



WSF's 2014 Thinhorn Sheep Summit Action Plan Update
The Kevin & Janine Rinke Thinhorn Initiative

December 2014 Update

Prepared by: Jeremy Ayotte (and Kevin Hurley) 01/02/2015; finalized 01/16/2015

“NO CONTACT IN THE NORTH”

Legislation is part of the solution

Recent Actions/Strategies:

- Expanded focus to support Yukon and Alaska efforts to create legislation to limit or exclude domestic sheep and goats from thinhorn sheep range.
- Planned a series of presentations in Whitehorse and Dawson City, Yukon in April 2015.
- Provided edits and comments to Dehcho Workshop proceedings in NWT; continued work with NWT Environment and Natural Resource contact (Nic Larter) to advocate for Dehcho First Nations resolution statement development.
- Maintained engagement with THS working group from all jurisdictions through monthly update (AK, BC, NWT, YT)

Jurisdictional Updates:

- **NWT:** Healthy populations of Dall's sheep are important for subsistence, resident hunting, and the world-class non-resident outfitted hunting industry in the Mackenzie and Richardson Mountains. In recent reports that we have referenced, guide outfitting in the Mackenzies alone annually generates more than \$1.8 million dollars for business, individuals, and the government in NWT. At the same time, a 2004 strategic planning paper for agricultural development in NWT suggests that the agricultural potential of the north has yet to be tapped, and there will be significant growth in the next few decades. At this point, our program's focus has been on working with the Dehcho First Nations toward a resolution or position statement that limits or excludes domestic sheep and goats from wild sheep range within Dehcho lands. The Dehcho (Dene for "big river") is unique compared to other regions because there are no settled land claims. In the Sahtu region of NWT, land claims have been settled, and there are Resource Management Boards that have been established under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. As we follow-up with First Nations representatives who attended the October 2014 Dehcho wildlife workshop that Jeremy presented at in Fort Simpson, we will further expand our effort to address/include Sahtu Co-Management Boards.
- **YK:** A series of presentations by Jeremy Ayotte are planned in the Yukon this spring (April 2015). Two talks are being planned with Troy Hegel for Whitehorse (one government, one public), and one in Dawson City. The Whitehorse government-only presentations will be used to catalyze discussion of this issue and the need for legislation within government, which had ramped up 2-3 years ago, but has recently died off. The forum will bring together Fish and Wildlife agencies, Department of Environment Policy & Planning staff, Yukon's Chief Veterinarian, and Department of Agriculture staff. The timing for this initiative is good with the new Animal Health Act established just last year. The presentation in Dawson City will be organized by Dan Reynolds and will be incorporated into a Renewable Resource Council meeting.

- **YK:** Discussions continue with Clint Walker, Paul Dueling, Bryce Bekar, Dean Turner, Sean Olmstead, and others on possible establishment/chartering of a Yukon Chapter of WSF; more focused discussion/activity is anticipated in Reno in early January during the 2015 WSF Sheep Show, along with in-Yukon gatherings in later January 2015.
- **AK:** Information has been coordinated to support Kevin Kehoe, Wayne Heimer, and others in their effort to develop a Brief to support possible introduction of legislation in Alaska during the 2016 Legislative Session.
- **AK:** In Reno during the 2015 WSF Sheep Show, a charter re-establishing an Alaska WSF Chapter was approved by the WSF Board, helping lead to a heightened focus on Dall's sheep in AK.

Actions to Implement:

- **(NWT):** Contact Heather Sayine-Crawford and Brett Elkin to discuss opportunities to address Sahtu Co-Management Board. Emphasize opportunity for this program to provide support for legislation to protect wild sheep within the Sahtu. Also look for opportunities to catalyze effort across boundaries (Dehcho-Sahtu, Yukon- NWT).
- **(NWT):** Continue contact with Nic Larter et al. to provide support where we can for a Dehcho statement of position or resolution to exclude domestic sheep and goats from thinhorn sheep range, throughout the Dehcho region.
- **(YK):** Provide Troy Hegel and Dan Reynolds with a clear description of our program's objectives so they can work within YK government and Renewable Resource Council to promote planned presentations in Whitehorse in April 2015.
- **(AK):** Continue to work with Kevin Kehoe, Wayne Heimer et al. to develop Brief to support introduction of new Bill to Alaska Legislature.
- **(All):** Coordinate conference call with Thinhorn Initiative working group to update everyone and emphasize strength of multi-jurisdictional approach.
- **(All):** Continue to compile information on each jurisdictional context:
 - public land management (are there concerns with public land grazing of domestic sheep/goats near wild sheep range? can we prohibit the use of sheep/goat/llama as pack animals? are there permitting processes we can use?)
 - private land regulations and politics (are private farms the key concerns? are there agricultural acts/regulations protecting farm practices?)
 - wildlife management (what is our lobby strength? what is the role of First Nations?)
 - regional protocols for confirmed contact (can this be developed within each region? such a protocol demonstrates critical importance of issue)
 - information management (is there a regional database with accurate thinhorn herd range polygons? are the locations of domestic sheep farms known being tracked?)