek area, Thiessen stated.

"Our crew tranquilized the sheep before they were airlifted to trucks for the 50-mile ride to their new home and all 12 of them were in good condition when they were released," he added.

Three sheep were lost, however, during the process of darting and handling. They were victims of a stress disease which bighorns are susceptible to, Thiessen said.

The California bighorns got their start in Owyhee County in 1963 with a transplant from British Columbia. The current population is estimated at about 400 animals.

NEWS RELEASE --Idaho Department of Fish and Game---December 26, 1982

WYOMING BIGHORNS MOVED TO IDAHO

Twenty one Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep with an appetite for apple pulp are checking out new surroundings in Idaho's Lost River drainage.

The relocation carried out by the Department of Fish and Game started in Wyoming's Whiskey Basin area, where the apple pulp used for bait lured three rams, 13 ewes and five lambs to drop nets.

They have been released on historic bighorn range in Idaho in line with department policy to reintroduce bighorns "into presently suitable range by trapping and transplanting existing stocks in Idaho or by obtaining stocks from out-of-state."

Last December, 12 California bighorns in Owyhee County were moved from the Deep Creek area to start a new herd in the Bruneau River drainage.

A senior wildlife biologist headed up the Whiskey Basin operation. The sheep were transported in two trucks to Idaho Falls the first day and released on their new range the following morning.

Personnel from the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service helped out at the release site. Releocations are always carried out in cooperation with other land management agencies that may be involved, a department spokesman said.

NEWS---Idaho Department of Fish and Game---January 9, 1983

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DESERT BIGHORNS RELEASED IN MORAY AREA

Eighteeen desert bighorn sheep, former residents of the Colorado River canyon country in southern Nevada were released at the base of 10,000 foot Moray Peak in northeastern Nye County June 22, 1982, the first of many such reintroductions in central Nevada according to state wildlife officials.

Ray Leach of the Nevada Department of Wildlife in Las Vegas explained that the animals roamed the mountains of central Nevada in large numbers up until the 1930's, when a combination of hunting, loss of water and food supply and diseases transmitted by domestic sheep decimated their ranks to the point of near extinction.

Some 30 residents of Tonopah and environs arose in the pre-dawn hours to travel to the release site, located some 70 miles from Tonopah.

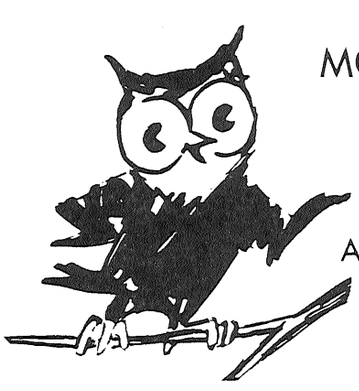
Bureau of Land Management wildlife biologist Dorothy Mason had contacted the volunteers who were needed to form a human fence to route the animals into the mountains instead of out into the desert - whenthey were released from the back of a truck.

BLM area manager Les Monroe noted that Moray Peak is an ideal habitat for the sheep, affording plenty of grazing and the only fresh water stream in the area, as well as plenty of brush and tree cover to protect against predators. He said that the project had been in the works since 1967, when studies on the best places to reintroduce the animals began. The sheep will not have to compete for food with domestic animals as the canyons around the Moray Peak area are closed to cattle grazing. Other plans call for an introduction in the Jefferson Peak area at a later date in 1982.

The sheep were trapped near the Lake Mead Recreational Area using drop nets. The sheep had been lured under the nets by the use of fermented apple pulp.

Two weeks prior to this successful transplant there had been a tragic loss of 16 bighorns in an accidental fire in a parked truck in Las Vegas. These sheep had also been destined for a transplant in Nye County.

Tonopah Times Bonanza issues of July 1 and 21, 1982 ----Courtesy of Warren Kelly



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