

## Appendix L

### Bighorn Sheep Supplemental Transplant Proposals in Existing Herd Units 10/22/03 DRAFT

#### Step 1. Internal Review (within Wyoming Game and Fish Department)

1. A need or desire to supplement an existing herd and potential transplant site is identified/suggested, either internally by WGFD or from an external source (e.g., Wyoming Chapter Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, sportsperson's groups, private landowner(s), federal agency personnel, or interested publics).
2. The need for a supplemental release of bighorn sheep, as well as suspected or known reasons for failure of the existing bighorn sheep population to thrive, should be described. Additionally, the feasibility, suitability, and habitat evaluation for a potential transplant site is analyzed by WGFD, including Regional Wildlife/Habitat, Bighorn Sheep Working Group (BSWG), and Veterinary Services personnel, with input and tentative commitment of funding support, if needed, from WY-FNAWS et al. A source of sheep for the supplemental transplant should be identified, and the herd health history of that source population should be reviewed, to identify potential disease transmission concerns, if any. A map depicting the anticipated range and likely distribution of transplanted bighorn sheep, based on known seasonal ranges of existing bighorn sheep within the herd unit, should be prepared. If the release is merely to supplement an existing herd and not expand currently or traditionally used habitats, then a map is not necessary. If produced, this map should be based on the expected movement of translocated sheep; the mapped area should be as complete as necessary to include anticipated year-round habitat, but should not include areas bighorn sheep are unlikely to utilize. All domestic sheep occurring within the anticipated range/distribution of existing and transplanted wild sheep should be identified, and a Risk Assessment to determine likelihood of contact between domestic and wild sheep should be completed.

A recommendation to pursue the supplemental transplant is forwarded by Regional personnel and the BSWG to Wildlife Division Administration. From there, Wildlife Division Administration should make a recommendation to the Director's Office to proceed with, abandon, or modify the proposal. If the Director's Office agrees to proceed, contact should then be made with the WGF Commissioner in whose District the herd unit occurs. If the affected WGF Commissioner(s) agree to proceed, external contacts should continue.

#### Step 2. External Review (outside Wyoming Game and Fish Department)

1. If the supplemental transplant site (and anticipated wild sheep distribution resulting from the transplant) involves public lands managed by a federal or state land management agency (e.g., USFS, BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, State Parks, etc.), discussions with appropriate resource personnel in those agencies should occur. Summaries of these discussions should be prepared, as part of the official record.

If the supplemental transplant site (and anticipated wild sheep distribution resulting from the transplant) involves private lands, individual discussions with potentially involved landowners/lessees should occur. Contact with sportsperson/conservation organizations should also be made. Summaries of these discussions should be prepared, as part of the official record.

2. A complete summary of all public comment should be forwarded by the Region(s) to Wildlife Division Administration, then to the Director's Office, then to the WGF Commission. If needed, Region(s) can meet with WGFD Staff and/or the WGF Commission to discuss the supplemental transplant proposal.
3. If approval to proceed with a supplemental transplant is obtained from the WGF Commission, Region(s) should firm up schedules, secure funding, and proceed with the supplemental transplant. Media coverage of the WGF Commission decision to move forward with the proposed transplant should occur at the appropriate time.

#### Step 3. Additional Protocol for Supplemental Bighorn Sheep Transplants

1. If the decision is made to go forward with a supplemental transplant, and if contact between domestic and wild sheep is subsequently suspected/documented, and/or if the supplemental transplant falters or fails, there shall be an *a priori* "hold harmless" agreement in place. If there is known, suspected, or highly probable contact between domestic and wild sheep, wandering bighorns should be live captured and transferred to Sybille; if live capture can not be accomplished, bighorn(s) should be killed and transferred to the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory as soon as possible. There should be immediate, mutual, two-way notification of interaction between domestic and wild sheep.
2. Utilize capture protocol to minimize stress and ensure adequate disease sampling on captured sheep.

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3. Radiocollar as many transplanted adult bighorns as possible (preferably all), to facilitate post-release monitoring; satellite/GPS collars would be ideal for monitoring movements and habitat selection.