

Ram Tracks

Winter Newsletter 2015/2016
Volume 36 Issue 3



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MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance, expand and preserve wild sheep populations; to educate the public about wild sheep and conservation efforts surrounding wildlife; to encourage lawful hunting and protecting hunters' rights; and to encourage youth participation in hunting.

Check Out Our New Website:

www.midwestwildsheep.org

Facebook: Wild Sheep Foundation Midwest Chapter

Twitter: WFSMidwest

President's Message



WSF-Midwest Members,

Greetings from the Frozen Tundra! No, I'm not writing from the home of the 13 time World Champions. But I am sitting and watching the snow pack dwindle from the incessant down pour of rain. It does remind me of the upcoming change of seasons as I watch an unseasonably warm day and rain. Soon we'll be spending more time outdoors enjoying warmer temperatures and longer days.

It also reminds me of a much busier season currently underway. The fundraising season! A number of conservation organizations choose to host their annual conventions and banquets between the 1st of the year and the end of April. It is a time to renew old friendships and acquaintances and catch up on the recent hunting season. It is also an opportunity to look forward to this next hunting season and book that hunt of a lifetime.

Again this year, we at the Wild Sheep Foundation – Midwest Chapter are offering a number of opportunities to put a check mark next to some lines on that "Bucket List" and fulfill some dreams. We are fortunate again to be offering the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep tags from Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota. The funds raised from these auction items go right back to fund the crucial research, habitat development, relocation and species management at the state level. Now more than ever these states need our help.

I've had the opportunity the last last two weeks to admire a beautiful Bighorn Sheep Skull that was found in South Dakota and donated to our chapter to auction at our fundraiser. As I studied the massive horns I thought of how this magnificent animal must have come to his untimely and early demise. At first it seemed to be such a waste to have died from anything other than a hunter's bullet or arrow at a much more mature age. The chance to hunt and harvest this trophy was lost most likely from disease. However, because of the foresight of the South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks we have the potential to turn a tragedy into an opportunity. This

ram's legacy will live on and provide the funding needed to protect the other members of his herd or others throughout the state.

This is the mission of WSF-Midwest, to "Put and Keep Sheep on the Mountain". In order to complete that mission we need your participation to follow through with our objectives.

First, I encourage all our members to attend our Friday events. I'd like to invite your involvement in your chapter by nominating new board members. It is a lot of work to plan and conduct an event of this magnitude. The more help we get on the board from individuals that are willing to roll up their sleeves be involved and lend a hand the more successful we will be with achieving our fundraising efforts.

Second, we are fortunate to have representatives from the very states where a significant number of funding has been conducted over the years. The game biologists from Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska will be providing us presentations about their respective projects and achievements. This is the direct link you have as a member to the very point where your hard earned funds are utilized. You have an opportunity to ask questions and provide them with feedback if you desire. I encourage you to invite a friend, neighbor or a couple of hunting buddies to the Saturday banquet of course. But make a real impression on them by binging them to hear the presentations by the state biologists. It will be well worth your time.

Last, but not least, you have an opportunity to help these agencies with the funds they need to achieve our collective objectives. Spend some time talking with the outfitters and merchants that have donated their time and items to our banquet. They welcome the opportunity to help you plan that hunt of a lifetime but also help you construct that dream for the future. Not only will you be putting a check mark next to some of those line items on that "Bucket List" but you will be helping us to "Put and Keep Sheep on the Mountain".

Respectfully,
Brian L. Helm, PMP



Wyoming Sheep Hunt

by Andy Otte, Randolph, MN



In 2015, I was lucky enough to be drawn for a Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep tag in Wyoming. This was my 17th year of applying for a license to hunt these amazing animals that God put on the mountains. I am also fortunate that my beautiful wife, Cris, was able to be there with me every step of the way.

A few years ago we connected with Clayton and Mitzi Voss of Lazy TX Outfitting. What wonderful people! They operate their outfitting business in the Wind River Range south of Dubois, WY. They are in the process of transferring their family run outfitting business to their daughter, Laura, and her husband, Dustin Stedder.

When we arrived in Dubois, in late August, we met up with our guides, Stephen Hoadley and Lane Stringer. After a short visit we checked the rifle

and made plans to ride into camp the next day. We left the trailhead on horses the following morning and arrived at their summer fishing camp after most of a day in the saddle. The following day it was several more hours to our hunting camp. We spent two days there, glassing for rams. We hiked in the mountains among the boulder fields while camping in that area. We moved to a new location on the third day and located rams on the morning of day four, several miles away. We tied up the horses and made plans for a stalk. I have never seen so many rocks in my life as on this stalk. We covered a lot of country getting to these sheep. Many hours later as we were getting near them, they busted us and took off. My heart sank. We left the mountain that evening a little disappointed but we knew we were in good hands. Stephen and Lane are very familiar with these mountains and the wildlife in them.

Day five we put on a big hike to check out all the hiding places on this mountain. After tying up the horses we hiked many miles over more boulders. We checked out drainages and peeked over many ledges, trying to locate the rams. It was late afternoon when we finally spotted a band of them. There were four or five of them and they were on the move to put some distance between us and them. They were about to go over a ridge and stopped to look back at us. I was able to get settled into a comfortable spot on a boulder for a shot. Stephen informed me of the distance and at the shot the ram dropped! I was in shock at what had just happened! It all happened so fast yet in slow motion. When we got to our ram I was thrilled, to say the least. He definitely exceeded my expectations.

This was our ram! So much work and preparation and planning. How lucky am I to have my wife

there beside me! Thank you Stephen! Thank you Lane! I cannot say it enough. You guys are awesome and I would go with you anywhere. Your knowledge and experience are well beyond your years.

Thanks to Clayton and Mitzi Voss for your help in making this dream come true. I am sure I couldn't have made a better choice. Thanks to Laura and Dustin for your hospitality in camp and making this a real family adventure. Having your son, Griffin, in camp was a real treat for us as grandparents.

To my wife, Cris, thank you. I love you! And finally to the State of Wyoming, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, and all of the Wild Sheep Foundation family, who without all of their efforts, none of this would have been possible!

Hunt Report



Life Member, Roland West, with an Armenian Mouflon that scored 133 4/8 SCI and ranked 7th in the SCI record book. Taken in February 2015 with a 150 grain Sierra bullet in 270 caliber. The shot was taken at 150 yards after about a one hour chase!

My North Dakota Moose Hunt

By Skye Henderson, Dickinson, ND

My name is Skye Henderson. I am 14 years old and live in Dickinson, North Dakota. ***“Skye, you got a moose license!”*** called my Grampa. I was nervous and excited and didn’t know what to think at the moment. I knew that I was very happy and very lucky!!

I could hardly wait until it was time to meet the landowner that said I could hunt on his land and look for that moose. My Grampa and I decided to take a road trip over to his place, to officially ask his permission in person and, of course, ask him what his favorite kind of cookies were, as it is hard to find a good place to hunt.

It was almost October and I needed to find the right gun and practice. My Dad suggested his rifle, a 25 -06 that Grandpa had made him. We went out to the shooting range and practiced shooting from several positions, it felt awesome!

It was finally October 9th, the day before I could hunt. My uncle Danny, my dad Cody, my little brother Chase, and both of my Gramps were all coming to help me look for a moose. Finally it was opening morning. It was time and I was excited and ready to go. I was a little nervous and tired but ready!

My Grampa and I were in one vehicle out scouting and my Dad and uncle were in another area also looking for a moose. I was watching a coyote out in a field when we got a call from my Dad, ***“Get over here now!”*** I could tell he was very excited! My Grandpa and I drove over to where my uncle and dad were and there were 8 moose standing in a swamp with one huge bull! I really didn’t see him good until he put his head up and wow!

They started to move out of the swamp so my Dad and I ran down into a field, dove to the ground, and setup my rifle on a bipod. It was about 175 yards and I couldn’t find the big bull at first. Then I finally got him in the scope and squeezed the



trigger, hitting him but not bringing him down. I was so nervous and afraid. I couldn’t reload fast enough, so my Dad helped me work the bolt to put another shell in, then “OWW”, I almost got my finger loaded in where the bullet was supposed to go! We finally got another shell in and I could feel tears coming but that didn’t stop me. The bull turned and I shot him in the chest, heard a thump, and down he went!

Everyone got up and cried. I think my Dad was crying more than I was! I was so happy, scared, excited and nervous! I got a big hug from my Grandpa and then called my Grandma right away because she couldn’t be there and told her I got a moose and she screamed! We all stood there for a few minutes trying to realize what had just happened. My Grandpa thought he saw the bull move a little and told me to be ready in case it got up again, but my Dad and uncle said “no it won’t”.

In just a few moments it bolted back up and headed for the swamp again! My stomach just turned as I dove back to the ground, found him in my scope and shot as he was running broadside to me. I shot him through the lungs and he collapsed in the cattails on the edge of the swamp. No tears this time, just a huge smile and butterflies in my stomach. I didn't stop shaking for several minutes until I knew he was officially dead and I was holding and admiring his huge horns.

Next the landowner got his tractor to help us pull him out of the swamp, and then we took lots of pictures with everybody. Man did I feel special. We then gutted it out which was very fun because I have helped my Dad and Grampa clean deer and pheasants before. It's heart was as big as my head! Another neighbor showed up with a trailer to load him on and we took him to the farmer's nice shop, where we skinned, washed, and cleaned him really good.

The next day I was still amazed at what I shot. While the meat was cooling we decided to go salmon fishing and bake cookies for the landowners and the neighbors because they deserved them! We all cut up the moose in the afternoon and put it in coolers. There is a bunch of meat on a moose! We also shared part of the meat with the landowner. I cannot thank them enough for letting me hunt and with everything they did to help!

Maybe by my 15th birthday Grampa will have it mounted for me.....? Also was wondering if Grampa might put me in for antelope, elk, and sheep next year! That's my story from the time when I was 14 years old and shot a moose, my first big game animal ever!



“Right Place at the Right Time...”

by Marc Shaft, Rochester, MN



After two previous hunts with other Alberta Outfitters in the “Golden Triangle” region N.E. of Edmonton and seven trips to Saskatchewan we (my dad and I) decided to extend our 2015 time in both Canadian Province’s by booking with Bouton Bros. Alberta Whitetails & Waterfowl for their first season of outfitting for whitetails in the Smoky Lake region of Alberta.

On an unseasonably warm (but still plenty cool) Monday morning on the dawn of November 16, 2015, I began the day as I would any other day during the fall season - packing up my gear for a day on stand. This day was not special of any sort, but little did I know that I would soon cross paths with the buck of a lifetime, the buck of *my* lifetime.

After a short drive and quad ride later, I was dropped off at my open tripod stand which was located on the edge of a cattail slough - completely encompassed by red willows and thick bush. Even though the season was unusually warm, with the northwest winds climbing to sixteen mph, I figured it was going to be a *very* long, *very* chilly day. My dad, Stewart Shaft, was seated in a ground blind approximately 20 miles to the east of my location. I cannot lie, sitting in that open tripod made me slightly jealous of the warmth that my dad would be experiencing in his blind out of the direct line of the wind.

The early morning light arose the anticipation and adrenaline that I am sure every hunter can identify with. A short time later, I glanced down at my watch and noticed that legal shooting time had arrived, prompting me to uncase and load my 7mm. I ranged to the east 180 yards, then to the north 137 yards. Once I was prepared for the day ahead, I swiveled my chair around to the west and couldn’t believe my eyes – it appeared like a steer was crossing the slough at the bottleneck some 130 yards away. No, that most definitely was not a steer - that was a buck. A *massive tall tined* buck at that. I set down my rangefinder, and raised my Swarovski’s just in time to see the giant of a deer disappear into the bush. *Not fair, this is unbelievable* I mumbled to myself. It was unbelievable in two senses - the first being that I had been in the stand for no more than five minutes when the buck of a lifetime walked into my life, and just as swiftly and unbelievably - he had disappeared.

While I continued my discussion with the man upstairs, I shouldered my rifle (right handed) as there was no time to swivel back around and shoot left handed. I slowly panned the south edge of the bush that bordered the slough hoping, praying, that the buck would somehow reappear and give me a better chance to see what I was missing in my brief encounter just moments earlier. To my utter disbelief, the buck abruptly filled my scope at less

than a 100 yards. Two more steps and he would be in the big bush – he stopped – I took the safe off, looked briefly one more time at his impressive frame centered the crosshairs behind the bucks shoulder and pulled the trigger.

What just happened? Was my hunt really over after only 5 minutes? I warned myself that it was time for me to wake up, because this had to be up there as one of the most teasing dreams any hunter could ever experience.

I waited patiently for the sun to rise and gave it an additional 15 minutes (just in case) before exiting my stand to start tracking. Thankfully, there was a dusting of snow that made the first forty yards of tracking in the thick bush pretty easy – until the blood stopped - along with my heart. If I hadn't killed this deer, it was probably going to kill me. Just imagine those headlines.

However, after calming my nerves, and talking myself through the next logical steps, I decided to continue following the “tracks”. After another 40-50 yards, I found myself face-to-face with my Alberta

monarch. Standing there, seeing this deer, my emotions were running at an all-time high. I have spent countless hours chasing my buck of a lifetime, and here he was, in all his Alberta glory. This was undoubtedly my all-time highlight of my whitetail hunting career, and most definitely....my very own “buck of a lifetime”- all in under five minutes. I'm not sure who coined the phrase... but “better to be fifteen minutes early than a minute late” kept running through my head.

Fortunately, I had cell coverage and was able to send a text to my guide, Dominic...*Big buck down...*which prompted a reply of *“REALLY? I'll be there in 20 minutes”*.

It was clearly my year to be in the *right place, at the right time*. I want to thank Mike, Steve, and Dominic, for all their efforts. Additionally to Ernie for the great accommodations at his bed and breakfast, and to all in helping to make my Alberta adventure a great success. And lastly, I am very grateful to have been able to share this experience with my dad; it is truly one I will never forget.



Aoudad Hunt in West Texas

by Kimberly Nybo, Minneapolis, MN

My husband John and I were looking for an fun hunt we could do together and do an old fashioned road trip. I was the high bidder at our WSF-Midwest spring event to hunt Aoudad in west Texas with Rowdy McBride.

I had heard so many great things about Rowdy McBride for years that I was very excited to be going on this hunt. We had to put off the hunt for a few years and Rowdy was very easy going with our schedules and plans.

Finally October 18 , 2015 was here and my husband started packing truck for the long trip. We enjoyed the fall colors of Minnesota, Iowa then Missouri with too short a layover in Kansas City at the famous "Knuckleheads Saloon." We loved this place! Elvis and Blues Brothers impersonators with

great live blues music and the cheeseburger was awesome. We kept going south to Kansas, then Oklahoma for the night.

Second road trip day started with breakfast then into Texas, past the "oil fields" of Midland and then to the beautiful Davis mountains where we met our guide at the gate of the free range ranch of 111 square miles! The ranch house was a 25 minute drive from the gate entrance.

At the ranch, we met Rowdy and the camp cook. After dinner and a great night rest we set out in the cool morning air to zero in our old 7mm. We loved the scenery and hearing the story of the landowner and tried to comprehend how large the 77,000 acre ranch is. As far as the eye could see sitting on top of the Mountain and then some. I



never realized until that moment how beautiful this mountain range was and how vast it is.

On day one we made a stalk on a large group of Aoudad (40) with one big stud ram. We climbed up 2000 feet and we waited for the herd, the herd went the wrong way and we tried to cut them off, but with the steep decline and a valley in between us I was not able to get on my sticks in time for a shot. The balance of the day was spent glassing for more Aoudad and enjoying the beautiful landscape which is incredibly breathtaking.

On day two we found another large group but we were eventually busted. Back to glassing for more Aoudad. We enjoyed the landscape, terrain and had an awesome lunch under a shade tree which helped us cool down from the afternoon heat. The weather was perfect and we had a short nap after lunch. That afternoon we continued sharing stories with Rowdy and discovered this guy has been everywhere and done it all!

We found other groups of Aoudad but not the big ram we wanted. We had a great dinner prepared by our camp cook. Then a good night's sleep.

Rowdy was confident that on day three I would close the deal and would find that great ram. That afternoon we spotted a group in the far distance and started our way to their location.

We knew we were above the group as we descended one steep foot at a time. One last step and I was in a staring contest with a young ewe! Was she going to bust us or ignore us - the wind was right, no noise, she wandered off without alerting the big guy.

We inched downward from 6200 feet descending to 5900 feet as the group of 20 got out of their beds and started to graze just 132 yards below us. My gold medal ram was the last to follow, then he stopped behind a Yucca plant.

His hair fell well below his body and he looked massive. I waited patiently till he revealed his vitals and I sent one his way. Rowdy had reminded me that due to the sharp decline I should hold a little low. My shot was placed well but he still had some

gas left in his tank! Rowdy told me they are very tough animals and it would take more than one shot.

My next shot was a "Texas heart shot" that finished him off. He rolled down a ravine some 30 yards. At this point it was getting late and we had to hurry to descend to retrieve him.

We took the photos and began to skin the 12 or 13 year old ram. John and I went down the mountain which was a very rugged and rough descent with the trophy to the river bottom and Rowdy went up to the top of mountain for the 4x4.

That three thousand foot descent went slow - in the dark and with the variety of things that will stick or prick you and the uneven terrain. The temperature dropped dramatically and we had a helpless feeling when you don't know where you are, it's dark and cold. We were patient as Rowdy's 4x4 headlights were a welcome sight. By the time we arrived back at camp it was well past 10 pm.

We had planned to go to a friend's cabin an hour from Dallas on the way home for my husband John's chance to pull the trigger on a whitetail and some wild hogs.

Our friend warned us the roads will flood with a small rain. We discovered how true that statement was when we nearly were stuck trying to find the rural cabin. We got lucky around 12 am and found the cabin, but the rain overnight and the forecast of flood warnings helped us decide that it was not good to risk being stranded with no food and head for home. The dirt roads were like grease with our truck slipping and sliding every inch we went and we celebrated when several miles later we hit pavement.

The rain did not stop the entire drive home to Minneapolis and at times making visibility almost impossible.

We had a great Texas road trip and Aoudad hunt. Rowdy was just awesome in every way!

Rowdy was accommodating, professional and more than friendly. The ranch, animals and entire hunt was perfect in every way.

My Mackenzie Mountain Adventure

by Kevin Camp

I have always been a hunter and a fisherman; it has been my lifelong passion since I was 8 years old. As is the case with most hunters growing up in the northeast, my experience with big game hunting has primarily been with Whitetail Deer. In the past few years I have found myself getting “bored” with just being a stand hunter and I have lost some passion for deer hunting in this way. On January 2, 2015,, I became a grandfather and soon after that I turned 50 years old. I found myself going through a “midlife crisis” of sorts and I began thinking about the adventure and challenge of a Dall Sheep hunt in the far north.

I very quickly concluded that I was not getting any younger and that if I was ever going to attempt to do a sheep hunt I had better do it sooner than later. I spoke to my Uncle (who is an accomplished sheep hunter) and his best friend, John Coulter, who is on the board of the Midwest Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation. John was aware of the Yukon Dall Sheep/Mountain Caribou hunt donated by Chris Widrig Outfitters that was being auctioned at the upcoming Midwest Wild Sheep Foundation banquet and encouraged me to bid on the hunt. The hunt package was a ten day horseback hunt in the Mackenzie Mountains of the Yukon and also included the option to harvest a grizzly bear for an additional trophy fee. John was present at the auction in Minneapolis and offered to bid on the hunt for me. I joined him on the phone during the auction and shortly thereafter my dream of going on a sheep hunt started to become a reality.

This hunting adventure was the single biggest physical challenge I had ever undertaken. I knew that I needed to



lose some weight and get into the best shape that I could in order to be able to perform as required on this hunt. In the months leading up to my departure in August, I put myself on a strict diet and began a work out regimen to strengthen my legs and improve my cardio. I also took some horse back riding lessons so that I would feel more comfortable riding in the mountains.

Before I knew it I was meeting Joanne Widrig (Chris’s wife) at the airport in Whitehorse. Joanne took me to the hotel to check in for the evening and gave me my tags and instructions for our departure to base camp early the following morning. While packing for my departure I reviewed the tags that had been purchased for me. What I noticed was that I did not have a grizzly bear tag. Some how the fact that I wanted a grizzly tag had been lost in the communication between Chris and I. I called Joanne to ask her about the missing tag and she immediately went to work trying to determine how I could get one for my hunt. As the Fish and Game office was closed for the evening, she elected to slightly delay the float plane departure to Goz Lake base camp the following morning in order for the two of us to be at the Fish and Game office at 8:00 am the next morning to purchase the tag.

After purchasing the tag we went to the floatplane dock. In addition to myself there were four other passengers on the plane; two sheep hunters, a Grizzly hunter and Peter Jules, a native guide who was flying into camp to guide the rest of the season for Chris. The flight into base camp was “Incredible”. The visibility was outstanding and the Mackenzie Mountains were wild and beautiful; unlike anything I had ever seen.



Upon arriving at base camp we met Chris and were introduced to our guides. As it turned out my guide was to be Peter Jules. We also discussed which spike camps we would be riding out to the following day. Chris had originally planned for Peter and I to hunt Border Camp which was a two-day ride. I was up for what ever he thought was best, but the following morning Chris and Peter jumped into Chris's floatplane and took off to do some scouting. When they returned they had a change of plans. Peter and I would be going to Hidden Valley camp as they had spotted what they felt were some legal rams near that camp. Hidden Valley would also only be a one-day ride instead of two days. That was fine with me and I was pleased that Chris had gone the extra mile to scout out the camp locations.

After a nine hour long horseback ride, Peter and I made it to Hidden Valley camp. We set up our tents, put up a tarp to cover our tack gear and our food supplies, gathered fire wood and got ready to hunt the next morning.

After a hearty breakfast of sheep meat and eggs, Peter went to wrangle up our two saddle horses as I made sandwiches for lunch. When he returned he mentioned that he had spotted a large bear on the other side of the river from him while he was gathering our horses. He said the bear wandered off in the direction that we were headed and that if we found him I should consider taking him, as he was a good trophy bear. We stopped to glass for sheep in a several different spots over the course of the day but never saw the bear. At about 2:00 pm Peter spotted a beautiful legal ram a long ways off and in a very nasty spot. We rode the horses closer to assess the possibilities of a stock. The wind was not good for the only reasonable approach to the ram and Peter had decided it would be best to try and locate the ram the

next morning rather than pursue a stock. As we mounted up to head back towards camp the wind shifted 180 degrees and became perfect. Peter changed his mind and decided we should attempt a stock on the ram. Three quarters of the way thorough our stalk the wind shifted to our back. When we got to the spot we should have been able to see the ram, he was gone, never to be seen again by us.

The next morning we set out to glass the mountain we had found the ram on in hopes that we could relocate him. The only sheep we spotted early that day were a lamb and ewe. Peter decided we should climb up a ravine in order to glass a bowl behind the mountain the ram had been on. We rode as close as we could get with the horses and were in the process of hiking the rest of the way up when I saw a bear a long ways off in the creek bottom. A quick look with the binoculars confirmed that the bear was a large grizzly and Peter felt sure that it was the bear he had seen the previous morning. He felt very strongly that we should attempt to harvest the bear.

Peter was excited and that made me even more excited. We watched the bear for several minutes to determine which way he was going. He was working down the creek, heading our way. Peter and I moved down the mountain a little to get a good rest in anticipation that the bear would continue working down the creek. We had the creek ranged at 280 yards. As it turned out the bear actually worked out of the creek bottom and started heading up towards us. He was heading into the ravine that led to the bowl that we were going to glass. When he came into view he was on the other side of the ravine. Peter ranged the bear at 306 yards. I was prone with my 30-06 on my pack and I was rock steady. I told Peter I was right on the bear and he told me to shoot when the bear stopped broad side to us.

We knew I had hit the bear with my first shot but he turned and started running back the way he had came. Peter told me to shoot again, which I did, twice more. The bear continued running out of our view. If the bear kept running he would have to come out where we could see him so we both watched intently to see if he would pop back into view, he never did. We knew the bear was in an area on the other side of the ravine out of our sight but we did not know if he was dead or only wounded. We mounted up the horses and headed over to the other side of the ravine. We took the horses as far as we could then dismounted and climbed up the rest of the way. We wanted to work down the mountain while searching for sign of the bear so that we would be above rather than below a potentially wounded grizzly.



The area the grizzly was in was thick with willows and extremely steep. We couldn't see more than 10 yards in any direction. Peter had not grabbed his bear rifle that morning so I gave him my rifle as he was in the lead searching for sign. I felt like Elmer Fudd as I followed him with just a knife in my hand. My heart was pounding out of my chest with adrenalin and fear that the bear was only wounded and was lying in wait for us. We searched for several minutes without finding any sign of the bear. Finally we came across some bear scat and soon after, we saw the bear piled up dead at the bottom of a trough of matted vegetation he had created while rolling down the steep mountain. It was exhilarating. I now understand the addiction some hunters get to hunt dangerous game. The thrill is magnified with the adrenalin rush and the fear.

The only shot to hit the bear was my first shot. The 165 grain Accubond bullet struck the bear exactly where I was aiming, directly behind the shoulder, taking out both lungs and probably got part of the heart. I should have aimed for the shoulder but having spent all my life hunting whitetail deer with both rifle and bow, my natural inclination is to shoot just behind the shoulder, not through it, as most bear guides would like you to do. The fortunate thing was that the bear had expired and had done so quickly and humanely.

We finished off the day by skinning out the bear. Peter put the skull with the full hide in his pack. I assisted him to his feet and onto his horse and we rode the hour and a half back to camp.

The following day, Peter spent the day fleshing out the hide of the bear and preparing it for the taxidermist. This turned out to be the most beautiful day of the trip and both of the successful sheep hunters in camp scored on this day. Each successive day the weather turned worse and worse with rain, snow and fog and

the temperatures continued to drop. It was hard to believe it was August. Due to horse problems and the weather I was only able to spend one more day attempting to harvest a ram. We did spot two legal rams that day but they were in an inaccessible spot. With all of our clothes and foot wear soaking wet, we ended up riding back to base camp a day early through 6" of snow and an August blizzard. The snow stopped falling just as we made it to Goz Lake Camp at about 9:00 P.M. that evening.

We found all of the rest of the hunters in camp when we arrived. Those that had not had success had also come in early. Chris Widrig and all of the guides agreed that this was the worst stretch of weather they had ever seen in August.

Unfortunately for me I did not harvest a ram to kick me out of the <1 Club. Fortunately for me, I did capitalize on the opportunity to harvest what many hunters believe is the Greatest Trophy in North America, a mature Mountain Grizzly. Even though there was hardship on my trip it was an incredible and memorable adventure, the likes of which I had never experienced before. I felt a sense of pride and accomplishment for enduring the challenges presented to me on this wilderness adventure and it left me wanting for more. I am currently making plans to head back to the Yukon Territories again in the hopes of harvesting my first sheep.





North Dakota Game & Fish

by Brett Wiedmann

Results from last summer's bighorn survey were encouraging as the count increased 6 percent from 2014, the first year of the pneumonia-related die-off. A re-count of lambs will commence in March 2016, as lambs approach 1 year old, to determine recruitment. This count will be informative as it relates to the lingering effects of the disease outbreak.

Fortunately, there continues to be very few mortalities of adults since the die-off began in 2014. We deployed radio-collars and collected biological samples from 22 bighorns, including the three surviving ewes that were recently translocated from Alberta, in early February to continue our monitoring efforts to detect the presence of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* within the population. Results of those tests were not yet complete at the time of this writing.

The ND Game and Fish Department closed the bighorn sheep hunting season in 2015 to assess the effects of the die-off on the state's population. However, because a greater number of mature rams were observed during the summer 2015 survey than expected, and few mortalities have occurred since, the Department decided to re-open the hunting season in 2016. The only significant change is that the number and distribution of lottery licenses will not be determined until completion of the summer survey on September 1, 2016.

The worst of the die-off is hopefully behind us, but we know the pathogens are still present. So, only will time will tell....



37th Annual Spring Fundraiser, Banquet & Auction!

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In Memoriam RON VOLLRATH

Ron Vollrath, age 75, of Delano passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on January 7, 2016. Ron was half owner and operator of LSV Metals, Inc. He served his country as a proud Army veteran.

Ron had three main loves during his life and one of them was hunting and shooting. He had many hunting adventures with his cousin and hunting partner, Loren Kohnen, traveling the world 2 1/2 times over and visiting 4 continents. The result of these trips included taking 4 sheep species on the North American continent which is called a North American Grand Slam, the taking of 12 species of goats from around the world which is called the Capra Slam and 12 species of sheep from around the world which is called the Ovis Slam. With the taking of these 28 sheep and goats, Ron was awarded with the World Slam. The Midwest Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation is proud that Ron served on our Board of Directors for many years, as well as being a Minnesota Firearms Safety Instructor, and director of the Elk River Gun Club.

One of Ron's other passions was his family. He had a close relationship with his brothers. He loved being with extended family and never forgot a name or place. He was a loving father to his children and grandchildren, showing them the meaning of being kind and generous to others. Ron's greatest love was the love he had for his Lord. He was also a devout Christian and acted on his faith in many ways.

Ron is survived by his brothers, his children, grandchildren, significant other, Phyllis and cousin and hunting partner, Loren Kohnen, as well as many other relatives and friends.

Tentative Schedule of Events

2016 Spring Fundraiser, Banquet & Auction

Friday – March 18 - Lake of the Woods Ballroom

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Registration | 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm |
| Happy Hour | 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm |
| Buffet Dinner | 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm |
| Welcome Message – President | 5:30 pm – 5:45 pm |
| Membership Meeting | 5:45 pm – 6:00 pm |
| State Biologists Presentations | 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm |
| Wyoming | |
| North Dakota | |
| South Dakota | |
| Nebraska | |
| National WSF | |

Friday Night Live Auction 8:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday – March 19 – Lake Minnetonka Ballroom

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Registration | 9:00 am – 6:00 pm |
| Pizza Party | 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm |
| Meet with Outfitters & Exhibitors | 1:00 pm – 10:00 pm |
| Ladies Wine Tasting (Lake of the Isles Room) | 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm |
| Happy Hour | 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm |
| Main Banquet Dinner Seating | 5:30 pm – 5:45 pm |
| Welcome Message – President | 5:45 pm – 5:50 pm |
| Main Banquet Dinner | 5:50 pm – 6:50 pm |
| Life Memberships Presentation | 6:50 pm – 7:00 pm |
| Saturday Night Live Auction | 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm |

Be sure to book your room at the Marriott early — There are a lot of events going on and you don't want to miss out on getting a room! Call the Marriott at (952) 935-5500.

Ladies Wine Tasting Fundraiser

Saturday, March 19, 2016

Lake of the Isles Room

Minneapolis Marriott Southwest

2:00 pm—4:00 pm

Silent Auction & Other Events

\$25 Registration Fee

(Register in advance and receive a free gift) at tasting)



2016 SDBI Convention

SIoux FALLS, SD

FEBRUARY 27, 2016

Best Western Ramkota Hotel—3200 W. Maple Street

(605) 336-0650—Block of Rooms Listed Under SDBI

Featuring Mike Mitten as Guest Speaker

Friday, February 26th, 2016

- Quality Inn & Suites, 5410 North Granite Lane, Sioux Falls, SD
- Wild Game Feed — 6PM - ????
- Please RSVP to sdbi.net@gmail.com if you plan to bring any food (optional).
- Everyone needs to bring a wild game recipe that we will compile into a book for everyone.

Saturday, February 27th, 2016

- Best Western Plus Ramkota Hotel, 3200 W Maple St, Sioux Falls, SD
- 8-12 — 3D shoot location — Minnehaha Archers, 5108 N Harvestore Rd, Sioux Falls
- 1-2 — Videography Seminar — Mike Mitten
- 2-3 — GFP Update
- 3-4 — Scheels "How to Dress for the Hunt" Seminar
- 4-5 — General Membership Meeting
- 5-6 — Social Hour
- 6-7 — Dinner and Auction—Featuring Mike Mitten
- Please let us know if you can donate any new or hand-made items we can use at the convention.

Mike Mitten



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The following items will be offered either through raffle or auction this year:

- Mathew Halon Bow
- Kota Recurve Bow
- Xpedition Bow
- Mission Craze Bow Package
- Cooler
- Ground Blind
- Swarovski Binos

Attention!!!

Buy a table for \$250 and receive two dinner tickets plus a chance at a \$500 raffle

Swap Table

Please bring anything you would like to swap!

Raffles

Auctions

Socials

Seminars

Schedule of Events Posted at <http://www.sdbi.net>

Our **Midwest Chapter**

is looking for
a few good members
to help with:

Board Member

Social Media

Facebook

Website

Newsletter Production

Excel and Powerpoint

POS System

If you have an interest in helping us
out with any of these areas, please
contact **Brian Helm** at
(651) 631-9273 or
email: blhelm@visi.com.





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