

📷 JIM HAMBERLIN



WILD SHEEP<sup>TM</sup>  
*Foundation*

# NORTH AMERICAN CONSERVATION VISION 2020

# MISSION STATEMENT



## VISION *Our desired future state*

To be the best managed, most respected and most influential conservation organization in the world, for the benefit of all stakeholders and wild sheep worldwide.

## PURPOSE *Why we exist*

To Put and Keep Sheep on the Mountain™

## MISSION *What we do*

We enhance wild sheep populations, promote professional wildlife management, educate the public and youth on sustainable use and the conservation benefits of hunting while promoting the interests of the hunter and all stakeholders.

## VALUES *The principles that guide us*

Honesty	Teamwork	Accountability
Integrity	Positive Attitude	Stewardship
Respect for Others	Respect for Wildlife	Loyalty
Hunting Ethics		

*Putting & Keeping Sheep on the Mountain Since 1977*

## North American *WSF Conservation Vision 2020*

Jack Atcheson, Jr., Conservation Committee Chair  
Brett Jefferson, Conservation Committee Vice Chair  
Kevin Hurley, Conservation Director

### INTRODUCTION

The *WSF N.A. Conservation Vision 2020* is one of our most important documents. It reflects the very essence of WSF's combined Mission Statement (Vision, Purpose, Mission, Values), and prioritizes how WSF resources will be applied over the next five years to drive wild sheep conservation and management in North America.

*WSF N.A. Conservation Vision 2020* is a dynamic document that addresses priority goals over the next five years. This document will be updated, augmented, and improved as science, environmental, and social realities evolve, and as budgets allow, but no later than end of Fiscal Year 2020. WSF believes these priority goals are practical, necessary, and achievable by 2020. WSF Committees (e.g., Conservation, Legislative Affairs, Development, Professional Resource Advisory Board, Grant-In-Aid Funding, Chapter & Affiliate, etc.) will prioritize their efforts and resources over the next five years to address and achieve goals identified in *WSF N.A. Conservation Vision 2020*.

By applying a goal-driven approach, and by tracking and measuring our mission impact in implementing *WSF N.A. Conservation Vision 2020*, WSF can remain the best managed, most respected, and most influential conservation organization in the world.

#### 1.1. Overall Goal

North American wild sheep and their habitats are effectively managed, accessible, utilized, and supported by interested stakeholders.

#### 1.2. Species/Subspecies Addressed

Stone's sheep and Dall's sheep (hereafter referred to as thinhorn sheep)  
Rocky Mountain and Desert bighorn sheep (hereafter referred to as bighorn sheep)







### 1.3. Thinhorn Sheep Goals, by 2020

**Goal #1: To have thinhorn sheep management plans developed and implemented in each thinhorn sheep jurisdiction (i.e., Alaska, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Yukon Territory) [Table 1]. As a component of these plans, establish the best possible thinhorn sheep population estimates for each jurisdiction. These estimates will serve as a baseline and enable assessment of population trends through time.**

**Goal #2: Ensure legislative or regulatory policies are in place to provide effective temporal and spatial separation between thinhorn sheep and domestic sheep or goats in all thinhorn sheep jurisdictions.**

**Goal #3: Conduct the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wild Sheep Foundation Thinhorn Sheep Summit by 2017 (dates and location to be determined), to evaluate progress on goals and action items identified in 2014 at the 1<sup>st</sup> WSF Thinhorn Sheep Summit.**

**Table 1. Thinhorn Sheep Management Plan Status, by Jurisdiction**

Jurisdiction	Name of Plan	Plan Date	Web link to Plan (if available)	As of 12/23/2015
Alaska	 Dall Sheep Mgt. Plan	1976		Statewide Dall Sheep Management Plans written in 1976 are currently being updated. Expected completion by May 2017. Old plans being revised available electronically at WSF HQ.
British Columbia	 Status of Thinhorn Sheep	2004	<a href="http://www.synergyecology.ca/docs/Demarchi2004Statusthinhorn_BC.pdf">http://www.synergyecology.ca/docs/Demarchi2004Statusthinhorn_BC.pdf</a>	A thinhorn sheep management plan for BC is currently underway; expected completion by March 2017
NW Territories	 Not Found			No Territory-Wide Management Plan Available via Internet
Yukon Territory	 Not Found			No Territory-Wide Management Plan Available via Internet



Wild Sheep Management Plan Not Found/Not Available/Not Current (> 10 years old)



Wild Sheep Management Plan Found/Not Current (> 10 years old)



Wild Sheep Management Plan Found/Current (< 10 years old)

#### **1.4. Bighorn Sheep Goals, by 2020**

***Goal #1: To have bighorn sheep management plans developed, updated, and implemented in each of 17 U.S. or Canadian jurisdictions with a bighorn sheep resource [Table 2].***

***Goal #2: In cooperation with WSF Chapters and Affiliates and partner agencies or organizations, and based on the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group 2012 document "Recommendations for Domestic Sheep and Goat Management in Wild Sheep Habitats," WSF will develop a comprehensive strategy to facilitate effective temporal and spatial separation between domestic sheep and goats, infected bighorn sheep, and healthy bighorn sheep in each of 17 jurisdictions. A detailed outline of this Separation Strategy will be completed no later than June 2016. For information, assistance from jurisdictional Departments of Agriculture (or equivalent) will be sought to help understand existing protocol(s) required and used to separate infected livestock from healthy livestock.***

***Goal #3: Because the most important threat to North American wild sheep populations is respiratory disease contracted from domestic sheep or goats or already-infected wild sheep, WSF will continue to support applied research designed to reduce the impact of respiratory disease on bighorn sheep. On-the-ground solutions to high-risk contact situations are imperative. By 2020 continue to educate North American wildlife and land management agency leadership on the anticipated impacts of pneumonia in bighorn sheep. A better-informed public will also influence political solutions formulated to address potential disease transmission.***













***Goal #4: Conduct the 1<sup>st</sup> Wild Sheep Foundation Bighorn Sheep Summit by 2018 (dates and location to be determined).***

***Goal #5: In cooperation with the governments of 6 states in Mexico with bighorn sheep (Baja California, Baja California Sur, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon), Mexico's federal wildlife agency (SEMARNAT), and WSF individual or organizational partners in Mexico, compile information on desert bighorn sheep population estimates and trends, past translocation actions, harvest, current wild sheep distribution, and identification of potential sites available to continue or enhance restoration of desert bighorn sheep in Mexico.***














***Goal #6: Encourage inclusion of 6 states in Mexico and SEMARNAT in the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Wild Sheep Working Group.***



**Table 2. Bighorn Sheep Management Plan Status, by Jurisdiction**

Jurisdiction	Name of Plan	Plan Date	Weblink to Plan (if available)	As of 12/23/2015
Alberta	 BHS Mgt. Plan Draft	2015	<a href="http://esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-management/documents/BighornSheepMgmtPlan-Draft-Jun25-2015A.pdf">http://esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-management/documents/BighornSheepMgmtPlan-Draft-Jun25-2015A.pdf</a>	
Arizona	 BHS Mgt. Guidelines	2011	<a href="http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/conservation/CGMP/Bighorn%20Sheep%20Species%20Management%20Guidelines%209-15-2011.pdf">http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/conservation/CGMP/Bighorn%20Sheep%20Species%20Management%20Guidelines%209-15-2011.pdf</a>	
British Columbia	 Status of RM & CA BHS	2000	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/statusrpts/b99.pdf">http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/statusrpts/b99.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/statusrpts/b98.pdf">http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/statusrpts/b98.pdf</a>	
California	 Desert BHS Conservation Plan (outside Peninsular Ranges) Draft  Sierra Nevada BHS Recovery Plan  Recovery Plan for BHS in the Peninsular Ranges, CA	2012 2007 2000	The 2012 draft plan is currently being finalized. Expected completion during Calendar Year 2016. <a href="https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=27634&amp;inline=true">https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=27634&amp;inline=true</a> <a href="http://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery_plan/001025.pdf">http://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery_plan/001025.pdf</a>	
Colorado	 BHS Mgt. Plan 2009-2019	2009	<a href="http://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/Commission/2009/Jan/big_hornSheepPlan1208.pdf">http://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/Commission/2009/Jan/big_hornSheepPlan1208.pdf</a>	
Idaho	 BHS Mgt. Plan 2010	2010	<a href="http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/wildlife/planBighorn.pdf">http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/wildlife/planBighorn.pdf</a>	
Montana	 BHS Conservation Strategy	2010	<a href="http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/bighorn/">http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/bighorn/</a>	
Nebraska	 BHS Mgt. Approach	2008	<a href="http://www.wildsheepworkinggroup.com/resources/jurisdictional-management-plans/nebraska/">http://www.wildsheepworkinggroup.com/resources/jurisdictional-management-plans/nebraska/</a>	
Nevada	 BHS Mgt. Plan	October 2001	<a href="http://www.ndow.org/uploadedFiles/ndoworg/Content/public_documents/Wildlife_Education/Publications/bighorn_management_plan.pdf">http://www.ndow.org/uploadedFiles/ndoworg/Content/public_documents/Wildlife_Education/Publications/bighorn_management_plan.pdf</a>	
New Mexico	 Not Found			



Jurisdiction	Name of Plan	Plan Date	Weblink to Plan (if available)	As of 12/23/2015
North Dakota 	BHS Mgt. Plan 2013-2023	2013	<a href="http://www.wildsheepworkinggroup.com/resources/jurisdictional-management-plans/north-dakota/">http://www.wildsheepworkinggroup.com/resources/jurisdictional-management-plans/north-dakota/</a>	
Oregon 	BHS & Mountain Goat Mgt. Plan	December 2003	<a href="http://www.wafwa.org/Documents%20and%20Settings/37/Site%20Documents/Working%20Groups/Wild%20Sheep/Jurisdictional%20Plans/sgplan_1203.pdf">http://www.wafwa.org/Documents%20and%20Settings/37/Site%20Documents/Working%20Groups/Wild%20Sheep/Jurisdictional%20Plans/sgplan_1203.pdf</a>	
South Dakota 	BHS Action Plan Draft	2013	<a href="http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/plans/docs/2013-bighornsheep-draftplan.pdf">http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/plans/docs/2013-bighornsheep-draftplan.pdf</a>	
Texas 	Bighorn Restoration Priorities Revised BHS Mgt. Plan Draft	2006 2002	No State-Wide Management Plan Available via Internet; hard copies on file @ WSF HQ	
Utah 	Statewide BHS Mgt. Plan	June 2013	<a href="http://www.wafwa.org/Documents%20and%20Settings/37/Site%20Documents/Working%20Groups/Wild%20Sheep/Jurisdictional%20Plans/bighorn-plan.pdf">http://www.wafwa.org/Documents%20and%20Settings/37/Site%20Documents/Working%20Groups/Wild%20Sheep/Jurisdictional%20Plans/bighorn-plan.pdf</a>	
Washington 	Game Mgt. Plan 2015-2021	2015	<a href="http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01676/wdfw01676.pdf">http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01676/wdfw01676.pdf</a> <a href="http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01676/revised_bighorn_sheep_herd_objectives_091415.pdf">http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01676/revised_bighorn_sheep_herd_objectives_091415.pdf</a>	
Wyoming 	Not Found		No State-Wide Management Plan Available via Internet	
Baja California 	Not Found		No State-Wide Management Plan Available via Internet	
Baja CA Sur 	Not Found		No State-Wide Management Plan Available via Internet	
Chihuahua 	Not Found		No State-Wide Management Plan Available via Internet	
Coahuila 	Not Found		No State-Wide Management Plan Available via Internet	
Nuevo Leon 	Not Found		No State-Wide Management Plan Available via Internet	
Sonora 	Not Found		No State-Wide Management Plan Available via Internet	

## 1. CURRENT STATUS of WILD SHEEP in NORTH AMERICA

### 1.1. Stone's Sheep

Estimates suggest there are approximately 16,000 Stone's sheep in northern British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. Current comprehensive management plans have not yet been established and implemented in these jurisdictions. British Columbia's Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) has initiated a thinhorn sheep management plan for the province with an anticipated date of completion by March 2017. Distribution mapping has been updated via the Wild Sheep Registry. Measures to protect migration corridors and wintering and lambing areas are needed. The WSF Thinhorn Sheep Summit in April 2014 was the most comprehensive effort to date to connect interested stakeholders (see below).

#### Stone's Sheep Population & Ram Harvest Trends (WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group)

1990- 14,500	466♂
2000- 14,000-17,000	278♂
2010- 12,900-18,000	333♂
2014- 13,000-19,000	??♂

### 2.2. Dall's Sheep

Estimates suggest there are 80,000-100,000 Dall's sheep in Alaska, Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and northern British Columbia. Current comprehensive management plans have not yet been implemented in these jurisdictions. Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has initiated an updated Dall's sheep management plan for the state, with an anticipated completion date by May 2017. British Columbia's MFLNRO has initiated preparation of a thinhorn sheep management plan for the province, with an anticipated date of completion by March 2017. Seasonal distribution and habitat mapping is vague, as are measures to protect migration corridors and wintering and lambing areas. The WSF Thinhorn Sheep Summit in April 2014 was the most comprehensive effort to date to connect interested stakeholders (see below).

#### Dall's Sheep Population & Ram Harvest Trends (WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group)

1990- 87,300-108,000	1914♂
2000- 81,700-101,500	1148♂
2010- 76,700-96,100	1161♂
2014- 42,800-49,500 (AK only)	????♂



Priority action items common to all jurisdictions were identified at the 2014 Thinhorn Sheep Summit held in Richmond, BC, and require continuing effort. An additional recommendation (#8) to benefit thinhorn sheep management has been added (below).

- 1) Develop comprehensive management plans for thinhorn sheep where needed.
- 2) Develop legislation, restrictions, or regulations to prevent contact between domestic sheep or goats and thinhorn sheep to minimize risk of disease transmission.
- 3) Develop access management plans for motorized use (ATV, OHV, helicopter, etc.) in thinhorn sheep range. Develop and enforce regulations on access or travel management aimed at protection of important thinhorn sheep habitat.
- 4) Build trust, partnerships, and awareness with all user groups to improve communication and enhance collaboration.
- 5) Refine WAFWA thinhorn sheep distribution and habitat maps.
- 6) Encourage development and implementation of predator management plans that meet agency management objectives.
- 7) Develop and implement thinhorn sheep habitat enhancement plans.
- 8) Encourage inclusion of the Northwest Territories in the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Wild Sheep Working Group.

### **2.3. Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep**

Estimates suggest there are ~48,000 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in 14 U.S. states (ND, SD, NE, MT, WY, CO, NM, AZ, UT, ID, NV, WA, OR, CA) and 2 Canadian provinces (AB, BC).

#### **Bighorn Sheep Population & Harvest Trends (WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group)**

1990- 43,675	858♂
2000- 46,295	835♂
2010- 48,600	967♂
2014- 48,000	???

Throughout their range and over the past century or more, bighorn sheep have been very susceptible to, and impacted by, respiratory diseases. Current knowledge has implicated a suite of disease agents, most notably *Pasteurella (Mannheimia)* and *Mycoplasma*



*ovipneumoniae* bacteria, as the agents of greatest concern. Die-offs are frequent events in many bighorn ranges. Disease vaccine research is a slow and costly undertaking, and to date, positive results remain beyond researchers grasp. Efforts must focus on prevention or minimization of bacterial transmission and post-transmission management to limit further spread.

## **2.4. Desert Bighorn Sheep**

Estimates suggest there are ~39,000 desert bighorn sheep in 7 U.S. states (AZ, CA, CO, NV, NM, TX, UT) and 6 states in Mexico (Baja California, Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Sonora).

### **Desert Sheep Population & Harvest Trends (WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group)**

1990- 22,525	266♂
2000- 26,050	330♂
2010- 29,145	451♂
2014- ??????	???♂

Priority action items for bighorn sheep include:

- 1) Based on an outline completed by WSF by June 2016, solicit assistance from WSF Chapters, Affiliates, and interested stakeholders in developing comprehensive, written effective separation strategies for each state or province where interaction between domestic sheep or goats and bighorn sheep occurs.
- 2) Implement an effective social media campaign to inform and educate stakeholders and the general public about the risks associated with contact between domestic sheep or goats and bighorn sheep.
- 3) Strive to collaborate with the domestic sheep industry to develop informational materials to inform and educate private-land operations (i.e., hobby herds, farm flocks, 4-H or FFA youth programs) about the risks of contact between domestic sheep or goats and bighorn sheep.
- 4) Strive for federal legislative language that will direct U.S. and Crown federal land management agencies (USFS, BLM, and Crown lands) to manage for effective temporal and spatial separation between domestic sheep or goats and bighorn sheep.

- 5) Actively support efforts of the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group and the WAFWA Wildlife Health Committee Adaptive West-Wide Disease Management Venture which is designed to address varying bighorn sheep demographic responses to respiratory disease challenges.
- 6) Oppose translocation of bighorn sheep into areas occupied by domestic sheep or goats where risk of contact cannot be assured.
- 7) Promote sharing of information and exchange of Disease Outbreak Response (DOR) protocols with jurisdictions that do not currently have DOR protocols.
- 8) Advocate for removal of feral horses, burros, and exotic ungulates prior to translocation of bighorn sheep, followed by active management to maintain numbers of feral equids or exotic ungulates at established, acceptable levels (e.g., BLM's Appropriate Management Level).
- 9) Advocate for development of collaborative land management or wildlife-management agency access management plans for motorized use (ATV, OHV, helicopter, etc.). Develop and enforce regulations on access or travel management aimed at protection of important bighorn sheep habitat.
- 10) Advocate for federal land management agencies to programmatically address the needs of state or provincial wildlife management agencies to access (via ground, water, or air) and scientifically manage wild sheep populations and their habitats (e.g., prescribed burning, water development, and maintenance) to achieve identified goals and objectives.
- 11) Encourage development and implementation of predator management plans that meet wildlife agency management objectives.
- 12) Advocate for ram harvest of 1.5-4% of estimated bighorn sheep populations, recognizing that some populations may need a higher percentage of ewe removal (either through translocation or harvest) to align bighorn sheep numbers with quality and quantity of available habitat.
- 13) Support efforts to increase participation by young hunters and explore opportunities such as differential, favorable-license issuance of wild sheep permits to young hunters.



WILD SHEEP<sup>TM</sup>  
*Foundation*

720 ALLEN AVE. • CODY, WY 82414  
307.527.6261 • [www.WildSheepFoundation.org](http://www.WildSheepFoundation.org)