



Wild Sheep Foundation Policy on Domestic Sheep and Goats and Wild Sheep Supporting Statements

- WSF is the premier organization advocating for wild sheep and their habitats;
- Since forming in 1977, WSF and its chapters or affiliates around North America have raised and invested \$85 million towards wild sheep conservation, restoration, management, and disease research;
- WSF recognizes that disease transmission from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep is a primary obstacle facing wild sheep survival, enhancement, restoration and management in many of the 20 western states and provinces with a wild sheep resource;
- WSF has invested heavily in wild sheep disease research (e.g., Rocky Crate/Wild Sheep Foundation Endowed Chair for Wild Sheep Disease Research, Washington State University), seeking knowledge and gathering data on pathways and consequences of disease transmission from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep;
- WSF recognizes that, due to their gregarious nature and social behaviors, natural attractions exist between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats;
- WSF recognizes that location and movement of domestic sheep and goats may be more effectively managed than those of wild sheep, and strategies to eliminate co-mingling should focus primarily on management of domestic sheep and goat grazing and trailing;
- WSF recognizes some wild sheep populations occupy contiguous habitat, while other wild sheep herds occupy more insular, “island” habitats;
- WSF recognizes that individual wild sheep may travel extensive distances, both daily and seasonally, within wild sheep metapopulations;
- WSF recognizes the need for differential agency response protocols to wild sheep moving within occupied ranges or within a metapopulation when compared to movements outside of such areas;
- WSF recognizes that increased risk of contact occurs if male wild sheep seek estrous domestic sheep or goats during the breeding season;
- WSF recognizes that the higher the conservation value (e.g., T&E listed status, core, native herds) of wild sheep populations, the more comprehensive the strategies to manage for effective temporal and spatial separation must be;

- WSF recognizes that assessments of risk of contact should be initiated, completed, and periodically re-evaluated and revised;
- WSF acknowledges that wild sheep respiratory disease outbreaks and population-level die-offs have occurred in the absence of documented contact with domestic sheep or goats;
- WSF recognizes that disease outbreaks and substantial population declines of wild sheep are frequent when contact occurs between domestic sheep or goats and wild sheep;
- WSF recognizes, supports, and promotes multiple-use policies on western public/Crown lands, while acknowledging that all multiple uses cannot occur on each and every acre;
- WSF recognizes state and provincial wildlife agencies as managers of each jurisdiction's wild sheep resource, while also recognizing the habitat responsibilities and contributions of federal/Crown land-management agencies and private landowners;
- WSF recognizes and supports the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA 2012) Wild Sheep Working Group's "*Recommendations for Domestic Sheep and Goat Management in Wild Sheep Habitats*" which advocates for pro-active management strategies to achieve effective spatial and temporal separation between wild sheep and domestic sheep or goats;
- WSF recognizes and respects federal/Crown regulations, policy, and laws addressing multiple use, including domestic and wild sheep population and habitat management;
- WSF recognizes the economic, social, and cultural contributions that domestic sheep AND wild sheep industries provide to the custom, culture, and tradition of many western North American jurisdictions;
- WSF recognizes the value and importance of sustainable agri-business and wild sheep populations to the social, economic, and ecological viability of western communities and ecosystems;
- WSF believes first and foremost in scientific, not political or judicial, solutions to resource management challenges; however, WSF also recognizes that legal recourse sometimes may be necessary to achieve productive and sensible management practices;
- WSF supports and is willing to collaborate with any and all interests to achieve effective separation of domestic sheep and goats from wild sheep on public or private rangelands;
- WSF believes in collaboration and consensus-building among diverse interests (CAST 2008; USAHA 2009; ASI 2011) and in working alongside traditional conservation partners as well as collaborating with individuals or organizations that don't necessarily share WSF's views;

- WSF believes that federal/government land-management agencies, in collaboration with wild sheep conservation organizations, other stakeholders, and domestic sheep and goat interests, must work to identify and offer alternative grazing options outside of wild sheep habitat for domestic sheep and goat permittees currently grazing within the known distribution of wild sheep. Where appropriate, WSF supports conversion of domestic sheep and goat grazing permits to alternative classes/kinds of livestock as a means to facilitate separation;
- WSF supports cooperative efforts to identify and secure research and management funding essential to ensure the viability of wild sheep populations as well as the domestic sheep and goat industry;
- WSF proposes to work collaboratively with the domestic sheep industry to critically review, synthesize, and evaluate Best Management Practices (BMPs) that reportedly contribute toward effective separation between domestic sheep or goats and wild sheep;
- Where appropriate, WSF supports negotiation amongst stakeholders of financial incentives for domestic sheep or goat permittees to waive public land grazing permits ;
- Where collaborative solutions cannot be reached, WSF recognizes that administrative appeals or legal challenges may be necessary in resolving land-use conflicts that impact populations of wild sheep.

Literature Cited

- American Sheep Industry (ASI) Association. 2011. January 20, 2011 Workshop, Reno, NV and June 13-14, 2011 Workshop, Denver, CO.*
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- U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA). 2009. Recommendations on best management practices for domestic sheep grazing on public land ranges shared with bighorn sheep. USAHA Joint Working Group Committee on Wildlife Diseases & Committee on Sheep & Goats. 8pp.*
- USDA Forest Service 2010. Payette National Forest Record of Decision Land Resource Management Plan. 38pp.*
- Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Wild Sheep Working Group. 2012. Recommendations for Domestic Sheep and Goat Management in Wild Sheep Habitats. 24pp.*
<http://www.wafwa.org/html/wswg.shtml>

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