



June 1, 2026

Evan Klein
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Licensing Bureau
1420 E Sixth Ave
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Proposal to market and sell via live auction one 2027 Pronghorn tag on behalf of the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Wild Sheep Foundation's application/proposal to market and sell via live auction a Montana Pronghorn Tag to benefit bighorn sheep and other wildlife conservation, restoration, research and enhancement initiatives of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. We are honored to once again be considered for the privilege of supporting Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MTFWP) in this way.

The Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit (EIN #42-1109229) wildlife conservation organization whose mission is to enhance wild sheep populations, promote scientific wildlife management, educate the public and youth on sustainable use and the conservation benefits of hunting, while promoting the interests of the hunter. WSF's Purpose is *"To Put and Keep Wild Sheep on the Mountain®."* Since forming in 1977, the foundation has raised and directed more than \$88 million to state, provincial, tribal, First Nation, and international agency partners to support their wild sheep and wildlife conservation programs, habitat enhancement, and other initiatives benefiting them through the auction sale of special permits and tags. WSF has raised and directed another \$21 million in Grant in Aid (GIA) to fund disease and wild sheep health research, wild sheep and habitat enhancement, education, outreach, and advocacy programs. This represents more than \$119 million raised and directed to agencies and in jurisdictional GIA to date. Graphic images of these funds and jurisdictions, as well as Montana and the BlackFeet Nation are attached as Appendix "B".

Additional millions have been raised and directed to support our Mission and Purpose.

Thus far the WSF has raised and directed \$10,211,500 to MTFWP, the Ft Belknap, Blackfeet Nations, the great state of Montana and her wildlife through the sale of bighorn and other special license and tags. Moreover, WSF has directed an additional \$797,934 in GIA to Montana conservation programs statewide to date in addition to hundreds of thousands of dollars directed to Montana bighorn sheep conservation indirectly through multi-jurisdictional projects/programs.

In January we were privileged to market and sell Montana's bighorn sheep tag during our recent 2026 convention. This amazing tag sold for \$450,000 and a complete summary of Montana's tags gross sales WSF has auctioned to date is attached as Appendix "B".

To continue this record of success we are privileged to submit our proposal to add Montana's Pronghorn tag to market and sell on live auction during WSF's February 2027 Sheep Show® convention in Reno, Nevada. The 2027 Sheep Show will be our 33rd show in Reno and our 50th anniversary and we are planning a huge event. The 2027 convention will again be held at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center and the Peppermill Resort, Spa, & Casino serves as our host hotel. In support of the Reno and Nevada economies, we also have room blocks at the Atlantis and Grand Sierra Resort properties to welcome global attendance. Our live auctions, which include Conservation Permits/Tags, are conducted during our evening banquets in the Tuscany Ballroom at the Peppermill. WSF live auctions, and the visceral audio-visual experience that support them, are world renowned as the marquis of wildlife conservation auctions.

WSF live auctions are also live streamed through an innovative online auction platform first launched in 2012 to enable bidders from around the globe to participate and raise the much-needed funds for wild sheep and wildlife conservation.

Conservation Permit Marketing and Transparency:

WSF

- Propose to sell the Montana Pronghorn tag with WSF retaining ten (10%) of the final auction bid price. Ninety (90%) percent of the final auction bid price will be forwarded to MTFWP.
- Will not bundle these tags with any outfitting services, taxidermy or other products or services, and will make clear that buyers of these tags must obtain the services of a guide/outfitter approved by MTFWP.
- Encourages non-credit card payments to avoid credit card processing fees but will charge an additional 3% convenience fee should the buyer(s) choose to purchase the tags on credit cards.
- Will showcase this Montana Pronghorn tag in the permit section of WSF's quarterly *Wild Sheep*® magazine as well as on the Permit section of our website including streaming video.  Our in-state partner, Montana WSF will promote the tags in their publications as well.
- Will invite MTFWP to provide video or still photos of wild sheep and conservation work accomplished, to be utilized in resolutely promoting the Montana Pronghorn tag and during the banquet auction.
- Will aggressively promote the Montana Pronghorn tag to our membership and our extensive database of permit buyers throughout the sheep and mountain hunting community using our weekly Mountain Minutes eNewsletter, AP wire, and WSF social media platforms. Again, our in-state partner, Montana WSF, will promote the tags through their marketing mediums as well.
- Will send press releases to all major hunting publications, i.e., The Hunting Report, Peterson's Hunting, Outdoor Life, Sports Afield, The Huntin' Fool, Lone Star Outdoor News, American Hunter, as well as to major hunting web sites, blogs and forums. Major conservation organizations, including Safari Club International, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Dallas Safari Club, the Boone and Crockett Club, and Mule Deer Foundation will also be sent press releases.
- As noted previously Sheep Show® live auctions include live streaming video on-line bidding should a prospective buyer want to bid on the Montana Pronghorn tag but not be able to attend the event personally. Online buyers are prequalified and may bid live, while watching and hearing our evening auctions streaming live on our secure website.
- Will also provide MTFWP with a complimentary booth in our exhibit hall to help promote the tags to convention guests and two (2) evening banquet tickets the night the Montana Pronghorn tag

is auctioned so a representative(s) can field any questions that may arise from the audience.

- Lastly, while the live auction sale of conservation permits is unmatched in efficiency and effectiveness in raising much needed funds for the species' conservation, they have become controversial in some circles. Transparency in the NGO selection and auction process, and transparency in the funds directed to the wildlife resource, are critical to ensure that this funding mechanism remains a viable tool for wildlife agencies to support their critical work. The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation provides for agencies to determine the best and most effective means to raise funds for the conservation of wildlife and their habitats. WSF is committed, as MTFWP partners, to conduct our promotions and sales of the tags in the most ethical, effective, and transparent way possible. In addition, we stand ready to assist MTFWP, and its staff in promulgating the process as well as where the tag funds are directed, and the impact those funds have on Montana's wildlife and its people.

Estimated Attendance and Potential Market for License Bidders:

WSF membership continues to expand with a current worldwide membership of over 11,000. We estimate convention attendance at 15,000 – 20,000 in 2027 with 5,000-6,000 of those as pre-registered banquet guests. WSF evening banquets sell out at ~2,500 seats Friday and Saturday night in the Tuscany Ballroom.

The demographics of the WSF membership consist of citizens throughout the world, but primarily from the United States and Canada. Many of these individuals attend our convention specifically for the purpose of buying or just observing the sale of the special conservation licenses, tags, and permits offered. These conservation tags represent wildlife philanthropy at its finest. WSF directed more than \$6.9 million to agency partners through special permit and tag sales at our recent 2026 show including a world record \$1 million bid for the New Mexico Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep conservation tag.

While the membership of WSF is unmatched in their altruism, non-members who are interested in conservation efforts are also welcome to attend the Sheep Show® as membership in WSF is not required.

At the time of auction if there are any changes to the auction write-up, or special announcements that could enhance the sales, MTFWP personnel will have an opportunity to briefly address the audience to address these changes or make these announcements.

In closing thank you very much for your consideration. WSF would be honored to auction this 2027 Montana Pronghorn tag at WSF's 50th anniversary and annual Convention in Reno, Nevada, February 3-6, 2027. We look forward to supporting Montana's exceptional wildlife heritage through the sale of these special conservation tags and are excited at the opportunity of advancing our ongoing partnership with you.

Sincerely,



Gray N. Thornton
President & CEO



Kim Nieters
VP of Operations & Auction Director

MONTANA

GRANT-IN-AID

- MONTANA = \$792,934
- CONFEDERATED SALISH & KOOTENAI TRIBES = \$5,000

PERMIT PROCEEDS

- MONTANA = \$8,725,450
- BLACKFEET NATIONS = \$371,700
- FT. BELKNAP = \$112,500

TOTAL = \$9,891,034



TOTAL WSF CONSERVATION
FUNDING 1983-2026





ALASKA
\$3,581,140

YUKON
TERRITORY
\$3,324,015

NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES
\$236,300

BRITISH
COLUMBIA
\$8,449,460

ALBERTA
\$6,506,928

WASHINGTON
\$4,631,496

OREGON
\$6,488,140

IDAHO
\$5,853,630

NEVADA
\$5,670,117

UTAH
\$2,742,005

CALIFORNIA
\$4,615,284

ARIZONA
\$11,781,347

NEW MEXICO
\$16,940,000

N. DAKOTA
\$375,603

S. DAKOTA
\$76,160

NEBRASKA
\$2,183,826

COLORADO
\$5,384,176

TEXAS
\$2,093,098

MEXICO
\$8,782,720



TOTAL WSF CONSERVATION
FUNDING DIRECTED
1983-2026

\$119,770,866 *

\$\$\$ = More Sheep = More Permits

Without the extra financial support from sportsmen, fish and wildlife agencies would have little to no conservation and management programs dedicated to wild sheep. There is no other durable funding model, let alone one that has contributed at this level.

Whether you are a sheep hunter, hope to be, or want to see this opportunity for your children, WSF is the one organization getting it done.

**JOIN THE WILD SHEEP
FAMILY TODAY**



**WILD SHEEP
Foundation**
406.404.8750
412 Pronghorn Trail
Bozeman, MT

JOIN WSF

*TOTAL INCLUDES: \$2,027,112 - International
& \$3,331,527 - Multi-State Projects