## #1

#### COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 12:49:33 PM Last Modified: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 12:59:04 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:09:31 **IP Address:** 184.167.66.3

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Jami Sindelar

City/Town: Missoula

State/Province: MT

Email Address: jami.sindelar@gmail.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

Please consider a long overdue change to limit drawing a big horn sheep license to once in a lifetime. There are so few licenses available and so many people entering the drawing, it just isn't right that people can put in for another tag seven years after drawing one. I know of many people who draw, then draw again as soon as they are eligible to put in again. Some of us will never draw a sheep tag in our lifetime, but at least our chances are increased slightly if those who have already drawn cannot apply again. Please do this, it is the only fair way.

# #2

#### COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 12:50:38 PM Last Modified: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 12:59:21 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:08:43 **IP Address:** 216.14.246.127

#### Page 1

### Q1

Contact information:

Name: Steve Kamps

City/Town: ovando

State/Province: MT

Email Address: 12kamps@gmail.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

I'd like to see the archery season opener remain as its been rather than only being a week early as proposed. I'd also like to see an the archery season opener apply to the unlimited sheep areas as well.

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Thursday, October 26, 2023 5:21:44 PM Last Modified: Thursday, October 26, 2023 5:23:47 PM

 Time Spent:
 00:02:02

 IP Address:
 71.32.58.253

## Page 1

## Q1

Contact information:

Name: Thomas E. Rudolph

City/Town: Conrad

State/Province: MT

Email Address: nanajo56@centurylink.net

## Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

Make this tag a once in a lifetime tag.

#### COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Thursday, November 02, 2023 7:41:26 AM Last Modified: Thursday, November 02, 2023 8:09:25 AM

**Time Spent:** 00:27:58 **IP Address:** 69.145.83.100

Page 1

#### Q1

Contact information:

Name: Jake Ahmann

City/Town: BOZEMAN

State/Province: MT

Email Address: jake.ahmann@gmail.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

HD 305- I am of the group that wants to see 305 be added as an "Unlimited Unit" with a quota of 1 ram. I believe this is justified in hunter effort vs hunter satisfaction, as well as much greater increased opportunity than 1 draw tag adds to our Montana Bighorn hunts. Montana has been the standard bearer in the lower 48 for sheep hunting opportunity with our current 5 unlimited districts. We should not move away from this practice, and instead see HD 305 as a great opportunity to expand on it. As Michael notes "Prior to the closure of HD 305, records indicate that this was a challenging tag to fill, but not impossible. Harvest/effort estimates records are available for 8 of the 10 years from 2005-2014. In those 8 years, harvest is indicated in 5 years." In the same Justification for adding the hunt in 305 back, which I wholeheartedly support, Michael states "The objective is to provide hunter opportunity to harvest a bighorn ram now that the population has increased."

I believe the best way for Montana to do this is as an unlimited district with a concise season for 3/4 curl rams, similar to 300 and 303, both of which used to be in the same hunting district as 305. These sheep' habits are very similar in nature to those two units, and the terrain they exist in is the same ecosystem. It would only make sense to treat this unit the same as those, with the added benefit of increased tag sales, increased hunter participation, and increased hunter satisfaction without a marked increase in hunter harvest. As Julie is well aware of in 302, when hunters spend 20-30 years to draw a hunt, they have much higher expectations of harvest than those hunters that participate in the Unlimited hunts in 300, 303, 500, 501, and 502. I believe 305 will see much of the same frustrations, just as Michael has acknowledged in his comments. No hunt should be a "slam dunk" just by drawing the tag, but no hunter should go their entire life without being able to hunt a game species that is held in public trust. Our Unlimited hunts provide anyone the opportunity to hunt sheep, removing hunters from the point pool and giving better draw odds, though marginal, to those that wish to pursue a draw hunt. This increase in draw odds far exceeds that of adding 1 draw tag to our pool, and provides dozens of hunters the opportunity to pursue bighorn sheep instead of just one any given year.

I know Michael is aware of these discussions regarding 305 being an unlimited district- I would like to hear the justification for not wanting to go that route.

# #5

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Thursday, November 02, 2023 12:41:59 PM Last Modified: Thursday, November 02, 2023 1:00:57 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:18:57 **IP Address:** 166.7.67.149

Page 1

### Q1

Contact information:

Name: Aaron Minney

City/Town: Boulder

State/Province: MT

Email Address: minney98512@gmail.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

I recognize that disease is a much bigger contributor to mortality in BHS, and trust the dept to create sustainable hunting opportunities. I support these changes.

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Monday, November 06, 2023 9:12:13 PM Last Modified: Monday, November 06, 2023 9:44:40 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:32:27 **IP Address:** 72.175.48.98

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Blake Moore

City/Town: Billings

State/Province: MT

Email Address: Turbomoore@yahoo.com

## Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

The purposed quota change in HD 482 down to 5 either sex tags is the best thing for this unit! The number of rams are way down and the quality and age class of rams has been declining drastically since 2017 which was due to the number of rams being taken and then the rough years of drought etc on top of that. I believe that 482 will bounce back well with 5 either sex tags and it will be back to the legendary sheep unit it once was. That being said, the fact that unit 680 is not reducing the number of either sex tags is outrageous! The quality of the sheep in that unit has suffered drastically since 2017 also, but even more concerning, it's becoming very hard to find even mature rams, let alone world class rams. In my opinion it should be lowered to 10 to let the unit bounce back from the rough years that they have just endured. 622 also seems to be down, and from local observations they believe that mountain lion numbers booming in that area are to blame. It seems that it could use a reduction in tags also, but I dont have as much personal time, boots on the ground, invested in that area to say for sure how many should be cut. The other unit of concern to me is 620. Having spent a large amount of time in there hunting sheep this fall, it can not handle 3 either sex tags and remain a quality unit. Aside from the fact that there is very few mature rams in the unit, it is such a small unit, and the sheep hang out in an even smaller area within the unit, that all 3 hunters are literally in a race to try to get to the best rams and messing up each others hunt. I talked to all 3 tag holders this year and they all were very upset with the fact that the quota had been raised to 3, and the quality of the hunt suffered greatly for all tag holders in that unit. Montana sheep are suffering, and as hard as it is to take away opportunity for a handful of hunters each year, the future of sheep hunting in Montana rests on not over harvesting the sheep we do have. Please accept the 5 ram quota in 482, and please look into lowering the others before its too late!

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Tuesday, November 07, 2023 6:51:49 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 07, 2023 6:59:11 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:07:21 **IP Address:** 135.134.1.148

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Kent R Greer

City/Town: Billings

State/Province: MT

Email Address: kentrgreer@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

In Favor

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Monday, November 13, 2023 8:44:39 AM Last Modified: Monday, November 13, 2023 8:47:35 AM

 Time Spent:
 00:02:56

 IP Address:
 97.121.221.189

#### Page 1

### Q1

Contact information:

Name: Randy J Tuhy

City/Town: Red Lodge

State/Province: MT

Email Address: rstuhy@gmail.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

Concerning sheep area 482. If the sheep numbers are down enough to drop the ram tags from 20 to 5 why are there still 5 ewe tags being issued? Sounds flawed to me

## #9

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Monday, November 13, 2023 3:59:28 PM Last Modified: Monday, November 13, 2023 4:23:23 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:23:54 **IP Address:** 172.56.200.19

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Nancy Ryan Anderson

City/Town: Hamilton

State/Province: MT

Email Address: nancyryananderson@gmail.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

I am the hunter who held the only bighorn sheep tag in 250 this year. My husband and I hunted for 25 days, and saw rams, ewes, and lambs. One day, we spotted 23 sheep, 17 ewes and babies and 6 rams. Two of the rams were 3/4 curl. We identified 3 collar ewes, and there were numerous lambs in the group. There were many other days where we laid eyes on groups of 12 ewes, 5 ewes, 2 ewes and the occasional single ewe. A good number of these groups had lambs. I was fortunate to be retired and able to devote my full-time to this once-in-a-lifetime hunt. The day I harvested my ram, we saw 4 full curl rams. I took a 9 1/2 year old ram who was measured by the taxidermist twice, and measured 168 2/8. This was an unbelievable hunt. I have day to day statistics, and feel it would be an injustice to close the 250 district in the future. The remaining 3 full curl rams will more than likely die of old age as hunters are deprived of an opportunity to hunt this magnificent animal. I have spoken to wolf trappers and mountain lion hunters who have been working to bring the number of predators in the area down, thus giving the sheep a better chance at survival. We noticed a significant increase in the number of elk and mule deer in the area as well. I believe hunters need to be aware of the area and the difficulty of the hunt. You have to be willing to get out and hike, climb mountains and find the sheep. I realize circumstances change from year to year, but the sheep and rams are in 250 and closing the harvest of one ram does nothing for the biology of the remaining herd. The 1/2 and 3/4 curl rams will breed the ewes, and barring disease and predators, this herd will survive and continue to grow without closure of the area. Thanks again for the unbelievable opportunity given to me by MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

# #10

#### COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Monday, November 13, 2023 4:24:28 PM Last Modified: Monday, November 13, 2023 4:30:03 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:05:35 **IP Address:** 172.56.200.19

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Ray Anderson

City/Town: Hamilton

State/Province: MT

Email Address: rayandersonmt@gmail.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

Regarding area 250, I don't feel taking away the opportunity to kill one ram makes a difference to the sheep in that area. All the ewes are going to get bred regardless, and taking one ram will give you more information as to what's going on in the unit than if it's closed and you get no input from hunters.

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Monday, November 13, 2023 4:30:39 PM Last Modified: Monday, November 13, 2023 4:31:57 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:01:17 **IP Address:** 72.250.138.167

## Page 1

## Q1

Contact information:

Name: Brian Gibson

City/Town: BAKER

State/Province: MT

Email Address: brijguy@gmail.com

## Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

No archery only for big horn sheep!!

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 6:44:45 PM Last Modified: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 7:01:17 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:16:32 **IP Address:** 98.97.115.243

## Page 1

### Q1

Contact information:

Name: Nycole Wildermuth

City/Town: Corvallis

State/Province: MT

Email Address: newildermuth@gmail.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

250 should perhaps go to an any ram tag or full curl ram depending when sheep reach sexual maturity? Take the female sheep out of the equation.

# #13

#### COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 3:40:42 PM Last Modified: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 3:48:25 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:07:42 **IP Address:** 69.145.171.224

#### Page 1

### Q1

Contact information:

Name: Michael Henry

City/Town: Florence

State/Province: MT

Email Address: aquilamt94@gmail.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

What about the 48 hr rule when everybody is observing a holiday? Offices were closed for Veteran's Day (Fri) then closed Saturday too. Provide numbers to call and make an effort to accommodate the hunter. Why can't you go to any regional office? How about 72 hrs?

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:29:24 AM Last Modified: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:31:05 AM

**Time Spent:** 00:01:40 **IP Address:** 128.177.52.54

## Page 1

## Q1

Contact information:

Name: Brayden Davis

City/Town: Great Falls

State/Province: MT

## Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

I support HD 482 BHS proposed quota reduction to 5 licenses for 2024

# #15

#### COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Sunday, November 19, 2023 8:23:21 AM Last Modified: Sunday, November 19, 2023 8:26:50 AM

**Time Spent:** 00:03:29 **IP Address:** 98.97.116.204

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Richard Wildermuth

City/Town: Corvallis

State/Province: MT

Email Address: rmwildermuth@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

If the numbers are down in the West Fork, action needs to be taken. Since it is currently either set, why not set it to rams only with very limited tags. As for 270, the ewe population in far more important than the rams, so I cant agree with increasing the ewe tags.

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Sunday, November 19, 2023 8:54:25 AM Last Modified: Sunday, November 19, 2023 9:03:18 AM

**Time Spent:** 00:08:53 **IP Address:** 72.174.74.19

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Justin Doll

City/Town: Great Falls

State/Province: MT

Email Address: j.doll6190@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

I am in support of reducing the number of permits given out in 482.

# #17

#### COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Monday, November 20, 2023 6:17:05 AM Last Modified: Monday, November 20, 2023 6:53:37 AM

**Time Spent:** 00:36:31 **IP Address:** 97.121.207.17

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Rick Miller

City/Town: Colstrip

State/Province: MT

Email Address: grrizzz@q.com

Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

A major shift in sheep management in HD 216 (upper Rock Creek) is going unnoticed by many. Not long ago this area was the premier bighorn sheep hunting district in Montana (maybe the world). Negative impacts to the herd are varied, with the result being complete elimination in our sheep hunting regulations? Please include HD 216 in the 2024 & 2025 regulations (even though there are no permits being given), so that sportsmen awareness and concern stay at a high (supportive) level. If we can't see it, we can't help.

## #18

#### COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Monday, November 20, 2023 6:13:54 PM Last Modified: Monday, November 20, 2023 7:32:53 PM

**Time Spent:** 01:18:58 **IP Address:** 174.45.45.111

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Brian Solan

City/Town: Helena

State/Province: MT

Email Address: brian@montanawsf.org

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

I have concerns with the reduction in one tag in unit 214. While it doesn't seem like a significant loss, when we lose tags we have a history of never getting them back. I've spent as much time in this unit as anyone alive and it's relatively the same as it has been for the past 12+ years with roughly 6 to 12 mature rams in the herd. Taking 2 mature rams out will not hurt the recovery effort. I've spent roughly 6 days in that unit this fall and I've counted over 50+ sheep in different areas of the unit. There is a core ~40 sheep wintering in the primary lime quarry area, but there are also several other smaller groups of 10-20 that stay on the Garrity side and another 10-20 that remain in the Lost Creek drainage. I have counted roughly (8) rams in the 5 to 7 year old range this fall. I did find a young three legged ram this fall that was coughing, but talking through with the biologist and FWP we are all convinced that the stress of losing a leg (a fresh injury) is the primary suspect of the respiratory coughing. I did not witness any other sheep coughing. There is MOVI present throughout that herd and it will resurface at some point when stressors surface. That being said, another ram in the herd will not make a difference either way and providing a sheep hunter with the opportunity to harvest a ram can have positive impact on sheep and their conservation. Thank you.

# #19

### COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Monday, November 20, 2023 7:46:35 PM Last Modified: Monday, November 20, 2023 7:50:48 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:04:13 **IP Address:** 108.174.124.20

#### Page 1

#### Q1

Contact information:

Name: Brennon fisher

City/Town: Darby

State/Province: MT

Email Address: fisherthathunts@gmail.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

Anyone who has hunted or hunts in unit 250 and leaves the road, knows that the sheep herd is healthy and should not be shut down completely. There are lots of mature rams and plenty of breeding age ewes in the unit. It is not sensible to shit this unit down. Because it is likely it will do very little to benefit the sheep population here.

If you'd like to do something to help the sheep out, it would be a better idea to incentivize predator hunting/ trapping. Specifically hunting of mountain lions in and around the sheep's winter ranges. Higher lion quotas would help the sheep out so much more than shutting the unit down to hunting.

# #20

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Monday, November 20, 2023 8:56:43 PM Last Modified: Monday, November 20, 2023 8:57:20 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:00:36 **IP Address:** 97.121.202.30

## Page 1

## Q1

Contact information:

Name: David Shimek

City/Town: Shepherd

State/Province: MT

Email Address: superdtoo@yahoo.com

## Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

Limit the draw to once in a lifetime

## #21

#### COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 6:31:11 AM Last Modified: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 7:47:34 AM

**Time Spent:** 01:16:22 **IP Address:** 174.215.24.86

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: casey austin

City/Town: butte
State/Province: MT

Email Address: casey@swankenterprises.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

Good morning. Last year 2022 I was blessed and received one of two ram tags in unit 214. I spent 38 days hunting. During this time, I spotted on an average of 45-50 sheep daily with a couple days after weather events counts of 70+sheep in primarily three different location. Within these numbers there were 6-8 mature rams daily, 5, 5-7 years old and at least 3 of these rams were 7-8 years old. I harvested an 8.5-year-old ram. The other hunter also harvested an 8.5 old ram both of them scoring 180" + or -. This season I was asked to help the two tag holders and I have spent about 10 days between the two hunters. Again, on numerous day I have spotted 45-50 sheep. One of the hunters already harvested his sheep and I was hunting with him at the time. It was an 8.5-year-old ram scoring about 170". Again, this season I have seen 6-8 mature rams in the same day. On November 17th I spotted 4 (5.5 - 7.5-yearold) rams in Olsen gulch, one in lost creek, 2 in tin can gulch and 2 in Blue eyed nelly all of these rams ranging from 150" - 170". The other hunter passed on all these rams hoping for a bigger sheep. My son also had this tag in 2016, and since 2016 I have helped several other hunters learn the area and often hunted with them. Between sheep hunting and elk hunting I average 20-25 days a season and have since 2016. It is my opinion that this heard is healthy and thriving. It is also my opinion that reducing unit 214 to one tag is a mistake. With (6-8) mature rams in the unit harvesting 2 rams will not affect the population of this herd. If the quota is reduced in a few years after the reduction rams will be passing away of old age as the mature rams get older and only one hunter is harvesting one ram. Last January 2022 I provided a complete season survey at the end of my 2022 hunt with daily totals, area by area and turned it into Christy the new area biologist and dropped off a copy at the Butte office front desk for Vanna. I know it is not an official F&G survey however I guaranty you this is 100% accurate, performed only by myself. In this survey I gave ewe / lamb numbers, collard ewes numbers, ram numbers with estimate age and size. I encourage you to read this survey and you will agree reducing the quota in not necessary. I can provide additional copies if requested.

# #22

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 11:30:09 AM Last Modified: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 11:31:27 AM

 Time Spent:
 00:01:18

 IP Address:
 72.174.242.125

## Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: MOGA

City/Town: Helena

State/Province: MT

Email Address: moga@mt.net

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

#### III. Big Horn Sheep Seasons and Regulations

In reviewing the proposed Wild Sheep seasons and regulations, we found them to meet the criteria by addressing conservation issues through more conservative regulations/quotas. Additionally, hunter opportunity and distribution were addressed. These proposals will not unnecessarily affect local and regional economies beyond that necessary for resource conservation. Therefore, we support the following recommended changes:

#### Region 2 Sheep

- Change quota range for the 214-60 legal ram bighorn sheep license from 2–8 to 1–8
- Close sheep hunting in HD250. Currently there is 1 Either-sex Sheep permit.
- Add a limited Adult Ewe license to HD270 (East Fork herd), with a quota of 3 and a quota range of 1–5.

MOGA Comment: There is a documented conservation issue with wild sheep in HD 250. We support the closure and support past Commission efforts to address predation on wild sheep through increased quotas and seasons on wolves, mountain lions and black bears.

We do not think that the reduction in HD 214 from a low end of the range of 2 to 1 is warranted or effective.

#### Region 3 Sheep

- Reopen bighorn sheep season in HD 381 for 1 any ram during archery and general rifle seasons but remove the Region 4 portion of the district from the boundary.
- Change the HD 303 Gardner Closure Area Restricted Area Description to address an area of confusion near Gardiner Airport and McConnell Fishing Access (a USFS access site).
- Adjust the HD 303 Boundary to clean up a sliver of land along the Yellowstone River between Yankee Jim and Big Creek that is not within either HD 300 or 303 by aligning HD 303 in this area with the Yellowstone River instead of Hwy 89.
- Reopen HD 305 (South Yellowstone) to sheep hunting with a single ram license by drawing with a season that ends Oct. 31, quota of 1 with a range of 1–5.

#### Region 4 Sheep

Reduce quota for 482-20 from 15 to 5. No change to quota range

MOGA Comment: There is a documented conservation concern with declining sheep numbers in region 4. While the decline is largely attributed to extreme and persistent drought conditions, there was also an over issuance of sheep permits in 2023 that resulted in 20 rams being collected. These two conditions make this action both reasonable and prudent. We support the change in the short term but expect as sheep numbers rebound, we will see an increase in harvest opportunity when warranted.

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 12:18:39 PM Last Modified: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 12:22:56 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:04:16 **IP Address:** 69.144.208.90

## Page 1

## Q1

Contact information:

Name: Robert Sherer

City/Town: Great Falls

State/Province: MT

Email Address: docsherer@aol.com

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

I am in favor of cutting the quota in area 482 from 15 to 5 for Rams

# #24

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 4:25:39 PM Last Modified: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 4:30:01 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:04:21 **IP Address:** 69.145.122.71

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Montana Wild Sheep Foundation (Ty Stubblefield)

City/Town: Missoula

State/Province: MT

Email Address: ty@montanawsf.org

#### Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

Montana Wild Sheep Foundation Comments for December Commission Meeting

#### 1) Bighorn Sheep Hunting District 214

FWP Proposal: "Change quota range for the 214-60 legal ram bighorn sheep license from 2–8 to 1–8."

MTWSF Comment: We are concerned about the reduction of the quota from 2 to 1 either-sex permits and offer the following information for your consideration.

In the justification, the reported ram ewe ratio was 50:100, from a spring 2023 survey, is mid-range of the 40-60 rams/100 ewes ratio recommended in the 2010 Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy. As stated by one of our members, "I've spent as much time in this unit as anyone alive, and it's relatively the same as it has been for the past 12+ years with roughly 6 to 12 mature rams in the herd. Taking 2 mature rams out will not hurt the recovery effort."

While we recognize the population has not recovered from the large scale die offs, we have member information that suggests there are many more than 43 sheep in this district. One of our members from Anaconda who knows this sheep population well reports, "There is a core ~40 sheep wintering in the primary lime quarry area, but there are also several other smaller groups of 10-20 that stay on the Garrity side and another 10-20 that remain in the Lost Creek drainage."

We would like to meet with FWP staff before quota tentative to further discuss and offer support to the Regional Wildlife Manager and local biologist in supporting survey efforts this winter and spring.

#### 2) Bighorn Sheep Hunting District 250

FWP Proposal: "Close sheep hunting in HD250."

MTWSF Comment: We support this proposal and agree with justification. However we would like the legal description and a placeholder identifying this district as closed to remain in the regulations to assure this BHS HD remains in the forefront of needing more work.

#### Bighorn Sheep Hunting District 270

FWP Proposal: Add a limited Adult Ewe license to HD270 (East Fork herd), with a quota of 3 and a quota range of 1-5.

MTWSF Comment: We support this proposal and justification.

#### 4) Bighorn Sheep Hunting District 381

FWP Proposal: Reopen bighorn sheep season in HD 381 for 1 any ram during archery and general rifle seasons but remove the Region 4 portion of the district from the boundary.

MTWSF Comment: We support reopening BHS HD 381!

#### 5) Bighorn Sheep Hunting District 303

FWP Proposal: Adjust the HD 303 Boundary to clean up a sliver of land along the Yellowstone River between Yankee Jim and Big Creek that is not within either HD 300 or 303 by aligning HD 303 in this area with the Yellowstone River instead of Hwy 89

MTWSF Comment: We support this proposal and justification.

#### 6) Bighorn Sheep Hunting District 305

FWP Proposal: Reopen HD 305 (South Yellowstone) to sheep hunting with a single ram license by drawing with a season that ends Oct. 31, quota of 1 with a range of 1–5.

MTWSF Comment: We support reopening BHS HD 305 and the quota and quota range!

## 7) Bighorn Sheep Hunting District 482

FWP Proposal: Reduce quota for 482-20 from 15 to 5. No change to quota range.

MTWSF Comment: We support this reduction and justification.

# #25

## COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)

Started: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 8:05:13 PM Last Modified: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 8:15:56 PM

**Time Spent:** 00:10:43 **IP Address:** 63.153.28.68

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Steven Anderson

City/Town: Belgrade

State/Province: MT

Email Address: mtsurveyor.bus@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Bighorn Sheep Season and Regulations

This is a general comment for all proposed hunting regulation changes. It is ridiculous to ask for comments on hunting regulation changes at a time of year when most hunters are hunting and don't really have time to review proposed changes. It would appear to me that you are mainly interested in comments from those who do not hunt. Why are you doing this?