

MONTANA WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

Minutes-Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Location-Telephone Conference Call

Board Members Present: Jack Chambers,(President), Mike Colpo, Doug Dreeszen, (Secretary), Tom Grimes, Steve Kline, Mike Menke, (Treasurer), Dan Spicher, and Jim Weatherly, (Executive Director)

Directors Absent: Glenn Erickson, (Vice President), and Bruce Sterling

Members Present: None

Special Guest: Shawn T. Stewart, Biologist, Montana FWP, Red Lodge, MT

Call to Order: The Board of Directors meeting was called to order by President Jack Chambers at 6:32 PM. Jack C. introduced Shawn Stewart who had also called in on the conference call so that he could give an overview/briefing to the Board concerning a joint Grant/ GIA titled: **Comparative Studies of Sympatric Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goats in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.** The other applicant on this project is Kevin Hurley, Wyoming Game and Fish Dept, Cody, Wyoming.

Shawn Stewart proceeded to give a description of the project and the purpose and intent of the study. Shawn stated that the area to be studied would be the Beartooth/Absaroka Mountains in Montana, the areas of bighorn sheep habitat in Wyoming, adjacent to Yellowstone Park, sheep habitat in Idaho, adjacent to Yellowstone Park, and Yellowstone Park itself. A team of biologists will initiate a research effort focused on addressing key issues of bighorn sheep and mountain goat ecology and the potential for competition among these two ungulates. Shawn explained that he has an existing data base from his observation and knowledge of mountain goats and bighorn sheep dating back to the early 1970's. They will look at goat habitat GIS model relative to bighorn sheep habitat to try and determine what is taking place in the Yellowstone Eco-system concerning bighorns now using areas where goats have disappeared. There are also some questions about potential conflicts on alpine winter range between goats and bighorns that this study will hope to answer. He stated that Wyoming is also concerned because there are goats in some of their core sheep areas, where goats have never been observed. After answering some questions from board members about Yellowstone Park's participation and other matters, Shawn was told that the Board would later discuss the matter further and let him know if we, MT WSF, would fund our portion of this grant. Our involvement would be \$5,000.00.

Approval of the Minutes: Minutes of the last meeting (General Membership Meeting), in Helena, MT, on March 13, 2010, were discussed with only one minor correction noted. **Motion: It was moved and seconded that the March 13, 2010, minutes be approved. Motion Passed.**

Treasurer's Report: Jim W, reported the current balance is \$105,804.32, with approximately \$12,122.00 in accounts as follows: Plains Signs \$3000.00, Skalkaho Weed Control \$6,300.00, Petty Creek Weed Control \$1,922.00, and Highlands Sheep Account \$900.00. **Motion: It was moved and seconded that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as reported. Motion Passed.**

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Membership: Jim W. reported one (1) new member since March 13th. We have 258 current members with 27 expirations in March 2010. Jim W. lead a discussion about our Chapter possibly having some sort of membership contest in the near future. Further ideas on the matter were discussed and it was agreed to put something together in the near future and get it approved by the board so that it could be out to the general membership in the next Newsletter that will be going out shortly. One idea was to include the existing members in a drawing for a rifle who sponsor a new member, which is similar to the present new member drawing that is held at our annual banquet/fundraiser.

Informational Items: Jim W reported that he had attended the April 8, 2010, MT FWP Commission Meeting and that the FWP is going to change some of the department's administrative rules concerning the process of awarding the "auction license", as the same rules have been in place since the beginning. The FWP will award the license at their August meeting. Jim W. also reported that on the May 13th FWP Commission Meeting, the Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy will be approved and that it would be nice to have some MT WSF members/directors present. Tom Carlson and Glenn Erickson will also be acknowledged at this meeting for their involvement in this endeavor. The final quotas for sheep, moose and goat are also set for this meeting.

Old Business: Jim W reported that he had a discussion with Jim Kropp the Chief FWP Game Warden in Helena about our involvement with the Tip-Mont Program about bighorn sheep poaching rewards.

Click Ranch Habitat Preservation- no activity and nothing new with this project.

Die-off Status and Future Monitoring Plans: Jim W. reported that due to the bighorn sheep die offs this past winter, it will give us a great opportunity to try and educate the community on the dangers of interaction between domestic sheep and wild sheep, resulting in a loss of bighorn sheep that Montana recently experienced. He said that the FWP is also looking into an educational campaign once the results are out from the Lab. We should stay in contact with FWP and perhaps work together on this matter.

Plans for 2011 Fundraiser: Jack C, reported that Jim W, Steve K, and he recently met and visited about changing the format of the 2011 banquet/fundraiser which will be held in Missoula on March 13, 2011, at the Hilton-Garden Inn. They feel that our chapter needs to change our program from a two day event to a one day affair. We would not have any booths, but still solicit sheep mounts and perhaps have a Saturday morning brunch for members and guests. At this morning gathering we could have some drawings, a mini-auction and socialize. Folks then could go to the seminars in the afternoon and then finally go to the evening banquet/fundraiser. One of the reasons for the one day event is to save money as there haven't been a great number of people coming to the Friday event. It was agreed that these board members could start a committee and explore this more and report back to the rest of the board.

Review of the 2010 fundraiser: There weren't many comments on this. Doug D, did mention that the system of buying raffle tickets and placing the ticket stub into the barrel needs to be improved in the future. This past year the tickets were purchased at one location and the stubs deposited at a different location that caused some confusion to the purchasers and the door attendants, who were checking folks going into the banquet hall.

Jack C. again thanked Glenn E for a job well done being the Fundraiser Chairman.

New Business: Beartooth/Absaroka bighorn sheep vs. mountain goat habitat study: The board discussed this matter further and Shawn Stewart's presentation. **Motion: It was moved and seconded that we would fund this project for the sum of \$5,000.00. Motion Passed.**

HD 482 Domestic Sheep removal: Jim W reported that he had been in contact with a rancher who has 100 head of domestic sheep in north Fergus County and close to bighorn sheep in HD 482. There are some concerns that they present a danger to the bighorns and will mix with them. Jim W has been in contact with the local FWP and apparently there are three (3) other small herds of domestics in the area, but the FWP isn't real alarmed about this, as the FWP has been working with the ranchers. Jim W will pursue the issue further and try to negotiate on some program and look into some alternatives with the ranchers. A discussion followed that this is a touchy situation and that we have to be careful on the monetary end of it and the confidentiality of all parties involved.

Big Three (3) Animal Coordinator for FWP, Moose, Sheep and Goats: Jim W led a discussion that this would be a prudent program for the FWP. However, due to the present budget concerns with in the FWP it appears that it wouldn't get off the ground. Jim W is drawing up a letter to document good reasons why this position is positive for FWP.

Future Bighorn Sheep Transplants: Jim W reported that FWP is aggressively looking for bighorn sheep transplant sites. Doug D. reported that the Wyoming Game and Fish has moved their domestic goat herd-project at the Yellowtail Wildlife Area, south of the Pryor's and away from our Pryor Mountain bighorns. If we could just get Tim Woods to get rid of his domestic goats the Pryor's would be a good location for a transplant.

Tag Quotas for 2010: Jim W reported that he went in front of the FWP Commission in the past and successfully solicited (1) sheep license for HD 270 for the 2010 season. This is one of the areas of this past winter's bighorn sheep die-offs. It now appears that after a recent sheep survey in this area that there are a lot of rams that have survived, estimated at 45 mature rams. He asked if it would be OK to go back to the commission and pursue a second tag for this area. He was given the blessings of the board to pursue this.

Newsletter Due Out April 30: Anyone having something for the Newsletter please contact the editor Earl.

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Request for Funding- Region 6 FWP Enforcement: Jim W reported that he had just recently received a funding request for Operational Funding (Surveillance Equipment and Super Cub Flight Time) from Sgt. Shane Reno, a Game Warden in Havre, MT, and that he had just e-mailed this out to the board, just before the meeting. Doug D. reported that he had it in his hands and would like to comment on it. Doug D. said that he had a problem with some of the language in the content and the purpose of the request because there was an indication that this equipment was going to be used for surveillance of legal hunting and that he didn't think we should be funding equipment to keep tabs of legal hunters in the field. After a lively discussion, it was also brought up that we had received reports last hunting season of FWP buzzing legal sheep hunters in the Missouri Breaks with a Super Cub. This funding request was tabled at this time.

Montana Taxidermy Assoc. Request, through Ralph Swang: Ralph Swang, a taxidermist and member of MT WSF forwarded a proposal to us to have us support a project that they are involved with the MT FWP. This deals with them and the FWP working together on salvaging capes and skins of animals that are killed by the FWP or in some cases road kills. Jim W. said that he would send the information out in the near future and the board could read it over and vote one way or another in supporting this.

WSF Summit Meeting: Jim W. reported the Summit Meeting with all the Chapters is in June in Edmonton, Alberta. He will probably fly to attend this event. He was wondering if anyone else is interested in going. Mike Colpo said that he might be interested.

Director Nominations: Jim W reported that Mike Menke, Doug Dreeszen and Glenn Erickson are up for re-election. Nominations usually takes place at our summer get together in July, but they will be posted in the Newsletter later this summer.

Jack Chambers adjourned the meeting at 8:55 PM. The next meeting will be in mid June. We will work out a date and time later. M. Colpo reported that it would be nice to have a meeting sometime face to face other than at the General Membership meeting at our fundraiser.

Respectfully submitted:

Doug Dreeszen, Secretary