

Goat Tracks



Journal of the Working Goat - Summer 2017
Until You Have Loved an Animal, Part of Your Soul Remains Unawakened.



Alpi, the Wonder Goat

Story by John Mionczynski

Alpi drawn by Ellen Herman

One of the first editors of Goat Tracks

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On Track with Goat Tracks

by Larry Robinson



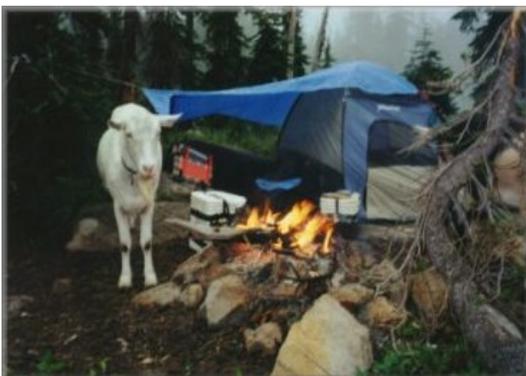
Since we appear to have survived the winter, a winter from ('that other place'), we are again on tap for another issue of Goat Tracks. It has always seemed to me to be a little premature to be calling this the **'Summer'** issue, when we, at least the 'we' here in Idaho, have so far had precious little opportunity to actually get out and stomp the woods with our goats. Of course there was Hells Canyon and the Rapid River, both up near Riggins, Idaho, that beckoned, earlier on, but aside from the constant inclement weather, I was once again enjoying my spring by recuperating from having my insides cut upon to fix another age-related malady. This is the second year in a row for this nonsense, and I am earnestly hoping that it doesn't become an annual event. I am waaaay too busy a guy to have limitations put on my 'liftings' and 'wanderings'.

The hike, or hikes, presented in this particular issue will likely be 'blasts from the past' as my requests for descriptions of my reader's excursions went unheeded. It appears that all the goatpackers have sold their goats and gone back to roller skating. Could it be?

The land use issues remain relatively constant. The Shoshone has published their SDEIS, which is relatively unchanged from the original with the exception of the non-use of the Payette RADT. Of the three 'Alternatives' listed, their **Proposed is #2**, which essentially is 'throw the goats out and keep them out'. This approach is essentially the operating style of the bulldog, that is: "grab hold, and hold on until either the patient or the doctor dies." The reason for saying this is because the entirety of the evidence against goats as a cause for Bighorn Sheep maladies continues to fade into irrelevance, and so their bias (fear) of goats is based upon nothing more than, well; "We've said it loud enough, and long enough, that we have actually begun to believe it".

The Blue Mountains, home of the Eagle Cap Wilderness (second in my mind only to Wyoming's Wind River Range), has taken the exact same approach as the Shoshone, in other words, in their recent DEIS, goats are **'verboden'** across the board in their so-called Alternatives. I must confess to be sick of this continuing nonsense. Their absolute unwillingness to examine the developing proof that goats are not, and will not, be a contributor to their Big Horn sheep maladies.

As I have said before, we have to be in this for the long haul, as it is clear that it is going to be a rough road changing this bias against our boys that threatens to keep us permanently out of the wilderness.



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Full page	7x9	50.00	150.00
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???? Is anybody reading this magazine?? Doesn't anyone want to talk to me? Throw darts? Whatever? 😊

Pet goat saves Arkansas family from house fire

[Alex Hider](#), Apr 14, 2017

A pet goat is being heralded as a hero after it saved an Arkansas family from a devastating house fire.

Last Thursday, [Abigail Bruce](#) of Weiner, Arkansas received an



unexpected 10th birthday present — a small white goat that she promptly named Speedy. Abigail's father Nick Bruce told reporters he originally "didn't want anything to do with the goat," but his attitude quickly changed.

[Two nights later](#), Abigail was awoken when Speedy barreled into her room, jumping on top of her and braying. When Abigail finally woke up, she saw the smoke.

The Bruce's garage had caught fire while the family was sleeping, and the flames were quickly spreading to the rest of the house.

Abigail quickly ran into her parents' room and woke up her parents. The family jumped out the bedroom window and ran onto the front lawn.

The Weiner, Arkansas fire department arrived soon after and put out the fire. However, the home suffered significant damage in the blaze.

Despite losing their home, the Bruces are thankful for each other — especially the newest member of the family.

"I'm glad we got (Speedy) before the fire happened or we wouldn't be here," Abigail told [KARK-TV](#). "... I think he means a lot right now. Well not just right now, but forever."

11-year-old boy uses birthday money to buy a goat for family in Africa

By [Leslie Rangel](#), Published: April 18, 2017

<http://kxan.com/2017/04/18/11-year-old-boy-uses-birthday-money-to-buy-a-goat-for-family-in-africa/>

AUSTIN (KXAN) — When 11-year-old Kyler Cox was scanning through a [Christmas catalog from Operation Mobilization](#) (OM), a non-profit ministry organization, something caught his eye. It was something he could purchase, but it wasn't anything that would go under his Christmas tree.

11-year-old boy uses birthday money to buy a goat for family in Africa



Cox saw that he could buy a goat for a family in Africa for \$56. His mom says she knows her son has a big heart but she never imagined he'd give his birthday money away.

"I just had spare money and because I'm never going to use all of it, I saw I can give it to a kid in Africa," Cox said.

"I'm ashamed to say, I was like it's his birthday money, I was like come on he just got it," Christy Catalano, Cox's mom said. But his family found Cox's young heart was much bigger than the simple idea of buying something for himself.

"It makes me so happy," Cox said, holding back tears. "It was amazing because [I saw] how one goat could do that much help."

For many of the families in need, the donated goats can mean food and money to help buy materials to build homes, trade and even fur. The goats produce milk and meat for food, manure for fertilizing crops, and they reproduce goats to help populate the goat ministry.

Cox dreams of one day visiting the African village where he bought his goat, but for now, he's virtually visiting through Skype with a missionary from the village.

He says he's proud to give back to children in need, just like his parents gave him help when he was adopted through the foster system at just 4 weeks old.

"He's a blessing to his friends and his family," Terry Cox, Kyler's father said.

Goat Program

According to OM USA, the goat program helps most in villages around Malawi in southeast Africa. As many as 85 percent of the children in the area are orphaned and do not go to school.

Many families struggle to meet the needs of their own families as well as the needs of the orphans.

To help extended families with the needs orphans, OM works to provide a goat to each family represented in the OM Christian school.



NAPgA Rendy 2017 is Imminent!

The date is June 15-18th, 2017 near beautiful Lake City, Colorado! Thursday through Sunday.

**** Guest speakers include John Mionczynski, the father of goatpacking! If you have never had the opportunity to listen to John Mionczynski speak, you are in for a special treat! John has most likely forgotten more about goat packing than most of us will ever learn ****

We are going to participate in a volunteer service project, and spare time can be filled for you and your goats on the many beautiful hiking trails that abound in this area.

Here are a few housekeeping issues to note:

1) Health Certificates are required, so please make sure that you get your goats checked out by a Vet .

2) Any goats that are showing any signs of respiratory issues, pink eye or any other type of health concern, should be left home.

Goats must be contained at all times, i.e., .

3) Animals should be highlined except when hiking. There can not be any goats free ranging throughout camp as has occurred at some past Rendys.

4) Please be considerate of your neighbors, and your neighbor's animals.

Bring food to share, as we will be having potluck dinners Friday and Saturday.

Click to: [Download Rendy Schedule & Directions](#)



Lake San Cristobal, near Lake City



near the Rendy campsite



The actual Rendy campsite



One of the views from the planned hike

Paradise Ranch

Pack Goats

COUNCIL GROVE, KANSAS

Paradise Ranch Packgoats will be delivering Packgoat kids to the 2017 Rendezvous in Colorado in late June and will be dropping some off at numerous locations along the route from Kansas. We are accepting orders and still have room on our order list at this time.

We have been breeding specifically bred Packgoats for over 19 years and offer 7 full blood breed, Alpines, Oberhasli, Saanen, Boer, Nubian, Toggenburg, LaMancha and a number of Hybrid lines like our 300 lb. Sabors.

We offer Saanens that will get near 300 lbs, 41". Our ever-improving genetics is second to none. We breed for Packgoat conformation and temperament and the results speak for themselves. Have we hit the mark? Are our Packgoats any good? Don't take our word for it, ask the ones who have purchased them, Larry Robinson, Charlie Jennings, Carolyn Eddy, Clay Zimmerman, Kent Daniels, Dave Suisse, Nancy & John Clough, Matt Lyons, Stephen Barnhill, Joe Delong, John Bamberg, Marc Warnke, Dean Kroon and many others.

Our specifically bred-to-be **Packgoat** kids sell for \$300 to NAPgA members, and \$350 to non-NAPgA members. They each come with all vaccinations, coccidia treatment, wormings and a life time of support. All kids are hand raised, individually, no lamb bar, with many hours of hands on personal training by the time you receive them. A percentage of the proceeds from our sales will be donated to NAPgA's legal fund.

The "Best is Yet to Come"! Phone: (620)767-7888 or eMail: paradise27@tctelco.net.



Mudslide & Louis, Bridger-Teton NP, WY



You could be the proud owner of good-looking boys like these

These pictures are from this year's crop of Dwite's goats

Land Use Issues

As I noted in my opening volley, the land use issues remain relatively constant. The Shoshone has published their SDEIS, which is relatively unchanged from the original with the exception of the non-use of the Payette RADT. Of the three 'Alternatives' listed, their **Proposed is #2**, which essentially is 'throw the goats out and keep them out'. This approach is essentially the operating style of the bulldog, that is: "grab hold, and hold on until either the patient or the doctor dies." The reason for saying this is because the entirety of the evidence against goats as a cause for Bighorn Sheep maladies continues to fade into irrelevance, and so their bias (fear) of goats is based upon nothing more than, well; "We've said it loud enough, and long enough, that we have actually begun to believe it".

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As I have said before, we have to be in this for the long haul, as it is clear that it is going to be a rough road changing this bias against our boys that threatens to keep us permanently out of the wilderness.

From the Shoshone NF Documentation:

Alternatives Considered in Detail

The Forest Service developed three alternatives, including the No Action, the Proposed Action, and an Adaptive Management alternative.

1. No Action: There would be no change to the Forest Plan regarding domestic sheep management, and pack goat use would be allowed on the Shoshone.
2. Proposed Action: Domestic sheep and domestic goat grazing would be allowed on the current allotments allocated for sheep and goats.
Pack goat use would be prohibited from core native bighorn sheep ranges.
3. Alternative 3. Domestic sheep and domestic goat grazing would be allowed on the current allotments allocated for sheep and goats.
Pack goat use would be prohibited from core native bighorn sheep ranges and authorized through a permit process once effective and viable mitigation is developed and approved by both the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the Forest Service.

It is fairly clear here that the presence of Alternatives 1 & 3 is simply eyewash. Included so they could say that, "Yes, Virginia we are considering alternatives." But that is clearly bogus as they have identified Alternative #2 as the 'Proposed Action'. In other words, forget about those other two Alternatives. So you guys with your

goats? GO HOME!

Complete documentation here:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/shoshone/landmanagement/planning/?cid=FSEPRD540949>

From the Blue Mountains NF Documentation:

stelprd3792953.pdf

RNG-11 S-4

Standard

The use of recreational pack goats shall not be authorized or allowed within or adjacent to source habitat for bighorn sheep.

stelprd3792954.pdf

As a result of die-offs and suppressed reproduction during the last century, the genetic diversity in bighorn sheep herds has been lost (Schommer and Woolever 2001). At the present time there are no vaccines to protect bighorn sheep from developing pneumonia (Clifford et al. 2009, Schommer and Woolever 2001, Srikumaran et al. 2007, Weiser et al. 2003). The only way to prevent a pneumonia outbreak in bighorn sheep herds is to keep bighorn sheep separated spatially from domestic sheep and goats (Clifford et al. 2009, Das-sanayake et al. 2008, Onderka et al. 1988, Schommer and Woolever 2001).

The separation, either spatially, temporally, or both, of bighorn sheep from domestic sheep has been recommended by leading bighorn sheep disease experts (Garde 2005, Schommer and Woolever 2001, Singer 2001). The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies defines effective separation as spatial and/or temporal separation between wild sheep and domestic sheep or goats resulting in, at most, minimal risk of potential association and subsequent transmission of respiratory disease between animal groups (WAFWA 2010). It is recommended that site-specific solutions for each bighorn sheep population and domestic sheep allotment be developed based on a management strategy appropriate for the complexity of the situation (Schommer and Woolever 2001).

(Fairly clear here that all of their quotes are far from what could be considered current science. And since the applicable science has been radically changed in the last 2 to 3 years, the validity of these quotes is nil.)

RNG 13 would be a Standard of trailing of domestic sheep or goats should not be authorized or allowed within 7 miles of bighorn sheep home ranges
(This standard is quoted in all the Alternatives. In other

words, as was noted in the original EIS, for Packgoats, there are NO alternatives. And the standard of 7 miles outside of Bighorn Sheep home ranges puts you well outside of the forest period. And as before, welcome to the Blue Mountains, NOW GO HOME!

Bighorn Sheep Attraction and Disease Transmission

– Bighorn sheep are attracted to domestic sheep and goats (Onderka et al. 1988, Schommer and Woolever 2001), and, although the mechanisms of respiratory disease in bighorn sheep are not well understood, the evidence that contact between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep leads to respiratory disease and die-offs in bighorn sheep is overwhelming (Clifford et al. 2009, Foreyt et al. 1994, Silflow et al. 1993). More than 327 bighorn sheep in a 30 square mile area in Hells Canyon died when exposed to *Pasteurella multocida* and *Mannheimia haemolytica* that was most likely carried by a feral goat (Cassirer et al. 1998, Onderka et al. 1988, Schommer and Woolever 2001). Both *P. multocida* and *M. haemolytica* were isolated from this feral goat and a bighorn sheep found in close proximity to where the Hells Canyon (1995 and 1996) bighorn sheep pneumonia epizootic began (Cassirer et al. 1998, Dassanayake et al. 2008, Weiser et al. 2003). Several authors (Dassanayake et al. 2008, Silflow et al. 1993, Srikumaran et al. 2008, Weiser et al. 2003) have demonstrated that bighorn sheep are highly susceptible to *P. multocida* and *M. haemolytica* strains found in domestic sheep and goats.

Excuse me! Where oh where do you get this BS that BHS are attracted to sheep and goats. The only ones I have encountered were NOT attracted, they were repelled, and they immediately put a plan of increasing the distance between them and ‘us’ into place.

Once again, all of the so-called scientific cites are old, some more than 20 years. We have seen significant changes in the science in the last 2 to 3 years. This stuff is absolutely bogus (of course, it always was). But classic government to be sure.

Once again as well, the old Hells Canyon die-offs float to the surface. Clue: when the same old justification is brought to bear, over and over again, the obvious con-

clusion is that that justification is all they have (which incidentally has been thoroughly discredited). And if all they have is Hells Canyon, that is NOT science. No one incident or experiment is considered established science.

stelprd3792956.pdf

From their definitions of terms:

Authorized pack stock: Any authorized animal used to pack or retrieve supplies, materials, equipment, or animal parts. This includes the Equidae family (horses, mules, donkeys, asses, hinnies), the Canidae family (dogs), and the Camelidae family (camels, llamas, alpacas, vicunas, guanacos).

Unauthorized pets: Any animals known or suspected to exchange diseases with state-managed native, introduced, or indigenous wildlife species. These include animals from the genus *Capra* (domestic goats) or any domesticated wildlife species that are currently managed by the state.

Interestingly, although they talk about Packgoats in these documents, they cleverly omit them from the definition of pack stock. They can’t seem to make up their minds whether our goats are stock, or pets. Because they are considered ‘stock’ in other areas.

See chart below: All the alternatives are ‘NO ALTERNATIVES’

Complete documentation here:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/shoshone/landmanagement/planning/?cid=FSEPRD540949>

A statement that I consider particularly relevant to what we are experiencing with this issue:

Law of Conservation of Ignorance

A false conclusion once arrived at and widely accepted, is not easily dislodged and the less it is understood, the more tenaciously it is held.

Standard or Guideline Designator	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternatives E and F
RNG-11 S-4	Standard The use of recreational pack goats shall not be authorized or allowed within or adjacent to source habitat for bighorn sheep.	This alternative retains the alternative B modified management direction.	This alternative retains the alternative B modified management direction.	These alternatives retain the alternative B modified management direction.

The following is an analysis NAPgA requested from Maggie Highland, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVP, VMO Researcher, regarding the Rudolph paper that is used as the gold standard of wisdom for justifying the removal of our goats from the forest.

The following comments are based solely on scientific fact taken from published research and are provided following a request from NAPgA to provide my professional assessment of the literature commonly used as “evidence” that goats have been the “cause” of bighorn sheep die-offs.

A single publication is often referenced as “evidence” for domestic goats being a threat to bighorn sheep; that publication was published in 2003 in the *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*, was authored by Karen M. Rudolph, *et al.*, and is entitled “Sharing of *Pasteurella* spp. between free-ranging bighorn sheep and feral goats”. The use of this publication as evidence that domestic goats, “feral” or not, have ever caused, or may be able to cause, epidemic pneumonia in bighorn sheep is a gross misinterpretation of the results outlined in this publication. The one and only scientific-based conclusion that can be taken from this manuscript is that bighorn sheep and domestic goats that come into close contacts with one another may share the same pathogenic bacteria. Nothing more. The authors even admit that there is no way of determining which way the same strains of Pasteurellaceae were transmitted, from bighorn to domestic or vice versa. Even after stating this unknown, the authors go on to state that the “evidence suggests transmission of strains from goats to bighorn sheep” and that “in this report we present evidence which suggests transmission of unique *Pasteurellaceae* stains from feral goats to free-ranging bighorn sheep”. What evidence? Personal belief is not scientific based fact.

Let’s take a close look at the findings described in this publication:

1 feral goat, 1 bighorn ram, and 1 bighorn ewe were found in close association to one another, separated from a nearby bighorn herd. None of the animals were sampled to determine what bacteria each carried prior to being in contact with one another (as obviously this wasn’t possible in this natural setting). The bighorn ewe was showing evidence

of respiratory disease, the bighorn ram and feral goat were not. All 3 were euthanized and samples collected to investigate what respiratory tract bacteria were present in each animal. The bighorn ewe and domestic goat shared several bacteria that the authors identified as being the same strains of Pasteurellaceae bacteria. However, the bighorn ram and bighorn ewe both had what the authors would classify (but don’t outright discuss) as the same identical isolate of a pathogenic Pasteurellaceae that the feral goat did not have (see Table 1 in the publication). If bighorn sheep don’t carry pathogenic Pasteurellaceae naturally, from where did this bacteria, not identified in the feral goat, originate?

In short, there is absolutely nothing in this publication that provides even a shred of evidence that domestic goats were the source of bacteria that caused the 1995-1996 epizootic outbreak of pneumonia in bighorn sheep described in this publication. A number of comments by the authors honestly reveal the reservations that they themselves had in their attempts to implicate the goats in this area as the source/cause of the 1995-1996 outbreak of bighorn sheep pneumonia in Hells Canyon. If anything, this publication provided evidence AGAINST the 3 feral goats being the source of bacteria associated with (or that caused) the epizootic bighorn sheep pneumonia outbreak that occurred in Hells Canyon during the winter of 1995-1996, as bacteria identified in the 1st feral goat (the one found with the 1 bighorn ram and 1 bighorn ewe) were not found in any of the other bighorn sheep tested during the outbreak. The authors even state “there is no evidence that those organisms were associated with subsequent disease or death”, with “those organisms” referring to the pathogenic bacteria found in the bighorn ewe and the 1st feral goat. And again, we have no way of knowing whether the bighorn ewe carried the pathogenic *Pasteurella* bacteria and transmitted it to the feral goat, or vice versa. Additionally the 2nd and 3rd feral goat found in Hells Canyon around the same time, but “not known to have been closely associated with bighorn sheep” were tested and found to carry non-pathogenic (LktA negative) Pasteurellaceae bacteria. Testing of these non-pathogenic bacteria indicated that these bacteria were similar (or the same bacteria strains based on the authors’ conclusions) to that identified in bighorn sheep that died during the outbreak. These bighorn sheep had no known contact with the feral goats and the bighorn sheep were certainly not dying from pneumonia caused by

the non-pathogenic bacteria found in the 2 feral goats (LktA has been shown to be the necessary virulence factor needed to cause lethal disease, therefore without LktA *Mannheimia (Pasteurella) haemolytica* and *Bibersteinia trehalosi* would not be the cause of pneumonia). So what does this mean? It means that no bacteria identified in the 2 feral goats would have caused the bighorn sheep pneumonia outbreak. The authors even mention that the outbreak the 1995-1996 outbreak describe in the publication was “incidental” to sampling of the feral goats and the 2 bighorn sheep that were in close proximity to one of the goats.

If tissues/samples from the 3 feral goats and all or any of the bighorn sheep described in the manuscript are still available, it would be of utmost importance to perform further analyses to determine whether the now recognized primary agent of bighorn sheep pneumonia, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, was present in the feral goats and whether the same strain of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* was identified in the bighorn sheep that died during the epizootic pneumonia outbreak of 1995-1996. Additionally, genetic screening of the Pasteurellaceae bacteria identified in the Rudolph, *et al.* publication should be performed, as the limitations and inaccuracy of the methods used to identify the Pasteurellaceae bacteria (particularly *Mannheimia haemolytica*) in the Rudolph, *et al.* publication have been personally observed (M. A. Highland) and also described in a publication by Miller, *et al.* (“Phylogentic and epidemiologic relationships among Pasteurellaceae from Colorado bighorn sheep herds”, Journal of Wildlife Diseases, 2013. 49(3), pp. 653-660.). If these samples are no longer available for additional analysis, then the use of this publication as evidence that goats are a source or cause of bighorn sheep pneumonia should be dismissed all together, as this publication clearly does not support contact with goats as the cause bighorn sheep pneumonia. In addition, and further providing little support for goats being a threat to bighorn sheep, is the fact that there have now been 4 captive research studies performed in which domestic goats have been penned together with bighorn sheep. Of these studies, just 2 of 7 bighorn sheep died in 1 of the studies; death in both of the bighorn sheep was contributed to *Mannheimia haemolytica*. Overall 2 of 16, or 12.5% of the bighorn sheep placed in forced captive settings with domestic goats died. In 2 of the studies, a goat strain of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* was either known to be present or purposefully introduced, and while all of

the animals (both domestic goats and bighorn sheep) developed signs of respiratory disease, they started to recover and none of them died from pneumonia.

References for these studies are available upon request.

Exaggeration and over interpretation of data has no place in science and it is inhibitory to problem solving.



Margaret A. Highland, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVP
Animal Disease Research Unit-ARS-USDA (VMO Researcher)
Pullman, WA 99164

Owyhee Packgoat Supplies *Equipment for Sale*

Barbara Locati has quite a number of new pannier sets, mostly the OPS Deluxe models, and 3 of the aluminum saddles that were rented once and are in excellent condition.

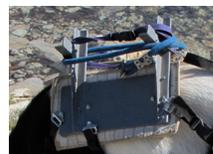
She is in need of the funds that the sale of this equipment would bring since her husband Greg passed away a couple of years back.

I have used this equipment since I began goat hiking 10+ years ago and have been completely satisfied with its performance. If you are in need of equipment, consider that these products are being sold at very competitive prices.

Cordura Pannier sets, \$110.00 (New)
\$ 75.00 (Used)



Zippers and Side Pockets
Each end.



Powder coated saddles \$120
(Used)

Checks or Paypal to:
larry@goattracksmagazine.org
Contact Barbara Locati:
manygoats75@gmail.com
1-509-386-2908

Wolves in the Backcountry

How does this affect us or does it at all?

Wolves in the Backcountry

By Larry Robinson

Another predator to consider as a hazard to we & our goats

While I painfully aware that this article potentially could ruffle some feathers, having already had an encounter with these non-native, govt-introduced predators, I have recognized for myself that they do indeed represent another threat while we are immersed in the wilderness.

As a point of fact, I have to note that I am *NOT* against wolves, per se. However, I am very much against the introduction of these Canadian wolves, as due to their size, as a species, they *DO NOT* represent an element of a balanced ecosystem, at least not here in Idaho. They are **very large** Canadian wolves. 35 of them were trapped and subsequently brought here and deposited on the main Salmon River in the central Idaho wilderness about 12-13 years ago. Their numbers have multiplied well outside of what would normally be expected of a group of that size, and as a result, they have expanded into Washington, Oregon & Nevada in their thirst for the territory to accommodate their growing numbers.



*Their size.
I.e., that is NOT a midget in the background*

My particular exposure to Idaho wolves occurred in the northwest end of the Bear Valley in a place that is a common dispersed camping location along Elk Creek. I subsequently learned that there are three known packs between Deadwood Reservoir and Elk Creek in the Bear Valley, which is a very large number of animals for such a small territorial area. As might be expected, the goats perceived that they were about, and became behaviorally just short of nuts. They don't mind being 'invited' to dinner, but it seems they have a decided aversion to 'being dinner', and were making me aware of that fact in *NO* uncertain terms.

The point here, is that the pepper spray (bear variety) that I have carried for all the years that I have been hiking is no longer solely sufficient to deal with all the apex predator(s) in the woods. Bears, probably. But a pack of wolves? Not bloody likely. The introduction of

wolves into the wilderness has created the conditions where it is now necessary to carry some kind of a weapon.

And I hate that!!! I don't like weapons, have never carried one, don't care to ever use one, but do not see any way that an aggressive wolf pack could be dealt with without some form of 'heat'.

And please don't take the time to tell me that they don't ever attack humans, the usual drivel dispensed by the government talking heads. They not only do, but they bloody well **will** under the right circumstances. Should you doubt this, Youtube is rife with examples of wolf predatory behavior. If you care to see on attack that occurred right here in Idaho, where a hunter was forced to defend herself from a predatory wolf, go here: https://youtu.be/c4To_A1Fy08

Bottom line? If you are going to take your boys into areas where wolves have established territories, you had better have a way to defend them. As I discovered last year in my encounter with a very aggressive horse, if an animal goes after your boys, it can get VERY chaotic, very, very fast!

First Person Account

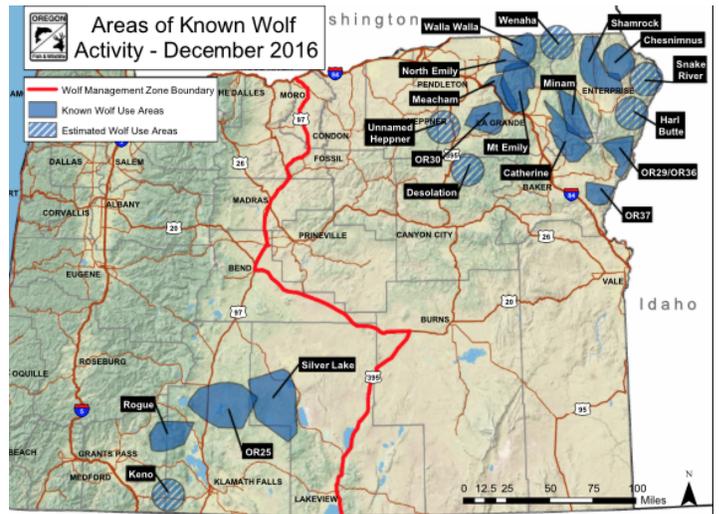
This may interest you. I talked with this young lady yesterday afternoon. This is what she told me: She had been bow hunting using a cow call near Headquarters, Idaho. She changed her position and was crossing an open meadow when the wolf appeared at the edge. It saw her and the wind was blowing directly from her to the wolf. She raised her arms and waved them to catch it's attention, it came straight for her. The bow was dropped and the S&W M-29 44 Magnum was deployed. She made the 1st shot at about 10 feet, hitting it above the left eye. It dropped and changed direction, trying to get away after the shot. She shot it again in the lungs, then a 3rd time in the neck. It took two men to lift it into the pick-up.

She's a tall woman, about 5' 11" and pretty tough. She hunts bear and cougar with hounds - her own hounds! Her husband is a long-range shooter and is adept at making 600 plus yard shots. The lady, however, is the one who busts the brush with bow or rifle. The wolf's size comes into perspective when you compare her size to it.

Another report was received this week was from Tim Johnson of Fishhawk Guides in Clarkston, the fellow who donates fishing trips to our Elmer Keith Shoots each year. He reports: "One of my Idaho Outfitter friends hunted a group of out-of-state elk archery hunters from the Great Lakes region last week and they called in a pack of 17 wolves by cow calling. None of the hunters had a sidearm or wolf tag and it was a very traumatic experience as the wolves surrounded the hunters! All hunters went home early very

disturbed claiming these wolves are very different from the Great Lakes wolves as they claimed these Idaho wolves actually “hunt” you and were not afraid!”

Outdoor adventures have definitely taken on new dimensions of excitement. Anyone for berry picking without a sidearm?

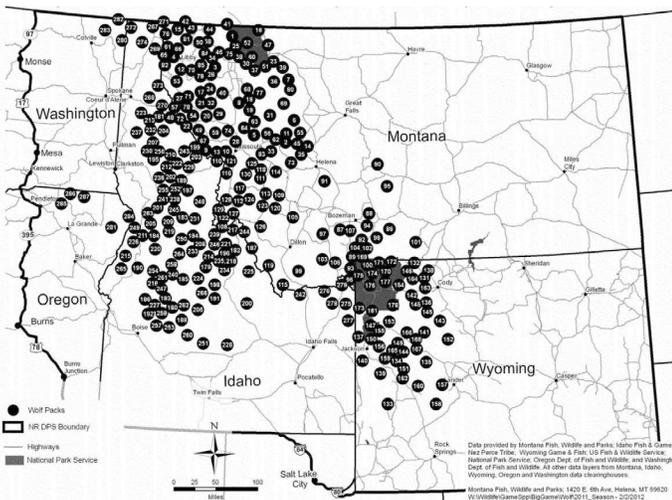
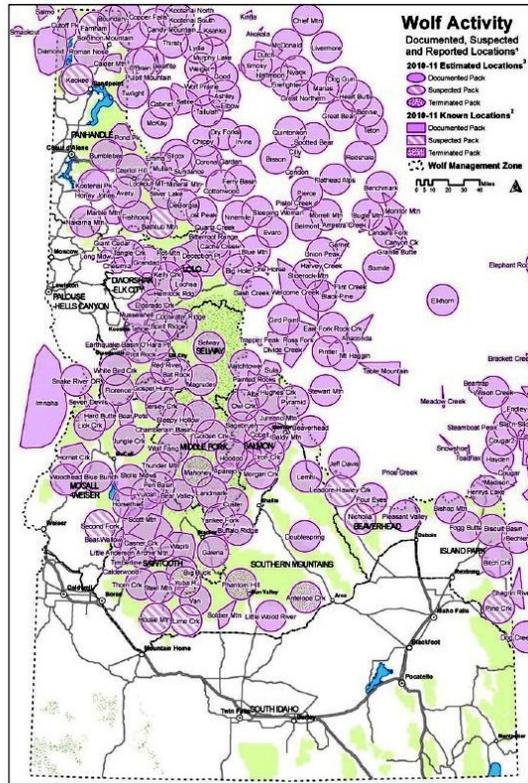


Washington's wolf population keeps growing



WOLF PACKS as of March 2016

NOTE: Polygon shapes are the estimated range of packs with collared wolves. Circles are a generic representation of pack locations without collared wolves.



Video of Goats in Sweaters Learning to Jump

[Shaunacy Ferro](http://mentalfloss.com/article/94465/watch-very-important-video-goats-sweaters-learning-jump), April 17, 2017
<http://mentalfloss.com/article/94465/watch-very-important-video-goats-sweaters-learning-jump>

Here's some very important news: It's kidding season. As in baby goats. You may not care about goat husbandry, but you definitely should care about these baby goats in sweaters figuring out how to jump for the first time. Gershwin, Butterscotch, Bruno, and Marigold were just 1 day old when this video (spotted by [Mashable](#)) was taken at Sunflower Farm Creamery in Maine.

The sweaters served a dual purpose: They kept the little goats warm overnight and disguised the white and tan kid in a darker color, according to the creamery's YouTube, because his mother wasn't recognizing him as her own. (The problem seems to have been alleviated, according to the video description.)

There is also [a livecam](#) so you can watch any future births in real time—the farm has 20 expectant goat moms this year—though the camera doesn't seem to be on at the time of writing. Rest assured we will be checking back often.

Preparing for Raising Goats!

How to Prepare for Raising Goats

By [Kirsten Lie-Nielsen](#), [Hostile Valley Living](#), 6/23/2016

When you're looking to enlarge your homestead and increase your self-sufficiency, goats are a great way to go. Their care requirements are much simpler than other large livestock, and they will reward you with some delicious milk that can be made into popular cheeses.

It's not hard to add goats to the farm as long as you take a few basics into account. Compared to adding a cow or a draft horse, goats are easy keepers. They do need more attention than "gateway" animals like chickens, though.

Goat Shelter Considerations

Like any livestock animal, goats should have a secure area that they can stay in at night or seek refuge from bad weather. If predators are at all a problem in your area, your goats need a nightly shelter that can be locked up so they are safe from potential attacks.

This room or stall should be left open during the days so they can use it to get out of the elements, or an alternative shelter should be set up in their field. For indoor shelter, goats require a minimum of [10 square feet per goat](#).

Pasture and Fencing for Goats



Goats also need outside space to range and play, and that area needs a good fence to keep them from escaping. To keep goats from trying to escape, make sure their pasture has plenty of entertainment for them. Goats are playful animals and the more

distractions they have, the less they will think about adventures.

For fencing, 4-foot [no-climb fencing](#) works for many types of goats. Use fencing with small squares, such as 4-inch by 4-inch, so that your goats can't get their heads stuck in the openings.

In theory, you can keep up to [10 goats on an acre](#), but the number of goats varies greatly depending on how much vegetation is available for them to graze. Goats are prized because [they are foragers](#) and often will eat underbrush and weeds that other livestock won't touch. There are plants that are poisonous to goats, however, and you should be careful to research what might be toxic in your field.

Goat Feed Considerations

Like any animal, goats need a constant supply of fresh,

clean water. Many goats that are on pasture in the summer need only minimal grain. If you are raising your goats for meat, you may be feeding them more heavily, while some pastured goats don't receive any additional feed when plenty of vegetation is available.

When considering how much to feed, it's important to look at what proteins and nutrients your goats are getting from their pasture. Dairy goats are fed supplemental feed when milking, but goats should never get more than 50% of their [daily feed from grain](#).

In addition to grain, you should offer your goats free choice access to [good-quality hay](#). Goats will forage between their pasture and the hay stand, and in winter they will fill the majority of their diet with hay. Legume hays are best for goats, such as alfalfa and clover. Goats do not like grass hays and these hays provide much less in the way of protein. Especially during winter, when your goat may be eating hay as their main food source, providing high-quality, legume hay is important.

Goats also need certain minerals that cannot always be found in their foraged food or grain. [Baking soda](#) should be offered free choice to goats, as it keeps the acid in their rumen healthy and their digestion functioning properly. A tray of baking soda in the goat's stall should provide them with plenty of the white powder, and they will simply sample from it when they feel the need.

There are many mineral supplements you can offer goats to make sure they are getting all of the [nutrients they need](#). There are large mineral blocks that you can leave for them in their stall to use when they need, or you can provide a tray of particular minerals or include them in their grain. Copper is especially important for goats to have, but there are plenty of minerals that are important to goat's diets just like they are to humans.

Weather and Bedding

Goats are hardy animals but they don't like extreme cold or heat. In winter, make sure their shelter is buttoned up from outside wind gusts and provide deep bedding for them to snuggle in. During the summer, it's important to provide them with shady areas to rest and plenty of fresh, cool water.



The most common bedding for goats is either straw or wood shavings. Wood shavings are often easiest to clean, and it is important to keep your goat's pen cleaned with fresh bedding. If you have dairy goats, it

is crucial to have a dedicated area for milking that is sterile and clean.

With access to hay and pasture and a nice, cozy stall or shelter to relax in, your new herd should settle right in. Adding goats to the farm is a great way to provide for yourself or possibly bring a small profit to your homestead from their meat or cheese. And the companionship and entertainment of a herd of goats can't be underestimated!

[Kirsten Lie-Nielsen](#) is rebuilding a 200 year old homestead in rural Maine, using geese for weeding and guarding purposes, raising chickens for eggs, bees for honey, and maintaining vegetable gardens for personal use. Find Kirsten online at [Hostile Valley Living's site](#), [Facebook page](#), and [Instagram](#), and read all of her *MOTHER EARTH NEWS* blog posts [here](#).

Kirsten Lie-Nielsen Bio

Kirsten Lie-Nielsen, Mid-Coast Maine Suburban Homesteader

Name: Kirsten Lie-Nielsen

Occupation: Farmer, writer

Place of Residence: Liberty, Maine

Background and Personal History:

Kirsten was raised on a farm and spent her youth riding horses competitively and gnawing on fresh vegetables from her family's garden. She moved away, went to college and spent time working in customer service, but the taste of fresh vegetables is kind of addicting. Inspired by the self reliance of farm life, she has increasingly made efforts to move "back to the land" as time has passed.

Kirsten and her partner are working to restore a 200 year old farm in midcoast Maine. Rehabilitating the previously abandoned barn and fields, they are looking forward to growing commercial organic fruits and vegetables.

On the farm, Kirsten uses geese for weeding and guarding purposes, raises chickens for eggs, bees for honey, and maintaining vegetable gardens for personal use.

Current Projects: Both farmhouse and barn have required a complete rebuild from the ground up. In addition to our homebuilding projects, she is mowing back and clearing over 90 acres of overgrown fields and hand crafted stone walls.

Goats, and a livestock guard dog to care for them, are recent additions to the farmyard that will produce fresh milk.

When she is not working outside, Kirsten is writing about her experiences for publications, her personal blog, and freelance for magazines.



Other Fun Facts: Kirsten's farmyard currently includes: seven geese, fourteen chickens, a top-bar beehive colony, vegetable and herb gardens, a cat, a dog, and a lovebird.

More Places to Find Kirsten on the Web:

[Hostile Valley Living Blog](#)

[Hostile Valley Living on Instagram](#)

[Hostile Valley Living on Facebook](#)

Tribal women corner the market on India's heat-hardy black goats

By [REUTERS](#), By K. Rajendran, PUBLISHED: 16 February 2017
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-4229976/Tribal-women-corner-market-Indias-heat-hardy-black-goats.html>

AGALI, India, Feb 16 (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - The lean black goats owned by the tribal people of Attapadi, in India's Western Ghats, are known for their resilience.

Not only are they resistant to most of the diseases that sicken other goats, they have a unique ability to prosper in southern India's increasingly severe heat, researchers say.



"Black goats can withstand even scorching heat without much care and attention," said T. Giggin, a professor of agriculture at Kerala

Agricultural University.

That reputation for hardiness has not been lost on the region's livestock dealers, who in recent years have trekked into the foothills to buy the goats inexpensively from struggling tribal families and then sell them on, at much higher prices, in livestock markets.

Now, however, tribal communities have come together to cut out the middlemen and keep more income at home by establishing just one "goat village" where all the region's tribal people sell their animals at a fixed price to visiting buyers.

The change has helped shore up tribal families amid scorching heat that in recent years has dried up many streams in the region's hamlets and forced an increasing number of families to sell livestock or migrate to cities in Kerala and Tamil Nadu in search of work.

"This coming summer I have a strong weapon (against drought) - our indigenous Attapadi black goat," said Ponnamma Thaghachan, a 38-year-old farmer in the village of Kullappadi.



Bighorn Issues

Efforts to end grazing are shortsighted

By Bonnie Brown, The Durango Herald, March 31, 2017
<https://durangoherald.com/articles/147493>

As the bighorn/domestic sheep conflict continues to be an issue, I felt it was important to attend the Sheep in Montana – Domestic and Wild – The State of Things and What We Know About Disease symposium which was held in Helena, Montana, in February.



The symposium was sponsored by the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Montana Wild Sheep Foundation and the Montana Wool Growers Association, and featured presentations from researchers across the West and Canada.

Respiratory diseases in bighorn sheep are both multi-factorial and poly-microbial; and remain poorly understood even under experimental “pen” (enclosure) studies.

Most of the research indicating *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (Movi) and some strains of pneumonia-associated bacteria may be shared between domestic and bighorn sheep in pen studies in which bighorn sheep and domestic sheep are forced to share the same enclosure. This forced confinement setting would never happen in open range grazing.

Furthermore, Movi and numerous strains of pneumonia-associated bacteria are not only endemic (regularly found) in bighorn herds throughout the West, but can be present in other ungulate species (wild goats, etc); and bighorns can share bacteria amongst themselves. Additionally, Movi and pneumonia-associated bacteria strains are only viable outside the respiratory tract for a few minutes, so require close contact (nose to nose) for transmission. However, shared pathogens do not automatically equate to the development of pneumonia.

The degree of risk of potential transmission of Movi and pneumonia-associated bacteria from domestic sheep to bighorns under open range grazing conditions is unknown. These endemic pathogens can cause bighorn die-offs in the absence of contact from domestic sheep.

While bighorn herds were more numerous in the past, no one has an accurate baseline for population numbers. Even with current methods such as aerial surveys, wildlife biologists are hard-pressed to come up with accurate population numbers, and solely blaming the domestic sheep industry for the demise of bighorns is short-sighted and inaccurate.

The targeted effort to end domestic sheep grazing ignores myriad of other factors that impact bighorns such as predation, nutrition, parasites, population density, habitat, weather, capture myopathy and other stress; and probably the single, biggest factor: inbreeding. It’s a scientific fact that inbreeding creates significant health problems and diminishes resiliency.

Another important issue to point out is the risk analysis model used by the Forest Service on the Payette Forest in Idaho, which ultimately resulted in the removal of 69 percent of the domestic sheep grazing on the forest.

The risk analysis model uses allotment boundaries as a main determination as to whether or not an area is considered high-risk for contact between domestic sheep and bighorns. If a bighorn crossed the allotment boundary, it triggered the high-risk rating.

The model isn’t an assessment of actual physical contact between bighorn and domestic sheep; it’s simply a computer model hypothesizing whether or not a bighorn entered a grazing allotment.

The domestic sheep industry is committed to sound science and research that will help maintain healthy bighorn sheep populations and a sustainable domestic sheep industry.

Eliminating domestic sheep grazing allotments will force many families out of business. That is unfortunate because our ranchers on federal lands contribute greatly to our rural economies while providing food and fiber from natural, renewable resources.

Bonnie Brown is the executive director of the Colorado Wool Growers Association and has been working on grazing issues for the sheep industry since 2000. Reach her at cwgawool@aol.com.

Goats in police cars eating veggies

Jeffrey Schools, WCSH, April 23, 2017

<http://www.wcsh6.com/news/local/goats-in-police-cars-eating-veggies/433491739>

BELFAST, Maine (NEWS CENTER) -- Goats in police cars eating veggies. No... not a new streaming show hosted by a former TV star, This time, one Belfast police officer has some interesting passengers.

Two kids, baby goats, were picked up by the Belfast PD wandering near High Street early Sunday morning.

Sgt. Fitzpatrick ‘captured’ the two kids and have them in his squad car driving around town.



Tank The Trail Finder: Goats Aren't The Only Curious Ones!

By Molly Geiger, Contributor to the News-Press, 3-1-2017
<http://www.shoshonenewspress.com/article/20170301/ARTICLE/170309995>

I have to admit that I have come to enjoy the reaction we get from fellow hikers we meet while out on the trail. It seems that Tank and Kiff bring a smile to everyone's faces and are perfect ice breakers for even the most solitary of hikers. In fact, we manage to strike up a conversation with almost everyone we meet.



Usually we are met with a barrage of fun questions. Ella always cracks up when we are asked, "Are those goats?" As funny as it sounds, we get asked this question fairly frequently, so we have thought up some pretty creative answers. My favorite is, "No, these are cloven-hoofed Labradors."

All joking aside, we get some really good questions! One of my favorites is, "What made you want to hike with goats?" Although the short answer is, "Why not?", the real answer is that I settled on goats after a year of research, and shockingly, I'm not the only eccentric goat trekker out there.

Goats are amazing creatures and apparently people have been drawn to their charm for a long time. Approximately 9,000 years ago, goats were among the first animals to be domesticated by humans. Over the years, they have filled many needs for mankind including, milk, meat, fiber and cart pulling.

In the early 1970s, there was a crazy goat breeder, U.S. Forest Service scientist named John Mionczynski who began fashioning pack saddles and panniers to carry research equipment to rugged mountain peaks. Although Mionczynski became better known for his supposed sighting of Bigfoot, he did write a book which became a definitive guide to goat packing in 1992. Since then, their popularity has grown within the hiking and hunting community.

Goats have filled a niche because they are economical in comparison to horses and mules, yet still have great stamina and the ability to pack 30 percent of their body weight over the most technical terrain (most full-grown pack goats can carry at least 50 pounds). But there are also other attributes that made a goat the natural choice

as a hiking companion for Ella and I.

I love the intense bond that a bottle-fed goat has with its owner. They quite literally will not leave your sight. Unlike a dog, a goat will never chase a squirrel or deer while out on the trail, or be tempted into a dog fight. It is their mild demeanor, which makes them very "kid safe." In fact, should a goat bite, (which is fairly rare) they do not have top teeth in the front of their mouths, so it is rarely painful and usually just slobbery.

I also like that goats are "easy keepers" while on the trail. They nibble as they hike making it unnecessary to pack additional food for them, and with good forage, can go three days without water. They also "tread lightly" and cause very little soil erosion on trails. When looked at more closely, their hoof marks look exactly like those of little deer.

Although we chose goats as our pack animals of choice for logical reasons, it is truly their personalities that have become my favorite part of their companionship. They have breathed new life into my hiking by reminding me to be a "kid" myself: remain alert, curious and inquisitive, be enthusiastic, try new things, kick up your heels and have some fun, and stop to smell the flowers (maybe even eat a few).

I am also quite touched by the true love and loyalty that Tank shows us. I find it to be quite human when he looks into my eyes to try and figure out what I'm thinking.

Sometimes he even knows exactly what I need and will gently rub his head back and fourth on me, not in an attempt to scratch, but because in his mind he is "petting me." Let me tell you, the love of a goat is a special thing.

A Venezuelan farmer kept his family's hard-earned fortune, some \$1,600, in a straw basket. He lost everything in 1871 when his pet goat ate the basket and everything in it.

The farmer retaliated by eating the goat. No goat ever tasted \$1,600 good.

From DUH! The stupid history of the human race by Bob Fenster



Tree-climbing goats disperse seeds by spitting

5-24-17, Ecological Society of America

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/05/170524152555.htm>

In dry southern Morocco, domesticated goats climb to the precarious tippy tops of native argan trees to find fresh forage. Local herders occasionally prune the bushy, thorny trees for easier climbing and even help goat kids learn to climb. During the bare autumn season, goats spend three quarters of their foraging time “treetop grazing.”

Spanish ecologists have observed an unusual way in which the goats may be benefiting the trees: the goats spit the trees’ seeds. Miguel Delibes, Irene Castañeda, and José M Fedriani reported their discovery in the latest Natural History Note in the May issue of the Ecological Society of America’s journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*. The [paper is open access](#).

Argan may be familiar from popular beauty products that feature argan oil, made from the tree’s nuts. The nut is surrounded by a pulpy fruit that looks a bit like a giant green olive. For goats, the fruits are a tasty treat worth climbing up to 30 feet into the branches to obtain.

But the goats don’t like the large seeds. Like cows, sheep, and deer, goats re-chew their food after fermenting it for a while in a specialized stomach. While ruminating over their cud, the goats spit out the argan nuts, delivering clean seeds to new ground, wherever the goat has wandered. Gaining some distance from the parent tree gives the seedling a better chance of survival.

This novel seed dispersal effect is a variation on the mechanism ecologists call *endozoochory*, in which seeds more commonly pass all the way through the animal’s digestive system and out the other end (or sometimes [through two](#) digestive systems). The authors suspected that reports of goats dispersing argan seeds by this more common mechanism were mistaken, because goats do not usually poop large seeds.

The researchers have witnessed sheep, captive red deer, and fallow deer spitting seeds while chewing their cud, and suspect this spitting variation on endozoochory may actually be common - and perhaps an essential route of seed spread for some plant species.

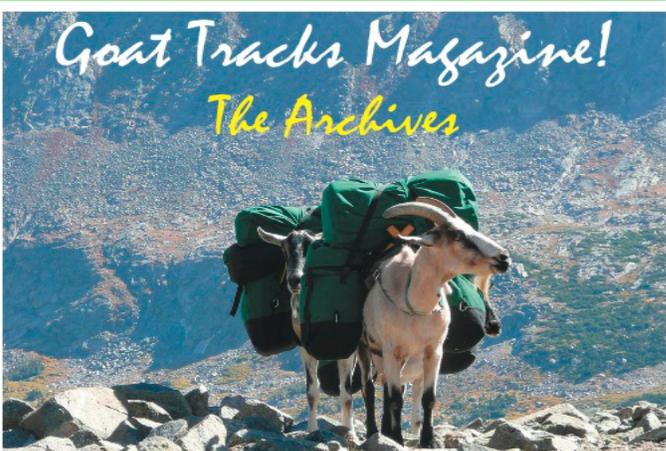


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In my frequent forays into the files that make up the GT Archives, I have come to the conclusion that the only reason that everyone doesn’t have a copy of this information is that they just don’t realize how completely entertaining lots of this stuff is. There have been some great writers for GT over the years!

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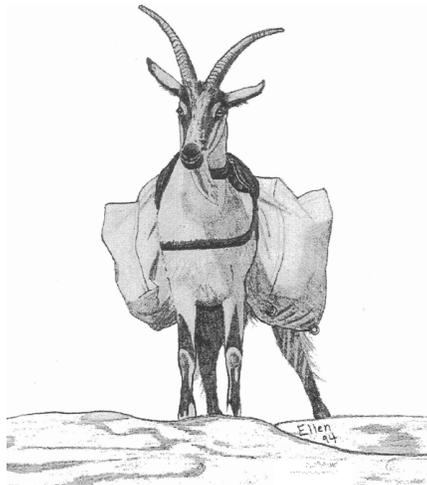
Things being a little thin this quarter due to a lack of producible articles, I went searching for notable stories from the past. And what to my wondering eyes should appear that this one from the very first edition of Goat Tracks, Fall 1995. And who better to feature in the magazine just prior to the 2017 Rends than our keynote speaker, John Mionczynski. I hope you enjoy this one that ends in a cliff-hanger, so to speak.

Goat Sense? Or Divine Intervention

by John Mionczynski

(A tale from the Wyoming wilderness)

It's winter in Wyoming and things have finally begun to slow down. Those of us in the outfitting business here in the northern Rocky Mountains work long days in the short summer season (five months or less) and have the winter to rest or tend to other, more home-based duties. (This year I've finished my book on goat-packing and found a great publisher for it.) As the snows blow outside my window, I can take time to reflect on the busy season just past, and on my career as the only commercial goatpacker in the United States.



Alpi, the Wonder Goat

Drawn by Ellen Herman

One of the first editors of Goat Tracks

Working with goats is a joy that grows with each year, as I learn more about the versatile animal that makes this business possible. Just when I think that I've learned about as much as a person can about goats, I'll stumble onto a new revelation that opens up doors to heretofore **u n c o n s i d e r e d**

concepts concerning the genus Capra.

A case in point concerns "Alpi - wonder goat of the Rockies," a pure American Alpine wether who is one of my all time best packers... and without whom I would not be here today to tell this story.

The outfitting business in the American west is essentially a service that offers to supply and/or transport materials into remote and rugged areas that cannot be reached by standard means of conveyance, such as cars or public transport. Some outfitters use rubber rafts or airplanes, but for the most part, animals

are used. As such, an outfitter functions simultaneously as a supply store; wilderness guide; local expert on rocks, wildlife, trees, etc., sometime baby-sitter, parcel postman cook, medic and animal tender.

Although most trips are fairly standardized in terms of camp cargo and clientele, an outfitter never knows just when he'll be face-to-face with a really challenging adventure. Sometimes the challenge is terrain; some times weather; sometimes it's the cargo. In the case of Alpi's adventure, it was all of these, plus one more... a 13,000-foot mountain called Jackson Peak that decided to go on the move.

It was in the summer of 1990 when Alpi, along with ten other pack goats in my employ, contracted with the United States Geological Survey to haul survey and other technical equipment as well as camping gear for four people up to an extremely remote corner of the universe called Upper Fremont Glacier. The Glacier is 13,500 feet above sea level, exposed, windy, subject to daily lightning attacks, virtually devoid of vegetation of any kind and three days from the trailhead.

But I didn't know this yet, because I'd never been to this glacier. I'd been to other glaciers in the same range - the Wind River Mountains of western Wyoming, and although the going gets rough at times, the goats always make it to the top. I did know that it was inaccessible to other pack animals and the U.S. Forest Service was not going to allow the USGS to use helicopters this year. So as has happened before, my primary competitor for the job, before they were disqualified by the U.S. Wilderness Act, was not horses, or mules, or llamas, but helicopters.

The first surprise came at the trailhead, when my partner Pat Neary and I tried to load up six foot long steel rods, large wooden crates, and a 45-pound theodolite, a high-tech computerized survey instrument. It took half the morning to find a way to load all these gadgets on the standard goat pack saddles. Since the theodolite weighs 45 pounds and comes in a cubic box, it had to be suspended off one side of the saddle and balanced with something of equal weight on the other side. Brownie, a very strong and reliable Toggenburg, was given the 90-pound load. On the third day, the 500 pounds of cargo made it, without incident, to the ice pack. On one particularly dangerous and precipitous ice crossing to our camp, the human contingent was obliged to don some technical equipment, special boots; crampons (sharp, metal pointed daggers that are fixed to the bottom of the boots to grip the ice) and ice axes, to arrest a slide in the early stages of any misstep. If someone slipped into an uncontrolled slide on the steep ice face, their body, human or goat, could be traveling at well over a hundred miles per hour when it struck the boulders

at the bottom of the glacier. This could be extremely embarrassing (that and other eventualities... ed.).

It was when we reached this point of the trail that my personal anxiety level was raised considerably by the glaciologist, who pointed out to me the fact that his prized theodolite, which Brownie was carrying, was valued at many thousands of dollars, and I, as the outfitter, was ultimately responsible for it. "Easy, Brownie," I said. "Just put one foot in front of the other and take it easy."

Brownie, like the rest of the packstring, of course, had no specialized crampons or ice axes to assist his traverse of this section of ice, but... the goats did, after all, have the specialized biological equipment built into their hooves and their genes, and the passage was smooth and successful. At stressful times like this, Alpi naturally moves from his usual middle position in the pack string to the lead. He senses the trepidation's of his buddies and trusts his instincts to lead the entire group, listening, sniffing, and testing the ice with his experienced hooves as he goes.

Alpi, a 220-pound Alpine wether, is one of those goats that is especially tuned to the wild environment. Most goats can develop a 'trail-wise' sense about things in the wild country when things get difficult, that people marvel at, but Alpi has always shown exceptional aptitude in this regard. Several times in whiteout snowstorms, when visibility was zero, Alpi has come to the rescue -- sometimes on his own, some times at my request -- to lead us over the invisible trail that was beyond my perception and under several feet of new snow. We had disagreed a few times, but I'd learned that Alpi was always right. He was uncanny. To take the number two position in the pack-string behind Alpi is a source of security and fascination for me when conditions are bad and the schedule doesn't allow us to stop and make camp. I know that all of us, including Alpi, would rather stop in a nice little flat spot and weather the storm under some big fir trees, but he senses that, for whatever reason, we must go on, and he knows that his instincts are up to the task - he moves on without complaint. Back on the glacier, the days were long and weather was favorable for about a week. The goats must roam the one granite outcrop near camp each evening for little three-inch tall sedges and lichen growing on the rock. Even with supplemental feed, they are obviously not as filled out as they were a week before. They carry cargoes all over the glacier for sampling and surveying so that the glacier's depth and movement can be mapped.

Traversing the glacier, we all must deal with cold winds and sudden, close lightning strikes, must jump crevasses and bear long hours exposed to the elements. But then conditions worsen. Simultaneously, the weather deteriorated, mixing intermittent rain and



snowstorms with fog, much lightning and persistent high winds, and the glaciologist began to show signs of acute high-altitude sickness. He must be evacuated. Pat and I escort him over the tricky ice. He is now coughing up blood, so Pat, who is an experienced emergency medical technician, leads him back to civilization, taking two loaded goats down with him. At times like this, I am very glad for the competent help of someone like Pat. It wasn't until later that the rest of us learned that the glaciologist required emergency treatment in the ambulance on the way to the hospital, and almost didn't make it.

Up on the glacier, Kirk Miller, the remaining scientist, and I could only speculate on the progress of the altitude sickness, as we attempted to carry out the rest of the studies with half the manpower and deteriorating weather. Rain blew into and permeated everything. I rarely set up a shelter for the -goats, but I did pitch a rain fly for them this time, and they seemed very appreciative.

The worst prospect was that the continuing rain would wash off the surface layer of snow from the glacier and create a condition of glare ice. I didn't know if even the goats could negotiate the steep terrain if that happened. In spite of worsening conditions, the Caprine contingent performed admirably -- never faltering, always faithful, always following us, nearly never requiring a lead rope.

We spent the next several days trying to work under almost unworkable conditions. Alpi led the string in bad weather. Brownie carried his 90-pound load from one survey site to another, whether we needed to use it or not. The other nine goats faithfully followed. Kirk admitted to having been a bit skeptical about the whole idea of working goats, in the beginning, but was now convinced that they were something of a panacea for the packing needs of the glacier scientist.

Finally, the job was done, and we had to leave the next day. We were worried. The rain continued, and the sound of rock slides kept us awake much of the night. I wasn't at all sure how we would do crossing the glare ice that now surrounded us.

The next morning, we left camp over incredibly

slippery ice. Jumping crevasses and supra-glacial streams was now a life-threatening ordeal for man and beast. The going was slow, and all around us the sound of rockslides added a tension to the air, which had now grown still. There was only one way out, and all we could do was keep moving, saying little prayers to ourselves as we approached the steep ice traverse. Traction was difficult to maintain, and there were many stops to catch our breath. We watched as the goats following took careful but unfaltering steps. Once again I was amazed at this sure-footed progress. But we could not deny that they had what could only be described as worried looks on their faces.

We had only a half-mile more to go to make Indian Pass and terra firma, when suddenly Alpi stopped and wouldn't budge another inch. I tried talking to him. I put a lead rope on him and pulled as hard as I could on that steep, icy traverse. I even yelled at him, all to no avail. Trying to pull the other goats past him also met with failure. I couldn't believe it. My most trail-wise animal, after a week of perfect obedience, decides to stop for no reason, and his stubbornness has the whole pack string convinced that no goat should move, just a half mile from safety!

I was just beginning to feel the flush of anger and frustration warm my face when Kirk and I heard a rumbling above us. Soon the sound was overcome by a terrible vibration we felt in our feet as we looked up and saw a side of Jackson Peak, directly above us, peel off and start tumbling over the ice toward us.

Quickly I looked back at where my pack string stood, wide-eyed. But there, motionless, stood Alpi, firm in his leadership while thundering boulders grew larger as they fell over the near-vertical ice above. There was no time or direction to run. We had to stay put and just watch. The first rocks to cross our path were small, spinning wildly, but in no time, boulders the size of cars and trucks and small houses were crashing through the path we had meant to travel. Some bounced off the ice ahead of us... some were spinning in the air, as if in slow motion, twenty feet off the surface. Boulders weighing many tons each slammed into each other and broke apart, showering us with their rubble, while the strong smell of granite sparks filled our nostrils.

It seemed like it took hours for the rocks, boulders and gritty sand to race past us at speeds nearing 100 mph, but I'm sure it was only a minute or so. Right across our intended route of travel!

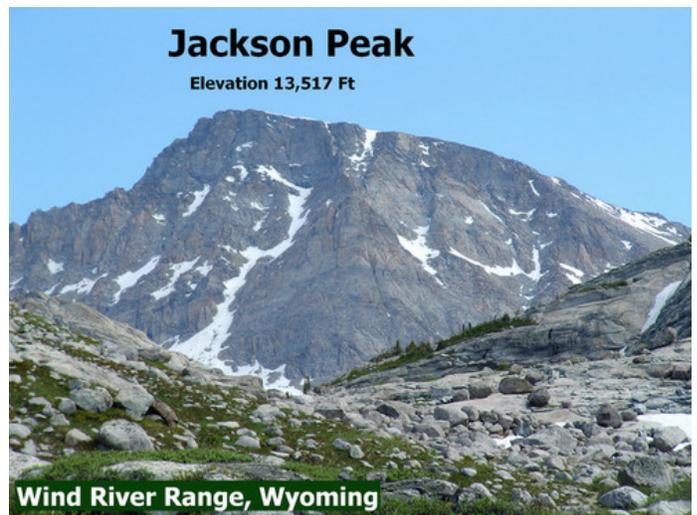
After the rockfall was over, the sound of our hearts pounding in our ears remained as a personal aftermath. We waited a while for any straggling rock to fall before we picked our way across the ice that now carried a

forty-foot wide swath that was rock-laden and roughly gouged. Kirk and I eyed each other as we passed silently over the rubble. Alpi was now faithfully following me and leading the other wide-eyed goats, without resistance -- and no lead ropes required.

As Kirk and I discussed many times over the next few uneventful days, the slide occurred about fifty feet ahead of us. If Alpi hadn't stopped where he did and stubbornly stuck in his tracks, there's no question that we'd have been right in the path of the slide. Our chances of survival then would have been near zero. Alpi had saved our lives, there's no denying it. But did he intend to? Did he sense the rock slide coming? Was it pure coincidence, or was this a case of a higher power intervening, for our benefit, through a 220-pound goat?

It's not easy to explain to people, but I can never look at Alpi (or any goat, now) and think of him in the same simple way I used to. Alpi and I have taken many, many treks in the mountains and deserts of Wyoming since that expedition to Fremont Glacier. Each time he gleefully follows me with his fifty to sixty pound load, seemingly wanting nothing more than to follow along in thoughtless bliss. But there was something strange about the incident on the glacier that will always make me wonder... the way Alpi stopped dead in his tracks and obstinately refused to move (he doesn't normally behave this way); the feeling I had that Alpi seemed to know, somehow, that he was in complete control of the situation; the way he stood his ground and did not try to run away from the tumultuous chaos and noise of the slide; the way he unhesitatingly followed us and led the rest of the pack string, minutes after the event, without again exhibiting that kind of behavior.

The question will always remain: Was it simple goat sense, or divine intervention?





[Cargo panniers]



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'Extinct' medieval goat thriving in Brentwood Country Park

By PiersMeyler, Posted: September 28, 2016

<http://www.essexlive.news/extinct-medieval-goat-found-thriving-in-brentwood-country-park/story-29760901-detail/story.html>



The goats particularly like munching through the brambles

A herd of goats being used to keep brambles in check at a popular country park in Brentwood have been identified as the ancestors of a very rare medieval breed thought to be extinct.

DNA tests have confirmed that the Cheviot goats' lineage dates back through more than 1,000 years to before the Norman conquest.

The herd of 11 animals is thought to be the largest in the country - experts estimate the total UK Cheviot population is as few as 500.

The goats, which were brought to [Essex](#) from Northumberland after emergency rehoming, now play an important role in controlling woody vegetation and are particularly good at controlling dense areas of bramble.

The Essex Grazing Project now cares for them as part of its work to support sites that require grazing to support scarce wildlife or to help conserve historic landscapes.

Councillor Simon Walsh, cabinet member for the environment at Essex County Council said: "We're not kidding - DNA tests have proved that these goats date back to before 1066.

"We're delighted to have a piece of history right here in our county.

"The Essex Grazing Project is an excellent project helping to prevent this rare UK breed from becoming



The herd of Cheviots is one of the largest in the country

extinct, with the added advantage that these goats are proving to be more effective than machinery at controlling woody vegetation.

"It's win/win and obviously something we're happy to bleat about."

DNA fingerprinting has shown the Cheviot goats are an identical match to the native Old English Goat, the remains of which have been recovered from several medieval archaeological sites in London and which was thought to have died out due to large scale importation of foreign goat stock in the Queen Victoria's reign.

The goats work alongside Red Poll cows to graze an area of species-rich grassland and are highly effective at chomping their way through tough bramble.

With their rare breed status confirmed, Place Services now hope to successfully breed the animals in order to increase their numbers as well as introducing them to other sites that require a conservation grazing service in Essex and further afield.

There has already been interest from Basildon Council, with ten goats recently introduced at Wat Tyler Country Park.



Shuteye Packgoats



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Goat Packing as a Use for Male Goats

By Lauren Hall Ruddell, Planet Goat, 1/25/2016
<http://www.motherearthnews.com/homesteading-and-livestock/goat-packing-as-a-use-for-male-goats-zbcz1601.aspx>

In the summer of 2000, my new farm in Colorado was refurbished, restored and otherwise brought back into working order. Before buying expensive Dexter cattle, I wanted a little more cow knowledge. I saw in an ad in a local penny-wise type of circular advertising that a very young Gelbvieh steer was for sale for a mere \$200. A bargain!



The down side was that he still needed to be bottle fed and had a bad hip. Also, because we had only horses at the time, who would be a companion to the little guy? Another ad in the same paper advertised free Nubian baby goats, also needing to be bottle fed. Well, if you're warming up formula for one animal, why not for more, I reasoned. They can hopefully keep the steer a bit of company.

About a week later, a steer and two black and white baby goats (twin brother and sister) came to our place. Sadly, the steer did not make it, but the baby goats did. Even though I was sad about the little steer, the baby goats made the whole adventure worth it.

From the minute I saw them in their nursery box jump up on their hind legs to greet a perfect stranger, with those long ears flying about, I was hooked. I have never looked back on those days when an unexpected goat herd decidedly grew and grew and other livestock went by the wayside. But as I grew more involved in breeding, a question arose that faces all breeders of dairy animals: what to do with the males?

Before I even knew much about the goat packing community, I saw a goat pack saddle with panniers on Ebay for \$75. I ran across this listing by accident but I was intrigued. I got the pack saddle and started researching pack goat training. *Huzzah!*

The neutered baby boys (called wethers) began training at about 1 year of age. Once again, I dived in and never looked back.

I found it, therefore, sort of poignant when a WWOOFer (farm intern) at our place here in Utah with previous experience with goats expressed distress concerning the euthanasia of males at birth at a commercial organic goat dairy. Aren't there other alternatives? I tried to explain in typical professor style, well yes, and no.

If you are a large outfit with a tight bottom line, then their approach is the most practical. Alternatively, many farms and ranches will raise the wethers to a certain age and weight and then sell them cheap as meat goats or as goat roping subjects.

Now don't get me wrong, goat meat is excellent and goat roping seldom results in injury to the animals. Selling baby goats for this purpose just isn't my style. So about a week after birth, all kids are assessed for their confirmation and markings. If they are registered, they are sold as bucks. If they are not registered and not particularly large, I find good homes at a great price for the buyer as pets. The other unregistered boys are kept and trained as pack goats from an early age.

Early training begins with name recognition, lead and tie training, and basic commands. After those basic skills are down, off we go into the wilderness for trail experience. After the age of 2-1/2 years, a wether can carry almost one third of his weight.

Trained pack goats can sell for up to \$400 when they are that age. Is that a fortune after putting all of that care and training into an animal for that long? Well let's just say don't give up your day job.

Training extra wethers (and females) for this job has added perks that may not be readily apparent at first. If you can use them as ambassadors for your operation, you will find that their training affects their personalities such that they are great with people and you seldom have to worry about safety.

If you can use pack goats as assets for community work, such as weed clearing, put their packs on full of snacks and drinks for volunteers who are doing the labor, and watch the crowds turn out to the event (at which you also promote your farm, ranch, garden, locavore restaurant, etc.).

And then there is the added benefit of using them for your own recreation. Instead of granola bars and top ramen at the end of a long hike, you can have steaks and champagne, chairs and table, tents and soft bedding all carried by the goats. We like a bit of luxury these days, so on a long trek, we take six goats, five of whom that carry gear daily and an extra we refer to as the "spare tire." But even one or two large pack goats can make hiking with small children a lot more fun and is cheaper than pack horses by far.



The goat Lauren calls the 'Bad Ass'

So, as I told this earnest young woman, yes there are options, but it all depends on a farm's mission, philosophy, budget, acreage, and so forth. For us, it works beautifully, and so I feel it would be nice if more folks understood that it is a wonderful option for many operations.

[Lauren Hall Ruddell](#) operates Planet Goat in the Utah high desert, one hour west of Salt Lake City. As the name of the operation suggests, goats are the consuming passion. Nubian dairy goats provide milk and adorable baby goats yearly, while the wethers occasionally, and vigorously, earn their keep in the back country. Find Lauren online at [Planet Goat](#).

A bio for Lauren Ruddell was published in the Spring 2016 edition of Goat Tracks on Page 23

Once again, this article has the potential to ruffle some feathers. Remember, it is one person's opinion only

3 Reasons You Shouldn't Own Horned Goats

by Lisa Seger, March 13, 2017

<http://www.hobbyfarms.com/3-reasons-you-shouldnt-own-horned-goats/>

Horned goats are just terrible accidents waiting to happen.

We have a hard and fast rule on our farm: No horned goats. Period.

As with all things goat, other farms may have other opinions, but let me tell you why we make no exceptions. Each of the three awful things that could happen with a horned goat has happened to a person I know. I'm not talking nebulous urban legends—I'm talking about terrifying outcomes for my friends and their goats. Be warned, this article may not be easy to read.

1. Horned Goats Can Get Stuck In Fences

The shape of a goat's horns—facing backwards from its head—often means that a goat can move its head forward through a small opening, but once on the other side, cannot get back out. Several things can happen at this point, from dying of exposure or dehydration before you find them to breaking their own necks trying to get unstuck. The very worst thing is that they can be mauled and eaten by a predator.

A goat in a herd nearby had this gruesome outcome. While stuck in a fence, a stray dog killed and ate it. The saddest part is that this was a herd where they, as a rule, disbud all of their own goats. However, this goat was one they bought that had horns, and they just didn't think this could really happen. It does. And it's not as uncommon as you would think or hope.

Of course, your goat may not be killed. It may just be badly injured, leaving you with the task of either euthanizing it or taking it for an expensive vet visit followed by a long and painful recovery. All of these outcomes are terrible and unnecessary.

2. Horned Goats Can Severely Injure Their Herdmates

A lot of people say they want to leave horns on their goat in case it needs to defend itself. I am never sure what they think it's going to defend itself against because predators don't care about horns. Watch some National Geographic videos. Goats also don't need horns to fight. They have perfectly serviceable, hard skull plates to use when battling for dominance or breeding rights. Horns do, however, come in handy for fighting dirty, which brings me to my next awful story.

A woman we know had a mix of horned and non-horned goats. Her philosophy was that nature put those horns there for a reason, so in her own goats, she didn't remove them. But keep in mind, farms aren't nature. Nature is cruel and competitive. One of her goats used its horned head in a lifting motion to gore and slice the udders of four other females in the herd. It literally tore open the udders in an attack. Aside from the obvious total loss for this woman's dairy business, it left her with the same bad choices laid out above: euthanasia or vet services. Plus, the injured goats might never be able to work for her again.

If you farm for a living, losses like these can be financially devastating. If you just have goats because you love them, it's just as devastating on an emotional level, especially knowing you could have prevented it.

3. Horned Goats Can Hurt You

In the scheme of things, this is the least upsetting, but it's still a very real thing to consider. A friend of mine was recently trimming her goats' hooves when the goat sharply lifted its head right into her face, knocking out a tooth. A nice, pretty, healthy front tooth. If no reason other than vanity, this freaks me out, but knowing the story about gored udders, I imagine things could have ended up so much worse.

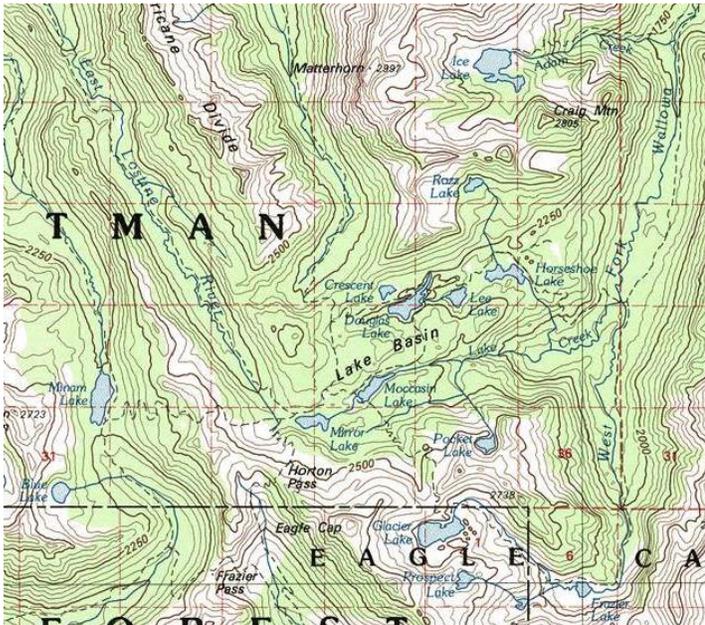
Before you say that you use a stand to trim hooves or some other reason this couldn't happen to you, know that it could. Whether intentionally or accidentally, you will have your face—or your leg, or your arm, or any other part of you—inches from your goats' heads from time to time. Taking the risk is simply not worth it.

Disbudding takes 10 seconds per bud to perform, and it keeps you and your goats from these potential catastrophes for their lifetime. As mentioned before, that horn bud is a hard, bony plate. It is not filled with nerves, and the ones that are there are cauterized with the disbudding iron. I have seen kids back to playful head butting within 60 seconds of the procedure—back to normal in a minute. In the scheme of risk/reward calculations to be made on your farm, this one is a no-brainer. Disbud your kids, and don't own horned goats.

Tripping the Lakes Fantastic
Or why I always wanted to see the Eagle Cap!
(And yes, a blast from the past, but one of my all time favorite hikes)

The summer of 2011 was a wonderful & memorable time. I managed to spend tons of time in the outback, and we had exceptionally good weather the entire time (which has *NOT* always been the case in the last few years in Idaho).

Without any question, the highlight of the entire summer was my time in **Oregon's Eagle Cap Wilderness**. I have to say that in a great number of miles of hiking in Idaho's best spots, I have never seen an area with so much spectacular, unbridled beauty. I was in awe much of the time. I guess that explains why Two Pan TH, on the Lostine River, was crowded then, and remains so much of the time (*Note well: This area is so large, that a lot of folks at the TH, does not translate to a lot of company... with two major exceptions, Mirror & Glacier Lakes*).



This is pretty small, but if you enlarge the PDF, you can easily see the areas talked about in this article

Mirror Lake. Mirror Lake was a shimmering jewel of a lake, and the first lake that you arrive at on the East Lostine River trail. However, due to a late afternoon start, my hiking partner and I didn't quite make it to Mirror Lake the first day.

But the next morning? Soon after we began hiking we came to Mirror Lake, around 10AM or so. The normal morning breezes hadn't begun at this point, and it looked as if you could just walk right out onto the lake. *Well, maybe not.* But it was so breathtakingly beautiful, you had to make sure you hadn't gone on to your reward! And this was just the beginning. We would be so rewarded almost to the last lake we hiked to.

After the usual talk with folks at Mirror Lake about the



goats, how great they weigh... **HOW MUCH CAN THEY CARRY!** I so weary of that question. 'About 1000 lbs or so!!' What

do they eat? Well, *SMALL CHILDREN, mostly...* 😊

We continued on to the east, ignoring Mirror Lake's **Upper Lake** to the west (*We'll see that one later on...*), and moved on to the east, past Moccasin Lakes' little after-thought above, and on down to **Moccasin lake** itself. This point, a trail junction, which is the departure point for **Glacier Lake**, a focal point of any hike in the Eagle Cap, served us as a lunch break at least twice. It was as beautiful a picnic spot as you could imagine.

Lunch done, we moved on, over a little bit of a pass to **Douglas Lake**. This was just one more of the incredible Eagle Cap lakes that was worthwhile of being a destination in and of itself! I insisted that we see every single Eagle Cap lake, so we journeyed off the main trail at this point to take in **Crescent & Craig** lakes, which lie to the north of Douglas. Crescent was pretty, but Craig was little more than a pothole lake, in its final stages of reverting to a meadow. But all wilderness is good, so...

Since there was still daylight to consume, we continued on to that day's destination, **Razz Lake**. Just one



look at the Topo would cause the most discerning (read: wise) person to say, "...who in their right mind would want to take this one on? Especially late in the afternoon?" It lacked the most basic of accouterments, i.e., that of a trail, and there was about 1000 feet of altitude to struggle through before you actually arrived at the lake! Well, at this age, you only have so many miles left before the Lord takes it away, and who knows when that is, so let's go!

And so, at the very limit of our senior-citizen energy reserves, we arrived at Razz Lake. Ahhh..., blissful solitude, not another human in sight. Well, sigh again, but **NOT!** There were two or three other young folks at this location and they went out of their way to make sure that we knew that they were no more excited to see us, than we were

to see them. I'm not sure what difference it made, since we camped a long ways from them and there was a lot of lake there, a lot of very beautiful lake as a matter of fact, but, folks are still folks and we all want to have a lake to



ourselves once in a while, *don't we?*

So we spent the night there, tried the next day to hike around the ridges to the point

where we could at least get a visual shot at **Ice Lake**, but it was not to be. Ice Lake is a hard one to get to, and needs to be accessed by its own trail, not from the heights.

The following day, we closed up our domain at Razz Lake, and headed on to **Horseshoe Lake**. Theoretically it shouldn't have taken long to get there, since it wasn't that many miles, but it was late afternoon before we arrived, and this became another overnight campsite.

This campsite was unique in that we experienced one of the only two bouts with weather that we had during the entire hike. About 5 PM or so, it began clabbering, and continued trying to get it together weather-wise, but never could manage more than a few sprinkles. But just enough for me to have to go through the exercise of putting up the tarp for the goats, just in case... which case never really developed, but they, the goats, always like to have a roof, so...

Despite the threat of weather, we still (Maybe I should say 'I') still wanted to see the two **Unit Lakes**, which were to the east of Horseshoe. We hiked on up there, some of which could have been considered off-trail since there was so much 'blow down' over that area, and eventually arrived at Unit Lake. It was an auspicious arrival, as we arrived just as there began a most incredible 'rise' of fish, in what has to be a nearly universally ignored lake. The lake was frothing with fishies that just were begging to transition to the dinner plate. But they were happily cavorting, eating the local bugs, and I was without a means to drag them onto the dinner table, so they live on today. I don't know why this area is avoided, but it definitely is, and the fish are fortunate that it is. And so on to '**Upper Unit Lake**' a very dead and on it's way-to-a-meadow lake. From here, off-trail and back to Horseshoe.

In the morning, Horseshoe was stunningly beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. It was difficult to leave. Which we had a bit of difficulty doing. Just about the time we had

let the goats loose, preparing to hike, comes here Señor volunteer ranger. He was engaging, he was personable and he was fun to talk to... until the point where he points out that my goats are chomping away on the area behind the temporary fence where the vegetation is supposed to be recovering from too much chomping already! Sh--! So we charged after the goats, and dragged them back to approved 'chomping' areas, and finished up our conversation with Señor ranger.

On up the trail to **Lee Lake**, a pristine lake that looked a bit ignored as well, and would be good for an overnight since it is more or less, 'off track'.

But, always 'pressing on', on we go, up the altitude lines, back to Douglas Lake, and on to Moccasin Lake where we will have lunch prior to climbing over the pass to **Glacier Lake**.

G l a c i e r

Lake, is the recognized gem of the Eagle Cap, that is, if you exclude Mirror Lake. It is beautiful, it is large, and it is a greatly



desired camping location. Until, that is, on the way into that basin, just about the time you get into the first real large camping area, you notice that there is a individual down in that area with mules, and as you are approaching, he yells, "Get those f----- goats out of here!"

Well, up to that point, I was unaware that I had 'that' particular breed of goats, and I also didn't realize that there was any individual that 'owned title' to any part of the Eagle Cap area. But, discretion being the better part of valor, and since there invariably seem to be a few buttheads, we motored on around the lake, and on up to the upper lake, which we had all to ourselves. No mules or other distractions.

Blissfully, the upper lake had only peace, and that's what you come out here for. And we enjoyed it.

The following day, we took off on a day hike for **Frazer Lakes** (there are two), and **Upper Frazer Lake**.

Was not to be. It was beautiful hike, it was a lovely hike, but when we got to the bottom, where we needed stream shoes, in order to cross what was at that time a fairly unpleasantly raging stream, we found we didn't have them. Hiking partner wanted to try it anyway. Sorry. It was way too dangerous-appearing to attempt in bare feet, so... no other choice but to leave these three for another day.

Which we did. Back up the drainage towards Glacier Lake, and back to camp.

Since there was a lot of day left, I informed hiking partner that I was going to go on over the ridge, a very steep ridge, to Prospect Lake... *Alone!*

Which I did. It was certainly a beautiful lake and a worthwhile trek. But parts of where I would have liked to go were cut off by incredible snowbanks, and reason dictated that trying to cross them would not be prudent, so I headed off around the north side of the lake, and enjoyed the lake from that perspective. Around, up, over, and back down to Upper Glacier Lake.

After one more night at Upper Glacier Lake, there was no choice but to move on, and move on we did.

However...



I was determined to visit Pocket Lake. Why? God only knows. On the Topo, it looks no different than any other of the high mountain lakes, just one more cirque, one more lake, but I

had determined that I was going to go there, regardless.

Which I did. I planned on leaving the hiking partner at about 8200' or so, her to continue back down to Moccasin lake to our lunch spot, and I would continue off-trail around the contour lines, to Pocket Lake.

Would that it had been that easy.

Hiking around the contour lines for a time was easy... there was a couple of snow banks packed into the drainages that were a bit of a challenge, but so far so good.

At some point, hiking partner decided on her own to rejoin me, which occurred right about at the point where the going became *reallllly* dicey.

And that was because at that point, we had to climb up a very steep slope with very poor footing, and hiking partner is nowhere near as good climbing this sort of terrain as I am, and so I worry plenty about her during these kinds of adventures.

But, blissfully, we made it to the top of a ridge overlooking Pocket Lake, and were treated to what I easily refer to as one of the most spectacular lakes I have ever observed. I am so very sorry that we didn't decide at that point to remain overnight here. I could have spent so much more time here drinking in the absolute beauty of this location.

Sadly, in retrospect, we motored on, down a precipitous snow/rock fall, and eventually to the trail at the east end of Moccasin Lake. Since I had my heart set on getting to Upper Mirror lake that night, we trudged on. And trudged. It was a long way to the upper lake, and we didn't arrive until after sundown. My purpose was to set us up for the next morning's challenge to Horton Pass, which is a real scramble. I wanted to do it early-on, during morning's low temperatures, and before the sun got well-established above us.

As planned, Horton Pass fell behind us early-on, and on down we went, and down, and down into the drainage of the East Fork of Eagle Creek. It was a long haul that day, and we were looking for the drainage for Moon lake, which would take us up past **Moon lake** and to **Hidden Lake**, that day's destination.

At this point, we were into the Eagle Caps lesser-traveled destinations, and the trails were nowhere near as well maintained, nor as tramped down as they had been previously. The trail up to Moon lake was rocky, rutted and littered with large glacial rocks that made hiking a real chore.

But this too did pass, and made our way on up and over the small ridge to Hidden Lake.

Hidden Lake was pretty, but not



overwhelming, and finding a camping spot was a bit of a chore. There were a definite paucity of good spots, and there was another group there, so it took a bit of site-finding, but we eventually did and settled in for the night.

After dinner and a short dayhike, I noted that the weather was looking increasingly threatening. I had not put up the tarp for the goats yet, so began scrambling to get it up, which we did, just in time as things at that point took a definite turn for the 'significantly worse'. Lightning, thunder, hail and significant rain.

Morning dawned beautiful and clear, so we breakfasted and headed off to the east, following my plan to skirt the almost 8400' peak to our north, follow the contour lines as we were able, and intersect the Frazier Pass trail following it over the top into the Minam River drainage.

Transiting the contour lines was easy, we found the summit and began down. That's where it got real dicey. Blowdowns proliferated, and deviating off the trail to get around them became the norm. In places it was a bit of a challenge to find the trail again after some of the deviations.

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Finally at the bottom, we were in a beautiful meadow where stopping for lunch seemed like the best plan available. It was just the right temperature, great logs to sit on were abundant, and it was a great break from hiking.

From that point, the plan was to continue on up the **Minam River** drainage to the output from **Blue lake**, which was complicated by the fact that there were two



creeks that merged with the Minam River at nearly the same point. Turned out that I made the decision to leave the Minam River trail a bit

early, and so we had quite a grunt to get up the side of some very steep hills.

Eventually we got back on the right track, happened up over a ridge and there lay Blue Lake right below. Blue Lake is a striking cirque lake and the last really exceptional lake that we were to see in the Eagle Cap. Minam Lake was next, and pretty in its own right, but it is dammed at each end, and that alone takes away much of its mystique. But when we arrived there, at our current fatigue point limit, it was verrrry attractive as a spot to stop, so camp we did.

The next morning dawned bright and beautiful, and prior to leaving we were graced with a herd of elk that were grazing their way across the hill on the west side of the lake. Breakfast finished, we set off for the last leg of our journey, back to the Two Pan Trailhead. Quite an elevation change here, as Minam Lake sits at just under 7400', and the trailhead is right at 5600'. Since we were exiting this wonderful area on the weekend, we passed a number of folks on the trail day-hiking. In fact, one gentleman that was hiking his socks off looked even older that we were!

Great hike? No, a stupendous hike! Just one more area that I would love to return to provided the Lord gives me the continued ability to do this kind of thing.

This area, incidentally, is just one more location threatened by the 'throw those bloody goats outta the woods!' folks. Blue Mountains DEIS is ongoing. And all their Alternatives say: "NO GOATS"



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