



# Sheep Fever Journal

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## Hunt of a Lifetime

By Bob Baker

I have dreamed of completing my four North American Sheep since high school. Over the years I have gradually worked towards this goal, sharing many fun adventures along the way with hunting partners and my wife.

I purchased the final tag, for a desert bighorn, at the FNAWS' s convention in Salt Lake City in February of 2009. The finish line was in sight! We were headed to the El Vizcaino Biosphere to hunt with Ejido Alfredo V Bonfil for desert Sheep! However; I needed to get in shape for the big event. I was seventy four years old with two artificial knees and I was not about to let this final chapter in one of my life's ambitions be compromised because I wasn't ready. I spent hours practicing at the local gun range and still more hours at the local gym working on my endurance and stamina. I knew I may not be the fastest one up the mountain, but get there I would!

In November 2009 we made our way south to Mexico. The desert scenery and the Sea of Cortez were spectacular and it wasn't long before we arrived at a very comfortable base camp at the base of the Three Virgins Mountain in the El Vizcaino Biosphere. We were greeted by the whole crew and treated to a delicious meal and then went off to bed. Next day we visited the sights of the local town of San Ignacio and then in the afternoon we glassed the mountain before us from the deck of the base camp, but no sheep were spotted. That evening it was decided that we would head out for a spike camp early the next morning and spend most of the day glassing the territory as we went.

We awoke to much activity; burros to load, breakfast to eat, mules to saddle, guns, scopes, backpacks to assemble, lists to check twice. Finally we drove to the end of the road and began our adventure up into the mountains in search of my final sheep. The mules we rode were sure footed and knew the way; the burros would come along behind us at their own pace and head



Bob Baker with his fourth Bighorn ram

straight to the spike camp. Everyone else walked the entire way. Great training for their other passion, soccer, according to Israel! We climbed the mountain and rode just below the ridge-line. We glassed all day and just before sunset Alfredo and crew spotted two rams a LONG way off down the mountain and several draws over. We all looked them over and watched them feed. They were definitely good specimens but, oh my, they were in rough terrain and definitely a long way from us. Two of the crew stayed behind to watch the sheep bed down and the rest of us proceeded to spike camp. The burros and their attendants had arrived and camp was quickly assembled. We ate, the crew played a spirited game of cards and we soon retired to our tents in anticipation of a long day the next day.

We awoke to brilliant sunshine but cool temperatures. We ate breakfast and by 7 am we were all headed out on foot in search of SHEEP. The desert was alive due to the recent rain

*Hunt of a Lifetime - continued on page 7*

## Problem Wolves Euthanized - Lawsuit Filed Against ODFW

One would think that the solution to wolves killing livestock is clear - eliminate the perpetrators. Not everyone thinks so and now Oregon's wolf issue has been elevated to a new level with a lawsuit filed against the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The suit was filed on July 12 by Oregon Wild, Hells Canyon Preservation Council, Cascadia Wildlands, and Center for Biological Diversity. The petitioners challenge ODFW's orders

*Wolf Lawsuit - continued on page 6*

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## Quick Report of July 18 Board Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Vice President, Mike Boethin. (President Larry Hunts is recovering from illness and hospital stay - get well soon Larry!) Eighteen Board members were in attendance, four other members, and one visitor.

The project committee requested \$1,600.00 for materials to construct transportation crates to be used for transporting goats in the transplant from the Elkhorn Mountains to the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in the Cascade Mountains. The funding was approved.

Another project under consideration is funding for research of the Hunts Rattlesnake herd and the herd on Ten Mile Rim by aerial methods. The objective is to learn more about the movement of the sheep between the herds and if they are moving to Oregon from Nevada and from Nevada to Oregon. The board authorized up to \$3000.00 upon the project committee's approval of further research of this matter.

Our existing trailer is in need of new decals. Alan D and Brent T will investigate getting the decals replaced. This brought up the subject of replacing the small trailer with one large enough to accommodate all our items including the long poles and bags for the new tent purchased with the youth day funds. Brent T and Dave G offered to look into the cost of a new larger trailer.

## Saddle Creek Bighorn Herd is Increasing

A survey was conducted on June 23rd, 2010 and 33 bighorns were classified along the Hells Canyon Rim north of Hat Point Lookout. There were 17 ewes (including 3 yearlings), 10 lambs and 6 rams.

This is a very interesting group of bighorns since it started from just 6 ewes from the Lostine herd (Minam Unit), that were transplanted to the lower elevation

Cow Creek Drainage (Snake River Unit) in February, 2005. That summer, the 6 ewes moved to higher elevation in the Hat Point Area (17 air miles) for the spring and summer where they lambed. The six returned to the Cow Creek winter ranges in the winter of 2005-06 but remained resident in the Hat Point area after that.

*Information provided by Vic Coggins.*



## 2010 Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Symposium

*By Jeremy Thompson*

Oregon had the honor of hosting the 17th Biennial Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Symposium in Hood River in June. This meeting is used as a forum for sheep and goat biologists and managers from throughout North America to come together to discuss issues and research involving sheep and goats. Topics of discussion at the meeting ranged from goat ecology to disease research and response. Being able to come together as professionals provides an excellent opportunity to discuss and further everyone's knowledge about the issues with these species.

One of the highlights of any symposium is the field trip, and this year was no exception. Attendees were treated to a float trip down the Deschutes River to look at one of Oregon's strongest herds of California Bighorns. While the cool wet weather wasn't the most ideal for a raft trip, it provided excellent bighorn viewing. At the end of the day, Oregon FNAWS hosted a fantastic barbeque, and an atmosphere for all river goers to discuss the day's escapades. Everyone agreed that the day was a success, and the evening festivities were second to none!



*The Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Symposium was held in Hood River this year and included a raft trip down the Deschutes River in Bighorn Sheep country.*

*We are always looking for information to put in the FNAWS newsletter. We welcome your stories, photographs, and comments. Newsletter contacts: Editor: Jerry Simmons - jwsimm2004@yahoo.com; Jane Hunts - janehunts@starband.net; Mike Boethin - mikebo@bendbroadband.com*

# Banquet and Fund Raiser a Success

The April 10th banquet at Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino in Warm Springs, Oregon provided Oregon FNAWS members with a great setting to enjoy gaming, golf, swimming, and other activities as well as offering delicious dinner. Along with the fun and games, members were generous in bidding on auction items to the tune of nearly \$75,000.00. In addition, there were receipts for raffles of over \$19,000.00. After banquet costs, the fund raiser brought in about \$24,000.00 profit to the organization.

The annual banquet is FNAWS largest fund raiser. It's only because of the generosity of those willing to donate to our cause that Oregon FNAWS is able to fund the wildlife conservation and enhancement programs that we do. Thank you all!



*Fun and games at the 2010 FNAWS annual banquet and fund raiser*



*Digging in at the Friday night Tail-gate Party!*



*The Ruger hand gun raffle was a big hit. Displaying the pistol is Mike Boethin and Brent Tannock, our banquet event organizers.*



*A happy winner from the wall of guns*



*The 2011 annual banquet will again be at Kah-nee-ta Resort in Warm Springs, OR*

# Deschutes River Project

By Jeremy Thompson

## Oregon FNAWS helps lead the way to improved habitat

The Lower Deschutes Management Area (LDMA) was established in 1983 and encompasses nearly 8000 acres within the lower 18 miles of the Deschutes River. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), has management responsibility for the area, and since LDMA's establishment has been attempting to restore and improve habitat conditions within the wildlife area where upwards of 450 California Bighorn sheep reside.

Control of noxious weeds is one of the fundamental tasks for management of LDMA. Over the past 15 years one of the primary focuses has been on Scotch thistle, a native of Europe that thrives within the river corridor. Scotch Thistle gets an "A" rating on Oregon's noxious weed list and has the capability to grow up to 12 feet tall. When left unchecked, this plant dominates riparian and important spring seepage habitats and chokes out native vegetation. This aggressive plant can form stands so dense that they are impenetrable to wildlife. ODFW has battled thistle along the eastern shore of the river, keeping the plant in check and allowing for the re-establishment of native riparian vegetation. The western shore has proven to be a greater challenge, primarily due to accessibility. Area managers can access the eastern side of the Deschutes via an old railroad bed that now serves as an access road. The only access to the western bank is by boat.

In 2005, a group of dedicated volunteers from Oregon FNAWS decided to assist ODFW in starting on the ground control activities for Scotch thistle along the western bank of the river. With shovels in hand and a fleet of rafts and drift boats, this group chopped thistle by hand for a weekend in June. The camaraderie was great, the work hard, and the progress slow. For three years, OR-FNAWS dedicated a weekend in June to chopping thistle, floating the river and looking at sheep. Everything was great, except that little progress seemed to be made in reducing thistle populations along the river.

For 2008, a new approach was taken. OR-FNAWS applied for and received a grant from the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Weed Board. The purpose of the grant was to hire a contract herbicide applicator to float the river and hand spray out the major infestations of Scotch thistle. In that first year, the contractor spent three weeks on the river and was able to spray the majority of state owned lands along the west side of



Volunteer crew of thistle cutters

the river. Another change was the addition of a partner group for the project, Oregon Trout (now Freshwater Trust). When the June project volunteer weekend came around, what was seen by volunteers looked extremely different than in years past. Volunteer numbers were doubled, and instead of cutting thistle forests, workers were left hunting out the small areas and individual plants that were skipped by the chemical treatment. This gave our volunteers the ability to cover twice the ground, and more time to look at sheep in the evening!

In 2009, OR-FNAWS and Freshwater Trust were again successful at acquiring a grant from ODA; in addition monies were secured from the Bureau of Land Management, allowing the group to expand the project to cover most of the state and federal lands from Mack's Canyon (river mile 24) to the mouth, as well as begin reseeding heavily impacted areas. For the coming year, another grant is being sought and the hope is to make even greater progress in getting a handle on invasive weeds within the Deschutes River canyon, and ultimately improve, enhance, and protect the natural resource areas along the river for sheep and all other creatures that call this home.

It has been great to see this project grow as collaboration not only between conservation groups and State and Federal Agencies but also as a partnership between fish, clean water and wildlife interests. From the nine of us that started the project in 2005, to the 30 that joined us this last year, this is an annual project for the membership to be very proud of!

### Scotch Thistle



# Deschutes River Project 2010

## Report by George Houston

Most of us met on Saturday morning, June 12th, at the last exit going East in The Dalles (#87) to sign official ODFW volunteer documents, get organized, and head up to Mack's Canyon to pick up the vehicles and start the shuttle process.

We had folks from OR-FNAWS and Oregon Freshwater Trust (formerly Oregon Trout) and of course we were once again hosted and fed by ODFW staff from The Dalles. Jeremy Thompson reports that we had 6 boats on the river and 24 people to do the weed chopping. The folks on the river floated from Mack's to the ODFW campground at Harris Canyon, about 10-12 river miles down river.

The first boats started showing up at camp late afternoon and were treated to a superb steak dinner. We enjoyed a long evening of discussions of multiple subjects. First thing Sunday morning, ODFW staff was on breakfast detail with eggs, bacon and other related goodies. The boats were underway by 9:30 a.m. for a bit more weed chopping on their way to the take out! Most all of the team was off the river by 3:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon! We very much appreciate all of the support from ODFW, Oregon Freshwater Trust and Oregon FNAWS!

The weed contractor finished his third cycle of herbicide treatment and we look forward to continued riparian restoration projects in the Fall!

## Report by Alan Day

Saturday morning the crew met at the Dalles and traveled to Macks Canyon with only one flat tire. After making lunch the crew put in the river to float down to the area to cut thistles while the shuttle crew drove the pickups to the mouth of the Deschutes River. Then the food & gear trucks were driven on the old railroad grade to the camp site to about mile post 10.5 on the river. After a hard day of cutting thistle the crew had a good steak dinner.

Saturday morning the crew had a good breakfast and then traveled up the river to view Big Horn Sheep, rattle snakes, and Indian Petroglyphs on the rocks. After that the thistle crew then traveled down river to cut more thistle



Deschutes River Bighorn Sheep

Photo by Alan Day

### OR-FNAWS Membership Application (Please Print)

Checks Payable to: OR-FNAWS

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Individual - \$30  Annual Family - \$55

3 yr Individual - \$75  Life - \$500

VISA  MC  AX  Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Charge for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Check Enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send application to: **Membership Committee Oregon FNAWS,**

**Attn: Linda South, PO Box 1088, North Plains, OR 97133-1088**

FOR QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT LINDA SOUTH at dlsouth@gmail.com

# Youth Outdoor Day 2010

By Tom Peterson, Public Education Officer OR FNAWS

The Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation held their 8th Annual Youth Outdoor Day at E.E. Wilson Wildlife area north of Corvallis, OR on Saturday, June 5, 2010.

In conjunction with ODFW, SCI, RMEF, OHA, DU and OR Trout, to name just a few of the sponsors, there were a myriad of outdoor activities to occupy the kids interests. To name a few activities, there was skeet shooting, archery, fly casting, decoy painting, bird-house building, elk & duck calling, wilderness cooking and survival from various sponsors and there was Bighorn sheep education from OR FNAWS.



With 790 kids and 1,590 parents attending, it was a great venue for educating people about wild sheep conservation. Our very able committee of George Houston, Larry Jacobs, Tom Peterson, Alan Day, Don and Linda South, and Andy Weibel with his girlfriend Jan Hlumani put on a very informative display about wild sheep. The kids loved the "hands on" displays of skulls, horns, hides and raw legs they got to examine.

We were able to stage our event this year in the new 20 ft. x 20 ft. canopy that OR FNAWS purchased with some of the proceeds from our youth "Frenzy Auction" that our very generous membership provided. We had posters displayed showing all the activities OR FNAWS sponsors, including sheep and goat transplants, thistle eradication on the lower Deschutes, hunter's orientation for new tag holders and guzzler installations in south-eastern Oregon. I think we "grabbed" the parent's attention as well as the kids.



I feel the Y.O.D. event is an excellent venue to get the word out about wild sheep conservation. We will try to "grow" this program in the future and possibly find other venues. With the dedication and hard work from your Board members, and the financial support from our membership, we can only continue to succeed and grow this program in the future.



## Wolf Lawsuit Filed Against ODFW cont. from page 1

issued in May and June that ultimately lead to the lethal removal of two gray wolves in Wallowa County.

ODFW authorized USDA Wildlife Services to kill two wolves from the Imnaha pack, which were responsible for seven confirmed livestock losses in May.

The authorization for lethal removal is consistent with the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and associated Oregon Administrative Rules, which guide ODFW responses to livestock losses by wolves. After non-lethal measures have been used and there are two or more losses on adjacent properties, the department may authorize its own personnel or Wildlife Services to kill wolves.

Wolf management in Oregon is the responsibility of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, however, ODFW wildlife biologists in Northeast Oregon have seen it necessary to intervene in an attempt to prevent further livestock depredation.

Time tending to wolf problems is not in the ODFW budget so this ongoing incident has already taken away from valuable resources that should be spent on deer, elk, and other species. Livestock producers, hunters, and biologists who are familiar with the Eastern Oregon ecosystem know that the gray wolf will, and as we have seen already, brings huge problems for wildlife managers. This saga is just beginning too because recently documented are at least four new wolf pups in the Imhaha pack. Is it just a matter of time before hunters see a considerable reduction in Eastern Oregon deer and elk tags?

## Schedule of Events - 2011

Winter Board Meeting, Red Lion, Pendleton, OR .....	Jan. 8
WSF National Convention, Reno,NV .....	Feb. 10 - 12
Annual Fund Raiser Banquet at Kah-Nee-Ta, Warm Springs, OR.....	April 8 - 9
Banquet set up - April 8	
Tailgate BBQ - April 8, evening	
Banquet and Auctions, April 9	
Spring Board Meeting .....	April 10
Youth Day .....	Early June
Juniper Cut, Guzzler, and Weed Cut Projects .....	Dates and locations to be determined
Sheep and Goat Orientation, Discovery Ctr., The Dalles, OR .....	July 16
Summer Board Meeting, Deschutes Recreation Area.....	July 17

## Hunt of a Lifetime Cont. from page 1

and the air was crisp. Luckily we had thrown in a couple of jackets as an afterthought which served us well because the wind was a constant companion. We found another ram along the way. After some discussion and much glassing it was felt by all that he was not of the same caliber as the ones we had seen yesterday. He was a nice ram, and would have been easier to harvest, but we had a goal in mind. I marveled at the professional, can do attitude of the crew. It was never in doubt; as far as they were concerned we were going after the big boys, and one way or another we would get there. By noon we were descending down the side of the mountain. Off in the distance lay the Sea of Cortez and in the back of my mind I kept hoping there was a way off this mountain out the bottom, going back the way we came would be a nightmare. It was steep, rocky and everything either poked you, scratched you, or crawled on you!

Half way down, Alfredo and Juan found a little rocky outcrop and we all stopped. Below us, at about 300 yards, in a brushy draw were at least five sheep two of which were rams.

Everyone had their eyes glued to their binoculars glassing intently. Yes! They were our sheep, the ones we had spotted yesterday and they didn't know we were there!! Closer now, it was decided that the darker colored ram was the one we wanted. The excitement began to mount. Patience was needed and time was on our side. The sheep would tempt us with



*Bob's wife Sheryl joined him on this great hunt*

movements in and out of the bushes but never presented us with a clear shot. As it was if he did show I would be shooting at a 45 degree angle straight down at about 300 yards away. We waited. The sheep waited. We waited some more!

Almost three hours past and then all of a sudden Juan whispered "Get ready." Alfredo was at my side, and the ever present Israel relayed the instructions in English. A ewe was making her way up the draw and it was hoped the ram would come out of the bushes to investigate. It was now or never, all those years of waiting were culminated in this one split second. Control my breathing, keep him in the scope, squeeze the trigger, stay smooth, breathe, listen for the telltale thud, and pray that it is a clean shot. Did he fall? The excitement of the group said it all. He had fallen and I had completed a life time goal! It was exhilarating and somber all at the same time. I had taken this sheep with a Model 70 270 Jack O'Connor special I had bought in 1959 and I had shared this moment with my wife who had been with me on all but one of my nine sheep hunts. Life doesn't get any better than this!

After much back-slapping and high-fiving now the real work began. How were we going to get him out of the canyon? It was a very steep descent from our perch and Israel wanted to

know if I was going down for pictures with my trophy. I asked him if we were planning on going out the bottom off the mountain. He smiled and said, "No Bob we must go back the way we came!" My heart sank; I looked back up the mountain and then back down to my sheep.

I would never make it down to the sheep and back out the top of the mountain. The crew came up with a plan. All 6 of them would shimmy down to the sheep, gut him and carry him back to our perch for pictures. Easier said than done! My knees ached in sympathy as they tumbled down the mountain to the sheep, expeditiously removed the entrails, and then began the mammoth task of bringing him back up the hill in one piece. Amazingly this was accomplished in about one hour, and as you can see from the pictures we had a wonderful backdrop for our pictures. He was a beautiful specimen, with a dark hide and heavy based horns. I couldn't be prouder. After the pictures, Israel had the daunting job of getting us back up to the top of the mountain before nightfall. We headed out while the rest of the crew skinned and quartered the sheep. Magically two burros appeared and they loaded our prize onto them and headed after us. Those trusty little beasts beat us to the top, load and all. They weren't led to the top, but found their own route. Thankfully when we



*Four wheel drive isn't the only mode of transportation in the El Vizcaino Biosphere!*

got to the top of the mountain there, waiting in the dark, were our two mules. We climbed aboard and headed for the spike camp. Approximately 3 hours later we were sitting beside a warm fire sipping coffee with a full belly and reflecting on the day's events. Although I don't speak Spanish and they spoke only a little English we laughed and enjoyed one another's company. Another rousing round of cards, and then off to bed with sore muscles, sore feet and happy hearts.

Next morning we loaded up our camp and headed back to the end of the road. When we arrived that afternoon we were greeted with an ice cold beverage from the cooler and another round of pictures. Back at base camp the ladies had made a special celebratory dinner complete with pineapple upside down cake. The next morning we completed the caping and measuring of the horns and it green scored at 176 6/8 Boone & Crocket (The horns are unusually symmetrical and even both sides of the horns are matched at 36 2/8 inches long).

My sheep now hangs above our fireplace, and every time I look up at him I remember those men and women who made it possible for me to fulfill a dream. I could not have asked for a better group of people with whom to share this experience with. I would hunt with them again in a heartbeat! Well done Ejido Alfredo V. Bonfil!

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[www.oregonfnaws.org](http://www.oregonfnaws.org)

***Oregon Chapter  
Foundation for  
North American  
Wild Sheep***

*A conservation  
organization aimed at  
enhancing wild sheep  
populations and wild  
sheep habitat.*

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