



# Goat Tracks



## Journal of the Working Goat - Spring 2021

*Until You Have Loved an Animal, Part of Your Soul Remains Unawakened. --Anatole France*

*The indoor life is the next best thing to premature burial. --Edward Abbey*



The Professor following the adage,  
As you go along, don't forget to stop and eat the flowers!  
Incidentally, 'The Professor' is Goat Camping in the Cascades, and  
Graciously Allowed Karen Bean to come along, Page 22



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## Goat Tracks

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# On Track with Goat Tracks

by Larry Robinson



Well, this is the first edition that will come from my new digs in New Mexico. It was a long hard road from Boise to finality in New Mexico, which included 5 months of living in a 25' travel trailer while trying to find and purchase a home. But it is done now and we are fixed in Glenwood, NM for the foreseeable future.

Living in the trailer with no home to give attention to, did give my sister and I a lot of time to go hiking, and we certainly took advantage of it. We explored much of our local area down here while introducing my goats to dry land wanders.

Hiking here is certainly different than what I was accustomed to in Idaho. Not near the amount of 'water' to hike to as high mountain lakes are virtually non-existent, at least in the Gila Wilderness. However, the topography is fascinating beyond words, displaying color and form that is endlessly amazing. My sister has said on many occasions, "I never thought that New Mexico looked like this. Most folks that have not been here would likely echo that sentiment.

NAPgA continues to work like mad to protect the goatpacker's ability to use the forest, in an environment that is clearly not always friendly to goats in the wilderness. I hope that all my readers are supporting NAPgA with thier dollars and efforts. You will never realize the extent of the job that NAPgA needs to do in order to keep on top of the threats that keep popping up like a field of marmots. If you haven't joined NAPgA, please go to <http://www.napga.org> and join now. After that, please consider attending the meetings and see what part you might play in the improvement of the goatpacker's hiking experience.

**The yearly packgoat Rendezvous** will be held near Stanley, ID this year and will be a great time of fellowship and goat hiking. Please keep track of the plans that will be soon posted on the NAPgA website.

This issue of goat tracks was an interesting one. The articles I had, for the most part, were very long. And there was an outstanding paucity of the smaller ones that you would use to fill the left-over spaces after another longer article. In at least one case, I went looking at some of the older issues for a small filler piece. Turned out it was one that I was happy to remind folks about in terms of the 'housekeeping' in the mountain travels.

I have never made note of it in previous issues of Goat Tracks, but in the PDF version, my goal is for all the URLs to be valid hyperlinks, and entries in the table of contents are all hyperlinked as well to the page the article appears on.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue and I would implore you to communicate with me if you have ideas, or find things that need to be corrected.

**I am always looking for folks to describe their goat-travels here in Goat Tracks. I have a lot of my stories on backlog, but you are going to get real tired of just reading about me! Please consider sending me a narrative of your adventures. I can edit like mad, but can't descibe your travels!**



*In a fit of extremely sloppy editing, I published the article Nan Hassey talks about below in the Winter 2020 Goat Tracks, with the full knowledge that different geographic areas have different threats and issues. I should have gotten some input before publishing that piece. Please read Nan's clarifying comments below.*

In regards to Stuart Barber's article on Johnes Disease, I would like to point out that he is from Australia and there are a few things that are not so applicable to those of us in the U.S. Although it certainly occurs, Johnes Disease is not "common" in goat herds in North America. It is far more prevalent in cattle than in goats in this country. Johnes is largely an overcrowding disease and is more common in commercial herds than in smaller herds typical of goat farming in the U.S. It is usually picked up by neonates from contaminated soil and is unlikely to infect adult animals. There is no approved vaccine available for Johnes Disease in goats in the United States, so our best defense is keeping sanitary farms with uncrowded conditions where kids are born and raised on fresh, regularly turned bedding. Breeders should do an annual Johnes disease blood panel on all goats over 2 years old, and having a more accurate fecal panel for Johnes every few years is not a bad idea either. It is not recommended to test goats under 2 years old since the bacteria does not shed in younger animals. Testing them is a waste of money and can lead to a false sense of security. Thankfully this devastating disease is not currently prevalent among goats in the U.S. Let's do our part to keep it that way!

-Nan



## Blast from the Past

by Larry Robinson

Jeff Ross is why I am in Glenwood, NM. Over 12 years ago I was looking for a place to snowbird with my goat boys, and he led me to the Double T Homestead which had horse stalls as well as RV parking.

When I mentioned to him recently that I had hiked into Rain Creek, he looked into his archives and came up with this picture of his goat Moose on the Rain Creek trail. Moose is now at least 15 and maybe as much as 16 years old at this point, and although certainly acting the senior citizen, he is fit and still willing to hike the local trails. As they used to say in Biblical times, 'Oh  Moose, live forever.'



## Kevin Bacon serenades his goats



Hey folks, I know it's Monday and you may be feeling the blues, so I wanted to share something that makes me happy: #GoatSongs. I have been trying out some songs that I think the goats, Macon and Louie, will like. This week I played "Don't Worry Baby" by @thebeachboys. Comment  if you think it was a hit and  if you think the goats want me to try another.



The latest Bronco Ad. Here is the URL for the Ad itself. <https://youtu.be/jZJS1YZxDDc>



**from the NAVAL ACADEMY, 1/7/2021**  
**Retired Goat Mascot 'BILL 33' DEAD AT 14**  
<https://www.tmz.com/2021/01/07/retired-navy-goat-mascot-bill-33-dead-at-14/>

Tragic news coming out of Annapolis -- retired Navy football goat mascot, Bill 33, has died, the Academy announced Thursday. He was 14.

Bill 33 -- AKA "Blue Eyes" -- recently battled age-related health issues that would not improve ... and was euthanized in his Navy home with his caretaker by his side, USNA said in a statement.

The angora goat was donated to the Academy alongside Bill 34 in 2007 ... and repped the football team through the 2015 season before taking on a mentorship role to the younger goats.

The Navy says Bill 33 enjoyed hay and treats during retirement ... and was wise enough to stay clear of the younger, "more rambunctious" goats.

The Academy notes Bill 33 is the only goat in the school's history to have blue eyes -- hence the nickname.

"The Academy would like to publicly confirm that he was quite 'old and gnarly' and had 'never been to school,'" USNA added.

Bill 33 is survived by Bill 34 and current mascots Bill 36 and Bill 37.

RIP to the GOAT goat.

*And from our 'reoccurring goat dilemmas' file...*

**Goats spotted on girder of I-49 bridge near Fayetteville**

by: Heath Higgs, Posted: Sep 21, 2020

<https://www.fox16.com/news/state-news/goats-spotted-on-girder-of-i-49-bridge-near-fayetteville/>

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. (KNWA/KFTA)

— A pair of goats were spotted, apparently stranded, on an Interstate 49 bridge near Greenland on Monday.



Central EMS said they received multiple calls from motorists regarding the two goats.

The pair was spotted around mile marker 53.

According to Arkansas State Police dispatch, the goats have been safely removed from the overpass.

Some years ago I had the pleasure to be included on one of Herb Flower's trips into the Utah desert. Taffy Mercer brought along a goat that she called Captain Morgan. He was one of the most engaging and fun animals that I have ever been around. Below are pictures from that trip, and also a picture of him now earning his keep as a pack animal.



Captain Morgan, now in Idaho, owned by Jim Rehmeier

## Land Use

from the Wallowa County Chieftan, 1-14-21  
[https://www.wallowa.com/news/out-of-the-past-produce-still-being-hauled-by-sleds/article\\_360d9f9a-545a-11eb-81a7-eb4113cb98d7.html](https://www.wallowa.com/news/out-of-the-past-produce-still-being-hauled-by-sleds/article_360d9f9a-545a-11eb-81a7-eb4113cb98d7.html)

25 years ago

Jan. 11, 1996

Vic Coggins, ODFW district biologist, delivered by helicopter bags of an experimental salt/mineral mix to herds of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in a continuing investigation of an epidemic that has claimed at least 30 animals along the Snake River.

*(I am kind of wondering just what is the efficacy of bags of salt/mineral for animals with pneumonia? GT Ed.)*

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### Researchers Eradicate Disease In Greater Hells Canyon Bighorn Sheep

Written by: [Kristen A. Schmitt](#), September 28, 2020  
<https://www.gohunt.com/read/news/researchers-eradicate-disease-in-greater-hells-canyon-bighorn-sheep#gs.ho8v88>

A collaborative testing effort between researchers, wildlife biologists and game managers from [Idaho](#), [Oregon](#) and [Washington](#) has resulted in healthy [bighorn sheep](#) herds within the greater Hells Canyon region, [The Lewiston Tribune](#) reports.

“Where we are now is that we have healthy populations almost everywhere in Hells Canyon and the Blue Mountains. It’s awesome,” said [Frances Cassirer](#), a wildlife researcher for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game at Lewiston and Washington State University at Pullman. “There is no [pneumonia](#). There is no mycoplasma. It’s not present.”

While a herd in the Wallowa Mountains of northeastern Oregon is still not disease-free, the rest of the herds within the area no longer show any signs of pneumonia or the bacteria that causes the fatal disease in wild sheep. This is amazing news, especially since bighorn sheep herds across the West have experienced massive die-offs due to strains of bacterial pneumonia.

While the current greater Hells Canyon region is home to about 900 bighorn sheep, it once had nearly 10,000 bighorn sheep before early settlers caused the populations to decline after they began to use the same areas to graze domestic animals. In the 1970s, bighorn sheep reintroduction efforts began and herds were reestablished; however, “pneumonia swept through many of the Hells Canyon herds in 1996, killing about 300 animals,” according to [The Lewiston Tribune](#). Since then, disease has continued to impact herds and lamb mortality has been high.

Infected bighorn sheep that survive the disease become immune, says [Cassirer](#), but that’s a rare occurrence, leading researchers to come up with another theory that suggested “carriers within the herds, likely ewes...were infecting their own lambs,” according to [The Lewiston Tribune](#). Infected lambs would pass the disease along to other lambs “through play.” Testing for carriers seemed to be a way to possibly stop the disease from spreading.

Wildlife officials in Idaho, Oregon and Washington started testing the theory and found that it worked.

“We had some different approaches in different populations, but in general we tested and we defined a carrier as an animal that was positive over two years on two tests,” said [Cassirer](#).

Those who tested positive as disease carriers were removed from the herds.

“We just kept testing, and everywhere,” said [Cassirer](#). “Except for one population, even though we had animals testing positive, when we came back the next year, they weren’t positive anymore. So there weren’t any carriers, and eventually we weren’t finding any positives at all.”

And it’s worked so far with an uptick in lamb survival and “signs of growth” within multiple herds. Next up: targeting bighorn sheep herds along the Salmon River and keep domestic livestock owners aware of the new carrier test. Researchers can test domestic herds that graze near bighorn habitat, according to [The Lewiston Tribune](#).

“We are really concerned about that and it getting back into the rest of the sheep,” said [Cassirer](#). “That is a really high priority. If they do have sheep or goats test positive, we talk to them about what options they might have to clear it from their herds, and if they don’t have it, that is good to know too.”

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### and from the HUH? file...

Robert Biggs, 69, encountered both an unfriendly lion and an unexpectedly altruistic bear in the mountains above Whiskey Flats, in northeastern California. Biggs had been quietly observing the bear and her cubs, when suddenly the lion sprang at him, crunching his backpack and shredding the skin on his left arm. Much to his amazement, the bear ran up and pulled the lion off Biggs “during a wild 15-second scuffle,” reports the Paradise Post. Then “the mountain lion bolted and the bear returned to her cubs before they moved on.”

## American trophy hunter scared off by Turkish ethnic group that considers goats sacred

By Nick Squires, ROME, 9 December 2020

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/09/american-trophy-hunter-scared-turkish-ethnic-group-considers/>

*Members of the Alevi faith have threatened to take legal action against the Turkish government if it continues to issue hunting licences*



An American trophy hunter's hopes of shooting wild goats in the mountains of Turkey

have been thwarted by locals who insist the animals are sacred.

The hunter was initially awarded an eight-day licence by the authorities to hunt the long-horned ibex in the province of Dersim in eastern Anatolia.

But after a local outcry, the licence has been revoked and the hunter has had to cancel his trip.

The region is home to people of the Alevi faith, a branch of Shia Islam, who believe that all living things must be protected.

Alevi are the biggest religious minority in Turkey, numbering around 15 million. Around two-thirds of them are Turkish speakers while the rest are Kurds. Their faith contains elements of pre-Islamic Turkish shamanism.

They consider mountain goats to be sacred and also point out that they are endangered.

"Life in nature is priceless for us," said Fatih Mehmet Macoglu, the mayor of Dersim. "We want the wildlife in this region to be respected. We want the protection of mountain goats."

Baris Yildirim, a lawyer who took part in the anti-hunting protests, said legal action would be taken against the government if any further licences were issued. "We want to state that we definitely think that no wild animal, including wild goats and antlered animals, should be hunted," he said.

It is the second time in a few months that locals have won a battle against hunting.

In July, the ministry of forestry and farming had to cancel a plan to offer licences to hunt 17 ibex after protests from animal welfare and conservation groups.

They also protested against the hunting and poaching of other species, including bears, wolves and lynx.

The government had argued that it was legitimate to allow hunters to shoot elderly, male goats in order to manage the population.

## Study Launched to Identify Unknown Disease in Mountain Goats

Published: August 15, 2020, Published by Steven Bonifazi

<https://northfortynews.com/category/new-scene/outdoors/study-launched-to-identify-unknown-disease-in-mountain-goats/>

Colorado Parks and Wildlife biologist Lance Carpenter and wildlife pathologist Karen Fox have begun a study on the summit of Mount Evans to look into an unknown disease outbreak in mountain goats.

The main symptom the mountain goats have is diarrhea, however, the cause is still unknown. The result has been the loss of nearly an entire age class of baby mountain goats between 2013 and 2014 with low recruitment into the population since. Unfortunately, the outbreak was not observed from 2014 through 2018 like in 2013 until appearing again in 2019.

"Through necropsy examinations, we have found a mix of bacteria and parasites, none of which single-handedly explain the severe losses in the herd," said Karen. "We are hoping to identify what specific pathogens, and what combinations of pathogens, are present before, during and after an outbreak of diarrhea," Karen said.

Lance began collecting fecal samples on Thursday, July 23 to send to Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW) health lab for testing. In 2015, Lance put 20 satellite collars out on nannies to look at habitat use by the mountain goats. During that study, if the mountain goats showed signs of diarrhea we could have used the location data to backtrack where those goats were to see if anything changed land-use wise that may have caused this diarrhea in the kids.

Karen hopes to use the results from this study to aid in interpreting the relative importance of each organism and obtain targets for treatment or management of the disease. Nevertheless, they can use the samples to look for uncommon or unrecognized pathogens if the results indicate that the pathogens found are not associated with diarrhea.

One pathogen the CPW is exploring as a cause of diarrhea is *E. coli* which can be found in animals and people. Though certain strains of *E. coli* can be harmful especially if exposure is high, there are heightened levels of *E. coli* present at Mount Evans as a result of heavy human traffic and recreators going to the restroom all over the wilderness area.

Currently, Lance and Karen are urgently working to get a hold on the disease prior to it spreading to other mountain goats statewide. The monitoring helps to ensure that bighorn sheep living within the same habitat do not show any signs of symptoms.

"Whatever is causing this may be mountain goat specific, which is good in the sense that we do not want to see this in our bighorn sheep," Lance said. "If we saw this in our bighorn sheep, we would have a really big problem on our hands," said Lance.

# From the Training Pen

(The Best of Rex Summerfield)

## Training - The Basics



The Goats were large, each over 200 pounds. I could feel every ounce of it as I tried to heave them up into the back of a 3/4 ton 4x4. I finally succeeded after much muttering about goats that wouldn't load by themselves. I might add here, that they were borrowed goats, my own were already in the truck. They had jumped in unaided and watched as I wrestled with the borrowed goats.

That incident happened several years ago and brought home the point of teaching your goats to lead and "load up." It's always a source of secret pride when my goats load in the truck with a quiet word and a pat on the tailgate, as on-lookers watch, usually waiting for an excuse to laugh at you for using goats in the first place. Goats that handle easily impress people. It's that simple. It's also that aspect that brings people to goat packing in the first place.

I feel that it is every goat owner's responsibility to train their goats, not only in the basics: leading, loading, packing, etc. but also what I call camp manners. John Mionczynski's famous goat management tool, the GMT squirt gun, is almost indispensable for teaching camp manners. I usually start with "barn manners." No goats are allowed to stand on the fences, gates, etc. I'm sure transgressions take place in my absence but none are allowed when any of us are in the barn. It has been my experience that behaviors consistently discouraged when we are around eventually fade from the animal's list of habits.

Every goat is an individual, however, and some are very stubborn. A verbal command, usually "NO," is spoken before the correction and it doesn't take long before you can look at a goat and tell it "NO," and it stops what it is doing. Other goats in the area may also look nervously around to see who is going to get it, but at least you know they are paying attention. Just as you discourage bad habits, you should praise a goat for doing the things you like. This helps reinforce the good habits.

One of the most commonly asked questions on goat training is when to start teaching a goat to lead. I like to start when they are only a few weeks old. The older they get, the harder it is to

teach, not because older goats are any dumber, but simply because it's harder to pull them if they decide they want to stop. Some goats have short attention spans, especially younger ones.

It is better to do several short sessions than one long one. Remember to try and keep it fun for the goat. Lots of PRAISE!

Some people coax the goat, with treats but I would rather have the goat think that the rope can't be defeated instead of learning that it has some control over being led. A 200 pound plus wether that doesn't want to go is impossible to tug along behind you. If you already have a full size goat or acquire one that doesn't lead, then you may have to employ treats and extra coaxing to get the goat going.

One method I have used on older animals that refused to lead, or the extra stubborn ones, involves the use of a dog training collar. I set the electrical stimulation down to low to start. First I pull the lead rope tight and if the goat doesn't give, I press the button and hold it for about 1-2 seconds. (Remember, it is on **low** setting.) I then let slack in the rope and let off on the button. Two or three times of that and the goat learns that a tight rope means a shock. It is important that no shock is given if the goat gives any slack at all. In only a few short minutes the goat immediately gives slack when you pull the rope. After the goat has the system figured out, it may test it a time or two. All of the goats I have used this system on were leading perfectly in less than five minutes. Several lessons are required before the goat leads reliably without the collar. I might also mention that after the goat has the system figure out, I give a warning prior to the correction, just like the squirt gun. I use a light bump on the lead, and a "heel" command prior to the shock. Even the most stubborn goats usually won't balk past the warning. It may sound a little harsh to some people, but a goat that won't lead in an area requiring animals to be led is worthless. It doesn't do much for goat packing either, for onlookers to see a tug of war between you and your full grown goat.

Another question commonly asked is, how do you teach your goat to load into a pickup. I usually don't teach the goats to load until they are large enough

to make the jump into the pickup unaided, usually at a year old or so. I start by backing up to a hump or dirtbank, so there is only a 6-12 inch step into the truck. I pat the tailgate and tell the goat to "load up." I then lead the goat into the truck and praise it and give it a handful of grain. A few times in and out and the goat learns that if it goes in, it gets some grain. The trick then is to keep the goat out of the truck until you give the command to load up. After the goat is familiar with the routine, pull the truck ahead, increasing the distance from the ground to the tailgate. Continue this routine until the goat is jumping in from normal ground level. Some goats can be taught to load in a single lesson, others take a few lessons. If the goat doesn't get loaded regularly, you may have to review the lesson a couple of times. Since we give our goats some grain after each packing trip, it seems only natural that they get after they load up.

In closing, I would like to say, as the TV commercial says; "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." Your goat is an intelligent animal and if it is ignorant... well, it's not the goat's fault.

<https://northwestpackgoats.com>



*Presumably, Desert Bighorns Surveying their Domain*

*The 'Sister' mentioned below is Taffy Mercer, one of the exceptionally energetic and active members of the NAPgA community. The stuff below is from the Blue Ridge, NC, Edition of the Trout Unlimited NL*



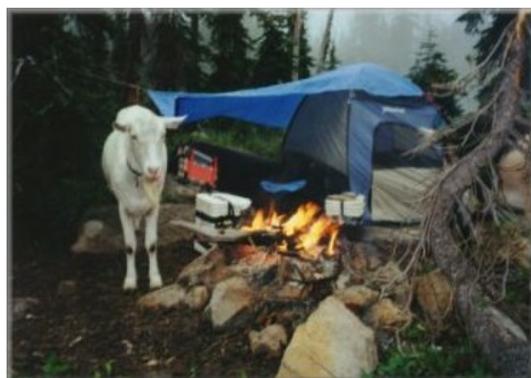
### A Unique Fishing Adventure

My sister has gotten into pack goats and recently sent me some information about Marc Warnke who does pack goat trips into the high mountain lakes of Idaho to take guests on fishing trips. The goats will carry your loads so you will enjoy the hike without a heavy backpack. They bring pack rafts that allow you to float out to the middle of the lake for fishing.

For more details check out <https://packgoats.com/>

### Got a Goat?

And if you go on that trip or have a friend with a goat, collect some fur. We've discussed using cat fur as dubbing in the past, well now there is a new source of tying materials. My sister raises pack goats and with the spring shedding season she combed out a nice mess of cashmere for me. Admittedly it was a bit of work getting out the guard hairs, but it has a beautiful texture similar to my box of super fine dubbing.



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Classified, per word, contact info counts as one word		.20	.60

When I decided to print this article from GT 1996, I had no idea that John 'M', the writer, was so prolific. It turned out to simply be too long for one edition of GT. Therefore the second half of this article will be published in the Summer edition. What I can say about this incredible writeup, is if you don't learn something from it, you better read it again... slower.

## Urinary Calculi, an Exhaustive Analysis

By John Mionczynski

Bladder stones or urinary calculi is a medical problem that can affect most, if not all mammals, and is of particular interest to keepers of working goats. Why? Because those of us who keep goats for packing or harness work usually have males (wethers to be specific). Castrated males are larger, can carry more weight and hike more miles in a day than their sibling females. Although "stones" occur in both wethers and does, it is the male goat that can easily develop problems of major discomfort, permanent damage or even death as a result of these bladder stones. Does rarely suffer any damaging symptoms from this physiological imbalance.

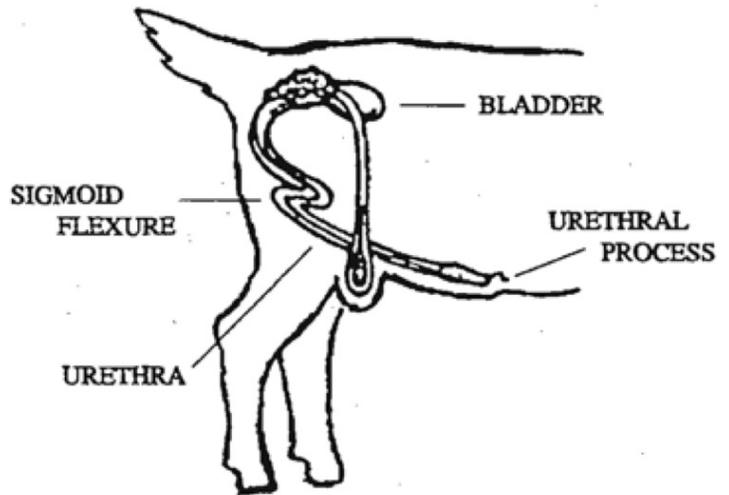
Although I just referred to urinary calculi (also known as "urolithiasis" - uro referring to urinary; lith meaning stone) as a physiological imbalance, my background in wildlife research does not let me rest comfortably with this narrow view.

In terms of wild goats living harmoniously and successfully within the bounds of their habitat, urolithiasis, like many other "diseases" actually plays a role in maintaining the balance, which has assured the long-term survival of all goats from the Miocene to the present. Understanding this may help us to manage our working buddies more successfully back at the farm.

However, first let's take a look at "bladder stones", i.e., the "imbalance". Stones are crystals or sand-like deposits aggregated with organic secretions called muco-proteins. These deposits can be up to four millimeters in diameter. They form in the urine and precipitate into a suspension or even settle on the wall of the urinary bladder. While here, they are not causing any trouble. It's when these crystals try to leave the bladder headed for the proverbial flat rock in the outside world that the steady flow of urine can be blocked.

The urethra (the tube connecting the bladder to the outside world) can be, blocked by one, or a group, of these calculi, usually at the narrow "process" at the end of the penis or at the sigmoid flexure (a large S-curve located just below the anal opening), causing a painful partial or complete blockage of urine flow.

The common symptoms include colic-like



symptoms (stretching, kicking at the belly, stamping the feet); straining to urinate; blood stained urine; dribbling at the penis; elevated pulse, respiration and temperature; pain indicators such as grinding teeth, "humping up" and loss of appetite, and later on may include bloody or dried urine deposits on the preputial hairs of the sheath enclosing the penis along with the possible dried calculi on those hairs. The belly and area below the anus may be hypersensitive to touch.

The calculi may pass on there, or they may block the urethra and lead to a very painful death in 24 to 48 hours, if the bladder or urethra ruptures internally. "Water belly", where the belly is distended and feeling like someone put a large water balloon in there, is usually a symptom of a ruptured bladder or urethra.

If stones are lodged at the end of the penis, a simple amputation of the urethral process will often allow for their passage. If the blockage occurs further up in the urinary tract, particularly at the sigmoid flexure, your vet may have to perform surgery to repair and/or divert the lower urinary tract. It may or may not be successful; it is often a very uncomfortable, long recovery for your animal and can cost a large amount of money with no guarantees for a full recovery.

Since this condition is very often foreseeable, and also very often preventable, it is a good investment of your time to study up on this not uncommon problem amongst keepers of male goats.

Let's start by taking a closer look at the mysterious calculi themselves. Turns out they're not really very mysterious! There are three main types of stones: 1) silicates; 2) phosphates (magnesium ammonium phosphate, calcium phosphate) and 3) calcium ammonium magnesium carbonate.

The last two categories are salts reflecting

physiological imbalance due directly to an imbalance in ingested feed and or water. The first category (more common in cattle) is the result of over ingestion of plants high in silicates (some grasses and horsetail Equisetum). There is some indication that in rare cases there may be a genetic tendency to produce these stones even on a normal diet, but chances are very great that you don't have one of these animals. That being the case, there are only three things involved in almost all cases of urinary calculi: Food, salt and water, all of which we as goat managers (and guardians of our animals) have a great deal of control over. This is what is called habitat management in wildlife terms. Too little of one necessary item in a herd's needs results in too much of something else; and conversely, too much of something will result in too little of something else. If all can be balanced, we have a herd of smiling goats.

So why do I keep preferring to wildlife management? Because our primary goal in raising working goats is to imitate as closely as possible, the wild goat in his natural habitat, with one exception... we want them to follow us wherever we go. The baseline resource for this information is found in the National Parks and Reserves where wild goats still roam. Thanks primarily to the pioneering work of preminent biologist Dr. George Schaller, there are many of these areas in central Asia, Africa and Europe. His pioneering work on preservation of wild Caprids is documented in his absolutely neat book, "Stones of Silence". Most of the available literature on domestic goats is directed at dairy animals which have been manipulated genetically and management-wise so that a wild habitat is not only inappropriate, but would probably kill a good dairy doe. No goat in the wild would ever produce 3,000 lbs. of milk per annum. To arrange that we must alter genes, feed, salt and water intake far from the natural requirements. Since wild goats must work to survive, it makes sense that management of working goats should depart from the available literature and attempt to get as reasonably close to wild conditions as possible.

Management of urinary calculi necessarily involves oversight of all three of the above habitat criteria at the same time. But the benefits are much more far-reaching since these three simple requirements, if managed correctly, will positively affect every other aspect of herd health. Often overlooked is the fact that stress from weather, change of habit, etc. affects the utilization and absorption of feed, water and salt in domestic as well as wild goats, so that too must be included in the management plan.

Wherever possible, conditions on the trail should be mimicked at the home pasture so that going out to work is not a sudden change resulting in stress.

Let's see how feed can be improved to resemble a more natural balance for goats. To do this we'll take a quick look at the role that conditions like urolithiasis can play in balancing things on a broader scale.

Goats are "browsers". There is some confusion here in the goat world. Browse does not mean to shop... looking here and there for just the right gift to eat. Browse means woody forage as opposed to graze (grass and herbaceous forbs - non woody forage) utilized by "grazers" such as horses, cows and bull elk. This means that wild goats in their native habitat will prefer to eat woody shrubs and trees over grass and forbs most of the time. This does not mean they cannot get by for a time on graze species such as grass, just as grazing species such as horses in the wild can get through a winter of heavy snow eating trees in the poplar family and actually do quite well on this diet as long as it gets back to grass eventually. Horses and goats are similar in this way. But they differ very dramatically in the diversity of normal dietary intake. Horses can do very well on a mono diet of grass their whole life just like most bovines. Goats, like humans, show a tremendous drive to vary the tastes of their dietary intakes if allowed to choose in their native habitat, even on a daily basis.

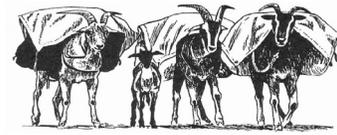
Wild goats, goat antelopes and some wild sheep are unique in the animal world for the degree of variation they seem to require and this can present a challenge to the keeper of working wethers, but it is one of the secrets to developing strong, high-endurance, healthy working animals. There is a sensitive balance between a species and its habitat and between neighboring species and neighboring habitats. A delicate interplay manages all of them in the wild. Behaviorally, goats prefer high, precipitous, dry, rocky ledges with a good view. Taste-wise, they prefer foods that just happen to grow best in those locations: woody and semiwoody shrubs and low trees that are 'very difficult for most other animals to eat, to digest and even to get close to, with a spring time preference for short herbaceous drought-tolerant forbs with a short growing season. All of these have a low nutrient high fiber content with a relatively dry fibrous texture and by nature, grow sparsely on small, exposed, very rocky mountainsides; The goat's preference for variety in this sparse natural home range matches the habitat. In order to survive at all, a wide variety of plant species must be consumable, concomitantly, these must be a reliable set of built in population

controls within the animals themselves to keep them from overbrowsing the scarce food source and thus eliminating themselves and their habitat from existence. As plants mature, they concentrate bitter chemicals such as nitrates, oxalates and silicates to protect them from being eaten during their critical seed producing periods. Animals will concentrate plant chemicals or micro-organisms that will set the stage for limiting population growth. There are literally hundreds of subtle and not so subtle interplays that have very effectively balanced animal-plant relations for much of earth's history.

Biological systems tend to be programmed to run at full bore, top efficiency, maximum output and are only restrained by outside limiting factors. These limiting factors are what keep the system in balance. An uncomplicated example is the role of internal parasites such as Protostrongylus worms (lung worms). As the number of animals on a range increases, the number of droppings increase. Moderate numbers of Protostrongylus eggs occur naturally in the droppings and these eggs will be picked up by common land snails which nurture the eggs in their development as an intermediate host. They deposit Protostrongyli on grasses and forbs as they feed, and these are in turn are ingested by herbivores on the range. Since caprids (goats, sheep and goat antelopes) localize onto strict seasonal ranges unlike nomadic migrators such as bison, they are subject to periodic build-ups in parasite levels.

When a particular threshold of Protostrongylus ingestion is reached, Whamo! The whole herd is sick at once. This is usually concurrent with over-utilization of feed on the home range. What a coincidence! Symptoms of this threshold being reached are: elevated breathing and heartrate, excessive physiological energy needs (remember, the habitat's symptoms at this time are decreased energy supply due to over utilization), weakness of muscle, weakening of the immune system, increased predation and high death rate in a short time, often 50% of the herd in less than six months. The increased presence of predators (which are incidentally immune to these infective organisms) discourages other herbivores from coming in, and effectively rests the range until forage species can regain vigor. A simpler example to understand is this one: Goats' hooves grow very fast. Goats prefer and must be on rocky surfaces if they are in their correct habitat for vegetation types. If for some reason they wander into a different habitat with soft, grassy ground, their hooves will over-grow and make them essentially lame. This in turn will make them vulnerable to predation, thereby protecting the soft turf

from over use and saving it for those that actually belong there, horses, camels antelope. Keeping a species from invading another species 'turf' is another critical part of the interplay that supports the key to all biological systems – DIVERSITY! Increase in hoof growth = decrease in population.



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## The Ongoing Saga Here in "Goatopia"

by Sally Bryan, sister of GT editor

In my last epistle, I mentioned that the stay in the RV Park was planned to be a short one. Our God's highly developed sense of humor is always exceptionally amused when we attempt to make plans outside of His Will. A long five months later, Mr. Robinson, hereafter being referred to as Señor 'R', finally was able to sign/'close' on our new home. The next day we packed up what was needed, hooked up our 25' trailer home, and headed to Boise. This venture was ostensibly to visit with friends and transport all of our belongings to the new place in Glenwood. Sadly we had to leave the Boys in their temporary RV Park home and I missed them immediately. Interestingly enough, Bogdan has decided that I don't suck quite as much as he thought previously.

The trip north was uneventful with the traverse through Salt Lake City acting out its characteristic nightmarish self and we arrived in Boise Town after dark two days later to settle in yet another RV Park for our temporary stay in Les Bois. Señor 'R' was not displeased about these temporary "digs" until the next day when he was informed that our two-week stay would cost twice as much as those that were staying for a month. I, on the other hand, was not a happy camper from the gate due to the fact that we were a long way from the bathroom/showers and "Bob the Builder" was in the ladies side 12 hours a day... "building" (remodeling).

The blessed day finally came for us to head back south to New Mexico and since we had loaded the 26' U-Haul the day before, we were able to leave out of Idaho quite early. The only thing that I lost in that part of the adventure was my cell phone charger cord! Since Señor 'R' had expressed his disgust for the horror of the Interstate through Salt Lake City, we felt that the logical plan would be to add a few miles to the itinerary and go through Las Vegas. There's that word again (plan). We hit Las Vegas at 6 PM and immediately began to wonder if SLC could have been that much worse than the unmitigated stress we were presently experiencing! Please note that Señor 'R' was dragging the 25' trailer and "little ol' me" was navigating a 26' U Haul!

Somehow we survived and attempted to locate an RV Park as soon as we left the garish city lights behind us, but sadly, the only one that would answer our call was one that was 14 miles out into the "Boonies" and the alleged proprietor said "cash only," making us both a tad anxious so we trudged on. When we got to Kingman, AZ we simultaneously refused to go any further and pulled into a now-defunct Quick Stop Store/Gas Station, not caring about the possibility of a late-night visit from the local gens d'armes. Imagine my fascination when we awoke the next morning to see the sign on the Quick Stop across the street advertising: **Free RV and Truck Parking!**

The rest of the trip actually *was* relatively uneventful and we arrived at our new digs that evening. For the next week or two, one or the other of us would race over to our former abode and feed and water the Boys while Señor 'R' focused his energy on building their enclosure. I spent some of that time attempting to make friends with the horse, Apache, that is our one attentive neighbor. However, in defense of the rest of them, I don't cut up apples and hand feed them. Señor 'R' and I were so pleased when we finally were able to bring the boys home!

This was when I found out that apparently Señor 'R's anecdotes about running into horses on the trail contained a vein of truth because as soon as the Boys were offloaded and brought into the yard, Apache became absolutely insane (for a horse) and it took him over a week to internalize the fact that the goats were here and he was there and "neither the twain shall meet." Things have calmed for now, with the exception of one or the other of the Boys trying to eat the house, but I truly believe that this life situation is fraught with opportunities for further reporting. I can hardly wait to finish with all this "settling in" and get out to the trails with Señor 'R' and the Boys!

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### ***A Correction to My Winter 2020 GT Article***

In the December edition of "Goat Tracks" I wrote an article entitled, "My Introduction to Goatdom" in which I my hikes with your esteemed Editor and the boys (Coffee Bean, Mocha, George, Bogdan, & Maxie). In that article, I described a tree that I used for a landmark as a Palo Verde Tree. I was informed by a reader that I might have been mistaken and after extensive research into the matter, I must change that identification to an Emory Oak Tree (*Quercus emoryi*). I wanted to set the record straight and go down in the literary annals as one of the few "journalists" whose material is based on the TRUTH!

Sally E. Bryan, LMSW, CPSA (Ret.)

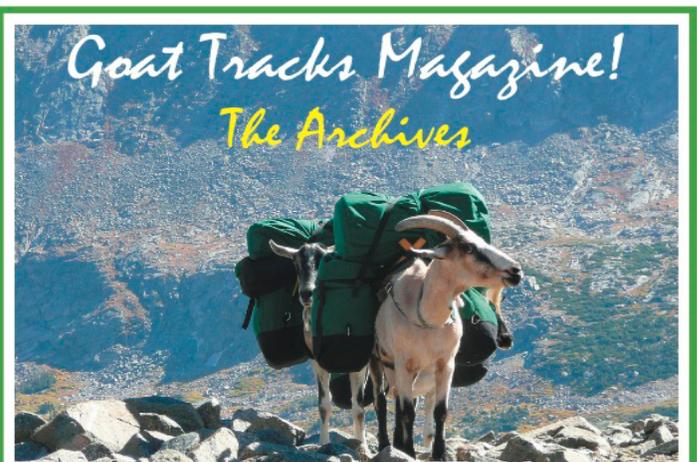


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*In my frequent forays into the files that make up the GT Archives, I have come to the conclusion that the only reason that everyone doesn't have a copy of this information is that they just don't realize how completely entertaining lots of this stuff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

## **NAPgA Has Added a Packgoat Registry and Hiking Log!**

The North American Packgoat Association recently added a packgoat registry and hiking log to its website! Although the registration is not recognized by the USDA for identification purposes, it is possible that if more people—especially breeders—register their goats with NAPgA, it could eventually become recognized. Having a recognized packgoat-specific registry could make it easier for NAPgA to work with the USDA on creating packgoat-specific rules for transporting our goats across state lines and back. Many rules are currently geared toward taking animals across state lines to sell, or to attend a show at a particular venue. Taking goats into the wilderness to hike is not something the USDA ever envisioned when designing CVI's.

Registration is currently a totally free service to members (no registration fees!) and NAPgA would love to see the packgoat community take advantage of it. Goats are traced permanently in the system and there is a tool in place to allow goats to change hands so that its records are not lost even if it is sold. There is also a place to record when a goat dies and a field to specify why it died. Over time, this could prove valuable for showing disease prevalence (example: how common is CAE?), or perhaps showing a predisposition toward urinary calculi in certain bloodlines. The registry allows you to upload as many as three photos of each goat. The registry is not just for packgoats. NAPgA would love to see breeders register their sires and dams so that bloodlines can be recorded and preserved in a single system.

Goats not only can be ID'd through the NAPgA registry, but their hiking miles can also be tracked in a new "Hikes" system. The hiking log is a great way to record and show off the miles you cover throughout a month, a year, and a goat's lifetime. The "Hikes" feature allows you to post photos of the amazing trails you've conquered. It's also a fun way to track your hiking accumulation over time. It's not just about recording the big hikes--it's about logging your routine activity. You'd be surprised how quickly your daily walk adds up!

We hope NAPgA members will try out the registry and provide feedback. If you are not a NAPgA member, this might be a great reason to join! NAPgA hopes to see the registry and hiking logs become fun, useful tools.

### **Goat Registry:**

<https://www.napga.org/membership/goats/>

### **Hiking Log**

<https://www.napga.org/membership/hikes/>

Nan Hassey  
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## **Permanent ID: A Breeder's Responsibility**

The new goat registry has brought to NAPgA's attention that some breeders do not make a habit of permanently identifying their packgoat kids. The first item on NAPgA's Best Management Practices is "ID your goats." This includes a form of permanent ID. While it is technically allowed under USDA Scrapies law to transport wethers under 18 months old without permanent ID, this goes against the spirit of the law, which is designed for goats going directly to slaughter. Since NAPgA's intention is for packgoat kids to live long, happy lives, the burden should rightly be on breeders to make sure each kid is permanently ID'd before leaving their property.

We breeders already have a USDA premises ID, herd ID, and/or registered tattoo in place. It is easy and cheap for breeders to tag, tattoo, or microchip a kid before it leaves the herd. Plus, we already have the necessary equipment and expertise. It is not so easy for buyers. They must apply to the USDA for a premises/herd ID or apply to a goat registry for a tattoo. Once obtained, the buyer's ID won't follow the spirit of the USDA Scrapies laws, which are intended to trace animals back to their herd of origin--the breeder. Buyers must also lay out money for the equipment to install their ID of choice and learn how to use it, or make an appointment with a vet to do it for them. It's not fair for breeders to lay the responsibility of permanent identification on buyers, many of whom are novices to the goat world.

Something else for breeders to think about is that if a goat's permanent ID traces back to the buyer, it won't benefit the breeder. The goat's true origin will be lost! If breeders mark their kids, the breeders' unique ID will follow that goat for the remainder of its life, even if it passes through several owners. Think of the permanent ID as your mark of excellence on each kid you produce. As a breeder, you do not want lose credit for your awesome packgoats because you failed to tag/tattoo/microchip it! As we're starting to pay more attention to bloodlines (particularly with our crossbred goats), having goats trace back to the breeder of origin will become more important as the generations progress. Breeders--Do not let your bloodlines get lost in the mists of time! ID your kids!

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## Ancient DNA analysis explains spread of domestic goats from fertile crescent into Caucasus

By Nagoya University, JUNE 13, 2016

<https://phys.org/news/2016-06-ancient-dna-analysis-domestic-goats.html>

Nagoya University-based researchers analyze ancient DNA of Neolithic domestic goats to reveal that the goats were introduced into the Southern Caucasus from the Fertile Crescent during the early sixth millennium BC, probably alongside establishment of trade links or population movement.

Domestic goats first appeared in the Fertile Crescent, in modern-day Iran and Turkey, around 10,000 years ago through domestication of the Bezoar wild goat. However, as this wild goat species is distributed across a large part of the Middle East, it is still unclear whether all domestic goats in this region descend from a single domestication event, or if multiple domestications occurred.

A research team based at Nagoya University and including members in Tokyo and Azerbaijan has revealed that goats were first introduced into the Southern Caucasus, in present-day Azerbaijan, from the Fertile Crescent around 7,500–8,000 years ago. This finding corresponds with archeological evidence showing sudden large cultural changes associated with the introduction of agriculture in this area.

Genetic sequencing technology combined with the ability to extract and isolate ancient DNA lets researchers obtain detailed information about ancient organisms, and compare them with their modern equivalents. This is particularly useful for studying animal and plant domestication and finding wild species that are the ancestors of present-day domestic animals and plants. The research team focused this technology on domestic goats, building on earlier findings about their main wild ancestor, and the location and timing of their initial domestication, to provide more details about how goats were distributed throughout the Middle East.

In the study, reported in the *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, the researchers extracted and sequenced DNA from goat bones obtained from excavations at early agricultural settlements in Azerbaijan, and which radiocarbon dating revealed to be 7,500–8,000 years old. They then compared the DNA sequences with those of present-day domestic and wild goats from the same geographic region, as well as those of other Neolithic goats reported in previous studies.

“Our analysis of mitochondrial DNA showed that the haplotypes of the present-day and Neolithic domestic goats in the Southern Caucasus matched,” coauthor Keiko Ohnishi says. “Yet they didn’t match the haplotype of the wild goats of the same region, suggesting that these wild goats are not the ancestors of the region’s domestic

goats. The genetic match between domestic goats in the Southern Caucasus and wild goats in the Fertile Crescent suggests goats were not domesticated independently in the Caucasus, but rather that already-domesticated goats were introduced.”

By combining the genetic results with archeological findings from excavations at the two sites in west Azerbaijan, the research team also drew some wider conclusions about a period of relatively rapid social change in the region.

“The sites where these bones were found are the earliest agricultural settlements in the Caucasus. Other novel signs of agriculture and cultural artifacts also suddenly started to appear in what were hunting-and-gathering areas,” lead author Seiji Kadowaki says. “This ties in well with the introduction of domesticated goats from the Fertile Crescent around the same time, suggesting that populations moved or indigenous hunter-gatherers in the Caucasus accepted agricultural lifestyles from the Fertile Crescent about 7,500–8,000 years ago.”

The study provides useful information about the spread of agriculture and domesticated animals throughout the Middle East, which appears to have been accompanied by the spread of other cultural practices. It also provides a foundation for further studies unravelling the relative contributions of human population movements and the adoption of novel practices by indigenous groups to the spread of domesticated animals.

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### What Did you Leave Behind?

OK, so you throw your gear and your boys in the back of the pickup, and you’re off to another adventure in the wilderness.

‘Gonna be a beautiful trip, nothing can hurt me now’.

However, if you’re using straw, and you leave the usual puddle of straw and berries behind at the trailhead, are you gonna be able to convince the FS or G&F guy that your straw is weed free? In most cases, you are not, and he is definitely gonna be in a citation mood after your litany of excuses.

There is, however, a way to avoid this situation altogether, and that is the use of wood shavings. I began to use them after I noted Carolyn & Alice utilizing them for bedding, and realizing that they have a multiplicity of advantages over straw.

The first and foremost is that they completely negate the argument concerning the spread of noxious weeds. They are also more absorbent, and you can either burn them or use in the garden as they biodegrade much faster than straw.

In these times of operating under the microscope, don’t give the land managers any excuse to point the finger at us for not adhering to their guidelines. We have enough trouble with them as it is.

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## Butterfly's Journey

By Nan Hassey

My heart fell into my stomach when I saw the bedraggled little body lying limp in the horse pasture. It was Butterfly—our first kid born in 2020 and one of the most beautiful, graceful, and active kids we'd ever had.

She was classic cou blanc with a black butterfly-shaped mask on her face. Her delicate ears curved upwards where they fluttered over

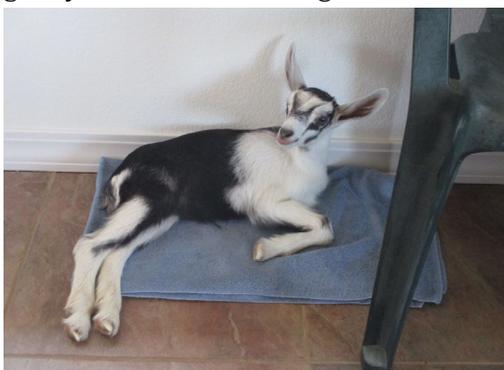


her head like wings. Her long limbs and slender neck gave her a gazelle-like appearance which was only exaggerated by her extreme athleticism. At one day old Butterfly could already leap the foot-high ledge across the door to her goat shed, while brother George stood inside lonely and unable to climb over.

But Butterfly's precociousness had gotten her into deep trouble. She wandered too far afield and ended up in the horse pasture where my yearling colt, Pepperjack, gave chase. At only three days old, little Butterfly couldn't outrun the trampling hooves.

I trembled as I knelt down and slid my hands under the tiny, featherweight body. I was sure she was dead, but as I began to lift, Butterfly screamed. She was alive! I picked her up as gently as I could but she continued to cry as I carried her back to the house. I set Butterfly down near her mother, Skeeter, and soon realized that she was not just bruised and in shock—she could not stand. Her hind legs were completely useless and she was obviously in a lot of pain. I feared a spinal fracture.

I took Butterfly into the house and called Phil away from his work. We cried as we stroked her sleek body. I told Phil I would take her to the vet for x-rays and we would hope for the best, but we both feared it would be a one-way trip. Phil said goodbye to Butterfly as I wrapped her gently in a towel with a bag of frozen corn pressed against



her rapidly-swelling rump.

The vet examined the x-rays and Butterfly's spine appeared intact, but her pelvic cradle was an odd,

asymmetrical shape. Her little 3-day-old bones were so slender and soft that it was impossible to see the fractures, but the vet could tell it was off-kilter like a partly crushed box. Whether the pelvic bones would fuse together again he could not say, and the pelvis would almost certainly heal narrow and a little crooked. If we decided to give her a chance, we would do so with the understanding that she should probably never be bred.

But these concerns were a long way off. More immediately, we were very worried that Butterfly might have internal injuries. The vet was concerned that her bladder might be ruptured. If it was, surgery or euthanasia were our only options. There was no way to tell until she passed urine. As for the broken pelvis, there was nothing we could do to set the bones or apply a cast. It's not a very "treatable" structure. If we could keep Butterfly penned in a small, safe area with good footing and stand her up regularly she might learn to walk again. The vet could make no guarantees, but Butterfly's tender age gave her a better-than-average chance. Young kids tend to heal rapidly and more completely than older ones, and their light weight works in their favor.

Phil was overjoyed when I stepped out of the truck with Butterfly in my arms. He had not expected to see her again. We immediately went to work building a pen in our basement. She needed a soft floor with good traction so we laid down some foam jigsaw mats enclosed with wire panels. We scattered pine shavings over the mats and I set up a cardboard "shelter" in one corner. We brought George in to be with his sister and they immediately curled up in the box together.

I wasn't sure how Skeeter would react to her handicapped baby. Many does instinctively reject or even try to kill a sick or injured kid,



which I suppose is nature's way of ending their suffering sooner. But Skeeter is a smart doe. She sniffed Butterfly's hind legs up and down inquisitively and immediately grasped the situation. We humans were going to help Butterfly heal and Skeeter's job was to keep her baby well-fed. Mama stood still as a statue while I supported Butterfly so she could suckle. Skeeter turned and nuzzled the little tail ever so gently in a way that told me she understood that her kid was fragile and unsteady. She gently but firmly pushed George away when he tried to steal Butterfly's meal. Late that night just before bedtime,

Butterfly dribbled a stream of clear urine. Butterfly was going to make it!

Skeeter was distraught when I brought Butterfly and George into the house. I let mama follow us so she could see where her babies would sleep, but she could not stay. My basement is no place to house a full-sized goat, and Skeeter would be just as upset to be away from her friends all night as to be away from her kids, so I might as well make things easy on myself and leave her outside. She would see her babies again in the morning. I almost left George with her, but Butterfly needed a companion, and I was afraid if George stayed with mama, that mama might bond too much with George and reject Butterfly. If I kept the kids together, mama would miss them both and be less likely to disassociate them from each other.



It took a few days to adjust to the new arrangement, but Skeeter soon stopped fretting about her kids. She knew where they were and

that I was taking care of them. I brought Skeeter into the house for an hour or so every morning so she could feed both kids and hang out with them. Then I would put mama outside with George while Butterfly stayed with me. I took Butterfly everywhere those first few days. She couldn't get up on her own, but if I set her on her feet she would shuffle around the room surprisingly well. I took her out to nurse and scoot around the yard several times a day, and in the evenings I brought George inside to keep Butterfly company through the night. Skeeter learned to say goodnight to her babies and allowed me take them without protest. She would come into the house around midnight to feed her kids one last time before we all went to bed. I was impressed by how quickly Skeeter grasped the situation. She seemed genuinely grateful to Phil and I for helping her special needs baby.

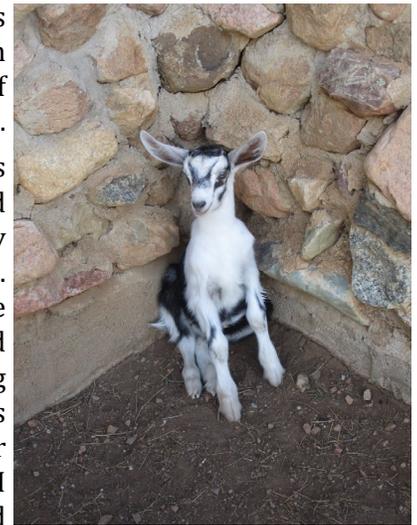
Butterfly began to heal more quickly than I could have imagined. For a few days she could only shuffle. Her hind legs bore weight and she could hitch them along, but she could not move them. She could occasionally stand up on her own if she hauled herself up on her front legs and then dragged her hindquarters up, but this was exhausting. Still, I encouraged her to practice and within a few days she had mastered the technique and I was beginning to see signs that her hindquarters were

strengthening. She was beginning to push from her hind legs instead of just pulling them upright.

Butterfly's progress snowballed whenever I let her play with the other babies. Two kids were born the day Butterfly was injured and they were starting to be fun. Butterfly was a little nervous of their rowdy behavior, but I could tell she wanted desperately to join them. Her desire to play with the other kids overrode her fear of falling and getting hurt. Meanwhile, George was getting almost too rambunctious for Butterfly. I had to watch him, and Skeeter did too. Skeeter took pains to make sure no kid—even George—was too rough with her darling Butterfly!

Within a week I was able to allow Butterfly to stay outside with the other goats during the day and I only brought her and George in at night. I couldn't leave her outdoors at night until I was certain she could climb in and out of the goat hutches on her own. I continued to take her with me whenever I left the house. She even accompanied me to church! But on the 12th day I watched with delight as Butterfly jumped into one of the goat houses all by herself. Now she could safely stay outside with mama. It was a good thing too! George was becoming altogether too wild to be a house goat any more, and the two kids could no longer fit into the cardboard box I'd set up for them. In fact, George kept jumping on top and threatening to collapse the whole thing! I was confident that Skeeter would take good care of Butterfly and make sure she stayed dry and safe and well fed.

Butterfly continued to heal throughout the summer. She loved to race, and within three weeks she was outrunning the other kids. She adopted a peculiar running style with both hind legs pistoning together like a deer. Her hindquarters took on an unusual shape and her rump retained a very steep angle which made it difficult for her to hold her tail upright, but she was pain-free and completely mobile, which were the important things. I even started some "physical



therapy” sessions with her where I would encourage her to jump on things, and I would stand her up on her hind legs.

Standing on two legs was one area where Butterfly continued to struggle. She had no balance. She didn't appear to be in any pain, but she was very wobbly, which made me think that her pelvis never quite fused together. But I knew that even if the pelvic cradle never mended together, strengthening the muscles and ligaments around it would help stabilize it. So I spent time walking her around on her hind legs with her front legs hooked over my arm for balance. Butterfly's long, slender build, her natural athleticism, and her bold attitude all helped tremendously in the healing process.

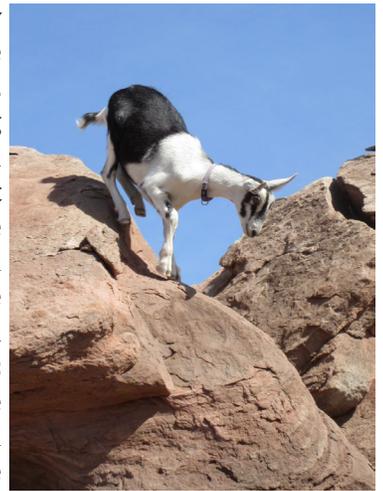


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born, and after seeing her injury and recovery he fell head-over-heels in love. Herb keeps a few female “pet” goats in his herd and his females were getting older. He wanted Butterfly, but I couldn't re-home her without George. The two had become inseparable, and Butterfly could not travel alone on that long trip to Utah with only my big, cranky pack wethers for company. It would be too traumatic. So Herb agreed to buy George. I didn't realize how closely George had bonded to Butterfly until we started that trip. George and Butterfly would squeeze themselves into the front corner of my trailer, but George always positioned himself in front of Butterfly so if Finn or Sputnik bothered them, he would take the brunt.

When we arrived in Utah I knew bringing George had been the right decision. George's protective nature gave Butterfly confidence that I don't think she'd have had without him. Herb's German Shepherd, Luna, was enthusiastic about the new arrivals and kept trying to sniff and interact with them, but George would have none of it! George continually positioned himself between Butterfly and the strange dog and wouldn't let Luna approach. If Luna so much as reached in for a quick sniff, George planted his sharp little horns into her ribs. Several times when Luna stopped to look at Butterfly, George stomped his foot toward the dog and snorted at her. I've never seen a goat so young be that aggressive with a strange dog. When Luna wasn't lurking around, George kept himself between Butterfly and Herb's other

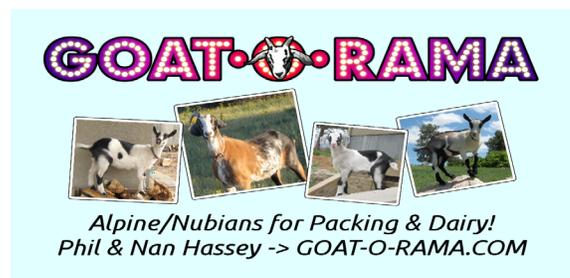
goats. I was impressed by how seriously he took the job of defending his sister. Herb had two other young wethers about George and Butterfly's age. I thought since they were on “home turf” that George and Butterfly would be the underdogs. But no. Within 24 hours George was King of the baby pen. He commandeered the feed trough and claimed the best shelter. Only Butterfly was allowed to share.



George and Butterfly grew accustomed to their new home over the ensuing week, and George soon relaxed enough about the dog and the other goats to let his guard down and start having fun! We took the kids hiking with us several times, and wherever George climbed, or leaped, or explored, Butterfly went too. She was in her element, skimming over the sandstone and leaping down precipices like it was her own personal playground. Seeing her so happy, so active, and so athletic brought tears to my eyes on more than one occasion. I couldn't help but think back to the day I carried her broken little body back to the house, certain her life was over. To see our little Butterfly flitting over boulders with her hooves barely skimming the surface was pure delight.

Video of Butterfly's three week healing journey: <https://vimeo.com/427230625>

More stories and photos can be found at <http://www.goatorama.com>





[Cargo panniers]

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

By K. Rajendran , Written by [Livingston Contributor](#) on 12-8-19

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-climatechange-goats/tribal-women-corner-the-market-on-indias-heat-hardy-black-goats-idUSKBN15V0ZC>

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



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.

### PAYING MORE

In previous years, Vijayan Nair, a livestock trader from Kozhikode, said he was able to purchase black goats from villages in Attapadi for 1,000 rupees (\$15) each, as drought-hit families sold off stock in search of cash.

"Due to the early advent of the drought, almost all the other goat breeds across Kerala are tired," he said. "But demand for the tough Attapadi goats has been hugely raised."

His most recent visit, however, which aimed at taking home a dozen black goats for resale, wasn't quite so profitable.

In Agali, where local people now bring their goats for sale, the animals sell for a minimum of 280 rupees (\$4) per kilo, or more than 5,000 rupees (\$75) for a typical animal.

"I sold my 20-kilo goat for 5,600 rupees (\$84), and the money was immediately credited to my bank account," said Sundhari, a tribal woman who is among those raising the hardy goats.

"Now I am sorry that last summer I sold three goats, much bigger than this one, for just 1,000 rupees each," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The goat-selling cooperative, created by a coalition of women's self-help groups with the assistance of the National Livestock Mission, serves 192 tribal villages, its backers said.

"Now no middlemen can loot the tribes. People can sell Attapadi goats only through the goat village and buyers can purchase them only through us," said Seema Bhaskar, who coordinates the project for the National Livestock Mission.

Even at the higher prices, demand for the goats remains relatively strong, with 28 goats sold over one recent week in January.

"Every day we are getting inquiries from farmers across the state. They want the genuine breed," Bhaskar said.

Centralising sales could also help buyers, who sometimes inadvertently buy animals that are not Attapadi black goats, she said.

Joseph Kurian, a livestock farmer from Kottayam who visited the village recently, said he two years ago bought a goat that was sold as an Attapadi – but became aware he had been cheated when it fainted in the heat.

He said he was willing to pay a fair price – "but I should get the genuine breed," he said.

With summer temperatures continuing to rise in the region, Attapadi goat breeders say they're aware they may soon have competition from some of their buyers, who intend to begin breeding the handsome animals themselves.

The women are now looking to other products the cooperative might sell. One women's group in the neighbouring village of Pudur has started offering traditional medicines from a central sales point, and another group, in Sholayur, is now selling organic food.

*(Reporting by K. Rajendran; editing by Laurie Goering; Please credit the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, climate change, resilience, women's rights, trafficking and property rights. Visit <http://news.trust.org/climate>)*

Karen Bean has been a frequent contributor to Goat Tracks. Here she describes a great fall trip into Washington's Cascades

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## Remote Camping in the Cascades

It had been a long, dreary summer in my part of northwest WA. While other areas were fighting



fires, we had nothing but rain for long stretches. My goats and I had managed to grab a few one and two day hikes in the local mountains, but I wanted to get out into the mountains: away from people.

That might sound strange in 2020, but the mountains were filled with newly-born hikers. Even before Covid, my area had been “Instagrammed To Death”. So many people, many of which that had absolutely no clue regarding wilderness safety, courtesy, or basic hygiene.

So finally, when September rolled around, it looked like we'd be getting a spell of good weather. The boys and I were going to hit the backcountry: *off trail!*

The “boys” are two pack goats, and the failed breeding experiment. The pack goats are Tiberius, aka Tibo, (An Oberhasli and lead goat) and Remington (Sannan, a type B personality quietly angling for lead goat position). The “failed breeding experiment” is The Professor; the tiniest Cashmere on earth – mom and dad were big, but that’s genetics for you. The Professor wears a dog pack and carries the trash.

The question was: where? Off trail... Alone... High Altitude... Difficult to Reach... Steep, with boulders was

in my mind. I checked my Washington Topo maps. I called rangers. I also needed to be able to reach the trailhead (or near trailhead)



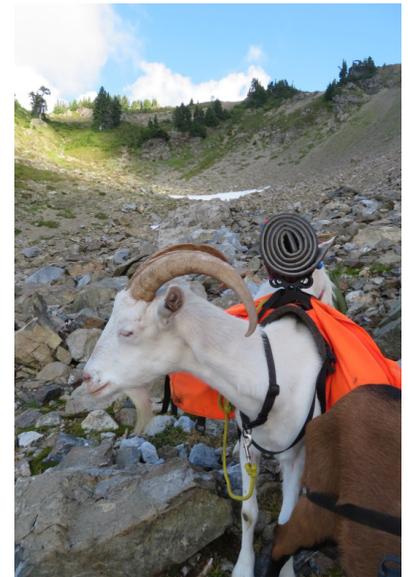
in a day’s drive. I couldn’t put my nice “goat hauler” on my pick up because I need help for that and my helper was being, rightfully, cautious about Covid due to family issues. Thus the boys would be riding in the back of my Toyota pick-up with the standard shell.

Finally I settled on a place. And so the planning began in earnest for this venture into Washington’s Cascades.

### Going In:

We started, as we usually do, at a trailhead. The road up to it was very promising. It was the width of my truck with high brush growing on both side and it was a steep incline. There were a few more cars than I would have liked and matters were made a bit complicated by the arrival of a family with dogs.

I asked if they could tie up their dogs until they started walking. The automatic reply of “oh they’re friendly” was given. I said, “I’m sure they are, but my packgoats won’t know that.” After a brief, stunned moment when they looked over and saw Tibo’s head complete with horns sticking out the window eyeing the dogs, they quickly put their very nice (and ‘friendly’) dogs on leads. As I saddled up the goats, I kept answering the children’s questions: “Why do you have them?” “Because I’m going to be out here a long time and they carry my stuff” “Why?” “Because I’m old and I can’t carry 2 weeks of stuff by myself anymore”... “Can we pet them?” “No, they’re really nervous right now (not true, but easy to say) and they’re big and they have very hard horns.” The family took off. I sat for a bit, the boys ate shrubs.



We followed a steep, unmaintained trail for the first part of that day. We passed all the other humans at a nice little lake where dogs swam in the water, children played on the shore, adults threw stones or stared at the beauty around them, talking all the time. Everyone was pleasant. My call of “could you

just grab your dog as we walk by” was met with amazement (at the goats) and a quick “we’ve got them”.



With a smile, a “thank you” and “no, please don’t pet them”, the boys and I left the happy,

somewhat noisy, gathering behind as we continued to climb. We slowly rose above the tree line, and the views were wide open. Tall peaks could be seen in the distance. Short grasses and small flowers covered the rolling slopes. It was easy to stay on course.

That course was a to near vertical rise which I had to scramble up. The top was a narrow ridge, which I would walk to head further into the mountains. Tress that had gained a foothold on the ridge made my route a bit challenging as I had to push through low branches, or hold on to them a to keep my footing.

The goats, however spread out along the steep slope that curved southward. They took a bite of grass. They sniffed the wind. They moved along with me, at a distance. The boys come to a “gentlemen walk on” or a specific whistle, so I let them choose their own route as long as I can keep an eye on them. We did gather for the next incline: straight up to the next intersecting ridge.

At the top we gathered. Me to enjoy the view; the goats ate. The far side of the ridge rolled gently away then dropped, steeply down to a boulder-strewn vale. From our high perch we could see our destination: a small, flat area nestled in a high alpine cirque.

We followed rapidly descending creeks down into the boulder



field. A challenge for me, joyful play-time for the boys. They, again, spread out, picking their own paths and manner in which they covered the ground as they paralleled my ungainly course through the rocks.

We arrived at my chosen spot. Grass and heather beneath our feet and hooves. Wildflowers turned the slopes around us purple and yellow. A small ridge separated us from a larger flat area, which looked a bit too soft and damp for my taste. We were going to pitch tent in this location for the entire stay. I like to be dry!

This is the first time I ever walked to a spot, pitched tent and never moved it again until the last day. But there was no loop to be made in this area. If one walked far enough one would simply walk over another peak or ridge and descend into the valleys far below us. I figured there was enough to explore – from flowered vales to tiny tarns to rugged granite outcrops.



### **Pitching Tent / Meeting The Neighbors.**

We were just at tree level in the alpine. Our campsite had no trees, so “high lining” was not an option. I went low: low lining. I placed “Orange Screws” (truly, that’s the product’s name) into the ground and ran my lines along the ground. We often camp in the alpine, so this was pretty standard. Remington and The Professor can share a line. Tibo needs his own. I do so hate head-banging on vacation. While I was out and about with them and I could watch them, they rambled about off-line.

The challenging part of the location was to find a tree high enough to toss a line for my Ursack bear bag. I found such a tree on a wooded knoll not too far from the tent. I need a bear bag in addition to the bear vault that I carry. The bag is for the goats’ treats and mineral mix. When we hike they get a goat kibble that is crushed, so no seeds are whole.

There are two challenges to bear bags when we go out. The first is my innate inability to toss the rock-in-the-bag-on-the line properly the first time. Thankfully I’ve never brained myself or a goat. The



second is that the goats know that their treats are in there. Calls of “no, no, no!” ring out when I haul

after being serenaded in the middle of the night. I could not see any threat, but the boys were on



the bag down, holding it high above my head.

It was a lovely evening. In fact, we were lucky to have nothing but good weather the entire time we were out. We all had raincoats, and the goats even had brand new, lined waterproofs for warmth. Did I mention we don’t travel light? After watching the stars for a while (me not the goats) we all settled in for the night; until around 2am.

The goats went nuts. Stomping. Moving back and forth. I woke up expecting the worst. This, for me is a cougar. After all, goats are simply cougar niblets. I leapt from the tent, flashlight in hand. I quickly released all goats. My philosophy is: we may be the feast, but the cat will have to work for it. And I started singing. Yes, singing. At the top of my voice. I have this amazing ability to drive almost every living thing away when I sing.

No cougar. But in the trees on the little wooded knoll, there were a pair of eyes reflecting my light. Just standing there, not moving, high off the ground: a bear. I sang the entire score of “Man Of La Mancha” to that bear. On the second rendition of “To Dream The Impossible Dream” he finally left.

I don’t carry a gun. I don’t even carry bear spray after I used it once years ago not thinking that I was downwind. The stuff does hurt. I just sing. So far it has always worked. I do carry a knife and pepper spray, but not for wildlife.

We finally settled down and to sleep. Dawn was beautiful. Lupins surrounded the hills and steep inclines around us. Heather added its red blooms to the mix. We were going to go high. I could see a landscape of rugged rocky land below the peaks to our west. Before we could leave every goat froze pointing the same direction: at the little rise that separated us from the flat, soggy area.

“Oh no, not again” I thought. Really a self-respecting bear should be getting a little shut-eye

full alert. And so the hills again rang out with “To Dream The Impossible Dream”. As I sang I swept the area with my eyes. The boys could sense it. I could not. Darned if I was going to go over the rise and look. Then, suddenly, I saw it. Its eyes were locked on us. It stood upright on its hind legs. It towered to its possibly two feet in height: a very big marmot.

I figure that marmot liked the song as much as I do. He stayed for the entire number; then dropped to the ground and ambled away. Finally, an entity that likes my singing other than my goats (I sing to my goats every night, each has his own song).

**Highlands, Vales, Meadows, and Ponds; Oh My.**

We spent the next week exploring the lands and never saw another bear. Marmots and pikas were abundant in the highlands that were a land of rock, scree, boulders, and snow. The highlands of the Cascades often have snowfields that last all summer long.

We traveled up and down the slopes. There was no other option, as there was little “flat” in the area. Outside of the large spongy area near our campsite, this is not a level area. Think of a line of peaks that descend to cirques punctuated by deep valleys formed by centuries of run-off. Streams begin in the rocky highlands and cut their way down to lush meadows below. Trees often stand on the edges of the ravines and cover part of the slopes.



Some of these vales are incredibly steep and deep, others

manageable. The land is a fabulous mix of rugged stone outcrops, scree and boulders, grassy slopes, and flowered meadows. We never had any real goal. There was pond on the topo map. I decided we would reach it one day. No hurry.

In full pack or on a day hike, I always carry a topo map and compasses (usually two), even



if I had a GPS I'd take the map/compass combo. They have no batteries so never "die". On our day hikes on this trip, I kept the compass/map and camera. Tibo and Remington carried the water and snacks as well as my sketch pad and pencils. The Professor got a "miss" on day packing duty as I only let him carry light items. The weight for the larger boys was so minimal, they barely noticed the pack.

### On The Rocks

The goats seemed to truly enjoy the rocks. The so seldom get hard soil under their hooves during the year in our wet area. When we traveled upwards the grassy slopes gave way to solid rock rubbed smooth in places from the winters' snows. Gaps of scree and narrow slots let us go around, huge rounded outcrops. "Shelves" cut in the outcrops allowed us to go up and over when we wanted.

Above us towered a line of jagged peaks of dark stone and snow. On our ramble, patches of snow rimmed low-lying areas where pools had formed and disappeared. One day we climbed up to an area that, according to the topo, we could cross above a deep ravine to draw closer to the goal of the pond.



However the substantial, but do-able, slope on the topo did not show the 300 feet

of loose scree and snow that formed the top of that deep ravine. I opted to stop, sit and enjoy the view while the goats wandered around. It was not worth the risk. There had to be another way. We had all the time in the world.

I always try to err on the side of safety, both my own and the goats. Because I travel alone, I carry a Spot device. It is an emergency beacon that can alert rescuers and bring help, or haul out the body. It does all sorts of other things: friends can track your progress; you can send preset messages. I just use it as a beacon. I dread the day I would have to use it, because I know I would not leave until someone came to get the goats.

### Up and Down and Up and Down the Vales

It took some time to work out a route that would lead us safely up and down these vales.



Up a thousand feet, over

one vale. Cross the now dry pool where the water would gather to begin its descent. Then meander down a thousand feet looking for ways to cross into the base of the next vale.

This was September in the Cascades. The wildflowers were glorious. Lupin, asters, and heather predominated. They were joined by other tiny flowers nested between rocks and gently waving grasses. The soft murmur of small streams often gave way to a crash as the waters suddenly dropped a hundred feet over an exposed ledge.

So many places to stop, draw, photograph and simply enjoy. The boys would say "so many things on which to nibble." We were all well pleased.

### The Pond

We did reach the pond one day. We did so in a roundabout way. We had gone up and around one vale, then descended the side of another until we could safely reach a lovely vale of flowers. Our climb up the other side took us nearly back to the rocky highlands with a view down to the pond. It was a glorious descent back down to the shore though waist high grasses and flowers. A slow descent, because it was very steep. I was secure



in the notion that the boys could easily traverse the slope. Should I slip,

it would be a smooth ride down over those tall grasses. The water was crystal blue. Snow lined one edge; flower the other. It was a good goal and nice to achieve it.

That was how our days went: up and down; rocks to flowers and grasses. It was calm and pleasant. We didn't see a soul until our next to last day.

### The Humans Arrive

As we returned from an outing I heard voices. Bliss could not last forever. Two people had camped in the larger spongy area. We gave them wide berth, to give them privacy. I assumed they were as surprised as I was to see someone. They were very nice, and soon understood that I really did not want to sit down for a chat. I did ask them to please not Instagram where we were. Or if they did so, to keep the actual location a secret. They seemed to agree that the area should be left in peace. I can only hope that it has remained anonymous.

### GOING HOME

We spent the last afternoon perched on an aster-covered slope high above another near by pond. One last wonderful sunset to watch and time was up. Wake up. Pack up the tent. Drop the bear bag. Clean up the area of droppings. Do an idiot check (I only found us). And off we went. Back up the boulder strewn vale, over the ridge top and back down to the small city of folks enjoying that first lake.

It was a wonderful trip. We had wandered and explored, without any set "must do." We went



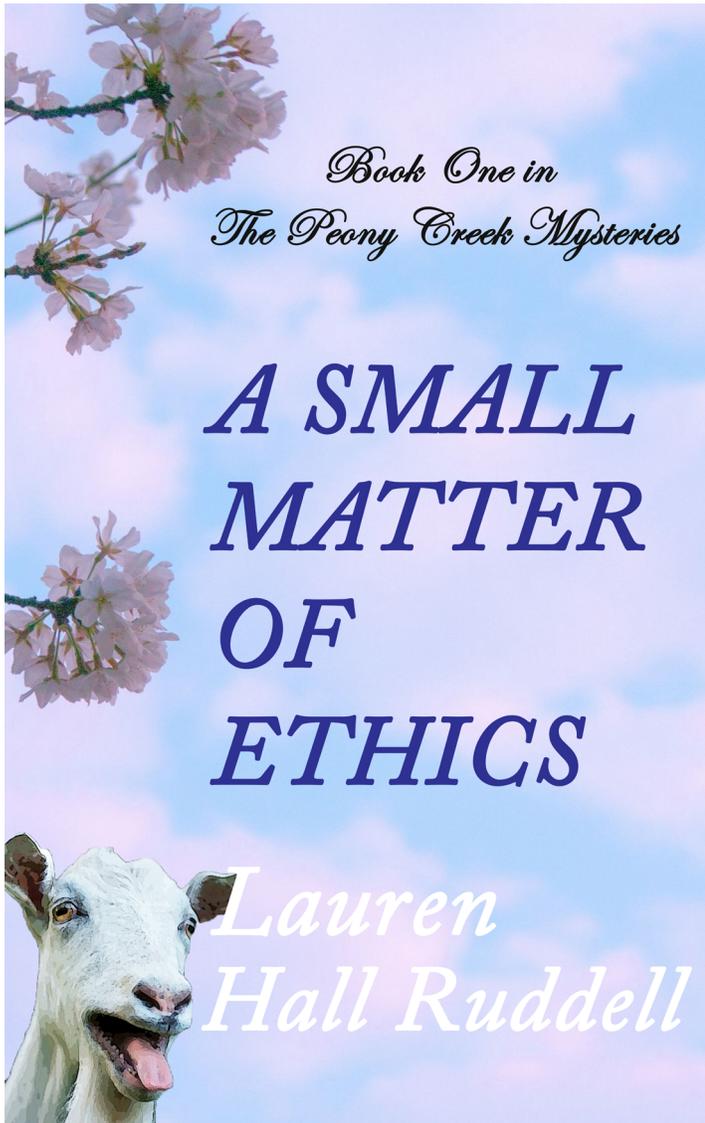
from highlands of crags and rocks to lower areas of streams and flowers, sometimes just hovering on the slopes sitting, staring and sketching (me), eating (the boys).

We had visited small ponds where salamanders lived. We watched raptors fly above us. And on one memorable morning the boys alerted me to a herd of mountain goats making their way along the slopes of a distant peak. We sat and watched until that herd cleared a pass and disappeared to the south. A lovely, peaceful trip.



I would just like to add a note regarding the 'Orange Screws' mentioned on Page 23. My love for these wonderful tiedowns is deep. And I've never met anyone but Larry Robinson who knew about them. I don't think goat packers should leave home without them.

I will always be grateful for Larry introducing me to these giant, sturdy, plastic ground screws with tie-down areas on top. Need I say they're orange, and thus very easy to keep track of. They come with a tough plastic sleeve that you insert though the tie-down area to screw the item into the ground. That sleeve also keeps the pointy part from poking holes in your pack. They are sturdy. And the company stands behind them. Remington once broke one. He's a very determined boy and it was a stressful moment in his life. When I went to order another I told the company how much I liked them and that it was understandable that a big goat could snap one, if determined. They sent me replacement for free.



## Chapter 1

### Monday Afternoon

There was a boot in the trail. Not unusual. It was on a foot. Also, not unusual. What was unusual was that it was the wrong way up.

The upward-facing Vibram sole was housed by the adjacent, expensive but well-worn Raichle boot body. That boot upper was, in turn, inhabited by an organic rag-wool sock-clad ankle. This ankle was, in turn, attached to the Supplex pant leg hiker.

Whose body was facing downhill off to one side on the steep, narrow, aspen-lined trail. Not usual.

Thor and Titan stood immobile, Thor occasionally snorting at the boot. Titan stared at the boot, then back down the trail, then at the boot again, then back down the trail. The leader of this troupe, the Kemosabe, the great knower and seer and protector against all things creepy on the trail, was now in sight. Both goats were extremely relieved to see her.

Laurelyn McNamara was just catching up to her two twin pack goat wethers. They knew this trail so well that they didn't mind forging ahead, waiting for their slow leader to catch up to them. Their bravado was a function of their age, size, and athletic prowess. Until there was real trouble. Then they turned into fussy and insecure baby goats, mindlessly throwing themselves at Laurelyn's knees until she nearly went down, or on this steep trail, overboard into a bracken and aspen abyss.

Knowing this, and seeing their agitation over something, before she even arrived at the scene Laurelyn began crooning a soothing song her boys had heard since they were born into her hands, two years ago. They clustered around her, needing reassurance, but did not crowd her so much as to knock her off her feet. Their emotional wellbeing attended to, she looked up and spied the boot. Still crooning, from long habit, she approached the boot.

The boots, pants, and tousled long, black, wavy head of hair, nearly hidden by this season's mellow golden ferns, resembled someone she knew well. Her laboring breath faltered, and her heart skipped several beats. Wondering if it was truly him and whether he needed aid, she quickly removed a thin webbing lead from her pocket and clipped it to Thor's collar, then lashed it around an uphill aspen. She knew that Titan might be torn between

allegiances but would ultimately stay with his brother.

Safety thus managed, she scrambled down the slick incline to the prostrate hiker's head. Or what was left of it. With a sickening feeling in her gut, she confirmed she did indeed know who this was. When she brushed back a lock of black hair from the bloody face, seeing that familiar profile, she nearly threw up, but the need to render assistance overcame nausea.

The hiker did not respond to her voice. When she shook the exposed arm, it was stone cold. Hope fading, she attempted to locate a pulse. The steepness of the slope made it difficult to be sure, but she could detect no signs of life. Even the neck below the shirt line was fairly cold.

She took out her cell phone. No signal. Not surprising. She untied Thor and they all hustled down the trail to a spot she knew she could get a signal. Hands shaking, she speed-dialed her friend and fellow farmer Sandy, who was married to the part-time town cop.

"Sandy, I'm on the Elk Ridge Trail about 1 mile up from the trailhead. About another half mile up the trail, I found Garrison lying face down on the side of the trail. Sandy, I think he may be dead. Can you get ahold of Mike?"

As Laurelyn descended the trail the rest of the way to the waiting 'goat mobile' parked at the foot of the path, she felt certain that Garrison was long dead and that his death was a matter of foul play. If that was the case, she knew who the primary suspect would be. Garrison and gas developer Milton Hornblend had been arguing violently and had come to blows in the parking lot of the small-town grocery just last week.

Laurelyn had never been one hundred

percent comfortable with her Wwoofer Garrison since his arrival. This particular 'Willing Worker on Organic Farms' was what she referred to as a 'true believer.' There was only one way to save the planet, and that was his way. Anyone that disagreed wasn't just simply 'not his cup of tea', they were positively evil. Although an attractive guy, with piercing brown eyes, and a well-sculpted face, his wild black hair and beard lent him something of a Rasputin look. Between that and his forceful opinions on environmental protection, he had very few friends.

He did have a girlfriend, however, that he had brought with him to Bad Aspen Farm and CSA, Laurelyn's farm. Saffron Starsinger (and Laurelyn was betting that wasn't her given name at birth), was a sallow, petite blond. While Garrison was attacking weeds in the microgreens patch with a ferocity that was a sight to behold, Saffron flitted about hither and yon, absorbing the sights and sounds of the farm in a dreamy, ethereal way.

She was nearly useless, and Laurelyn would have terminated her contract with them if not for the fact that Garrison was a force of nature in field and barn, and Saffron had astonishingly good manual dexterity and genuine creativity. Discovering that Saffron would meticulously pluck the petals and leaves from any sort of plant or herb for hours made up for lack of strength and endurance in the field and greenhouse. Her potpourris and sachets were brilliant and beautifully wrapped in creative ways with the variety of materials she had to choose from. A wisp of something she had picked while meandering, a sprig or a dried flower, lent understated elegance. For virtually free. Laurelyn admired her work, even if it was done at a maddeningly slow pace. At the end of the day, they were beautiful offerings she was pleased to include in member's weekly CSA shares.

And even better, it was work that Laurelyn did not want to have to do herself, preferring to see to the goats and the greenhouses. Laurelyn wondered how dreamy and fragile Saffron would take the news of her boyfriend's departure from this world of woe.

Laurelyn secured the goats in the trailer and locked it. Mike's cruiser pulled in just as she was heading back up the trail. The sound of an ambulance could be heard in the distance.

"Can you show me where the hiker is laying?" asked Mike as the ambulance and Sandy arrived at almost the same moment.

"Well, sure, I guess, but you can't miss him. He is lying face down about one and a half miles up."

"OK, the EMTs and I will head up first, but if you could come along behind in case there is any confusion, I would sure appreciate it."

Overhearing this, Sandy offered, "Lor, would you like me to drive the goats back to your place and put 'em away. Mike can drop you off later."

Laurelyn was not at all happy to be involved further and just wanted the professionals to do what they did best but agreed out of a sense of civic duty. Besides, Garrison was her farm intern.

She needn't have worried, for by the time the fit and well-conditioned back-country emergency team reached the body and verified what she already suspected, that the victim had been dead for some time, they came charging back down before she had proceeded even another half mile.

"This is a job for the coroner now," pronounced Mike. "It's probably a crime scene and I gotta wait here for the CIS from Grand Junction. The ambulance will take you back home."

Laurelyn wanted to make sure the goats were

put away properly, being goats and not always cooperative with neighbors unfamiliar with their ways. Sandy was more used to trimming vines and picking grapes at the small vineyard and winery that she and Mike were restoring to its former glory. She was familiar with these boys but had never had goats of her own. Hopefully, the boys had not been too much trouble.

But mainly, it was breaking the news to Saffron that she was dreading. She had no idea how that flakey young woman might react.

Saffron was braiding willow branches into wreaths bedecked with dried rose hips. She lifted her dreamy face to Laurelyn's, whose tragic expression would have tipped off almost anybody else that something was badly wrong. But not Saffron, she just smiled pleasantly, waiting for whatever it was that Laurelyn had to say to her.

Laurelyn knelt beside her. "Saffron, I'm afraid there's been an accident. Garrison may be hurt, possibly badly," she prevaricated. She wasn't sure if it was her ethical or legal place to render this terrible news, so she felt it best to leave that to the professionals as well.

The smile slowly faded from Saffron's face. Her eyes slowly widened, and she even more slowly stood up from her patio chair.

"Where?" was all she said, at first.

"On the Elk Ridge Trail."

Muttering, "I knew it, I knew it," over and over, she sank back down onto the folding chair. Face in hands, she began rocking back and forth, back, and forth. "I knew it, I knew it."

Laurelyn hated to ask, and actually just wanted to run to the goat barn or the greenhouses, but inquired, despite herself, "Knew what?"

But Saffron had completed her litany. And just sat rocking. As things unfolded, it would be sometime before she would hear Saffron speak again.

The town's full-time cop was pulling into the yard. Laurelyn nearly sprinted to meet him. She relayed her information as to Saffron's emotional state and her relationship with the deceased, and the fact that the two of them had been together since 7:00 AM that day. Officer McCarthy confirmed that a statement would need to be taken from her, but that could wait until tomorrow. What was needed from her now was information about immediate family and how they could be contacted. Laurelyn invited Roy McCarthy into the common area/house sitting room/studio to speak with Saffron.

The young woman sat rocking and weeping silently in the same place Laurelyn had left her. Roy introduced himself but received no response. He laid a hand gently on her shoulder with the same result.

"Miss, Miss, can you hear me?" He shook her shoulder ever so slightly. No response.

"Saffron, I know you're shocked and hurting, but this officer needs to get a little information from you about Garrison's folks. They will need to be notified," inserted Laurelyn, timidly. No response.

Laurelyn and the cop looked at one another. She shook her head that she had no idea what to do at this point. Roy took her by the elbow and escorted her outdoors.

"I think I'm gonna call Nancy Clifton in Social Services to see if she can help with this. She's good with this sort of thing, and I'm not," he stated.

'Me neither,' thought Laurelyn, but said

nothing and just nodded in agreement. After Roy left, she called her part-time, permanent helper Weston to see if he could come over, even though it was his day off. Plants still had to be watered, and goats fed and milked, regardless of the tragedies unfolding this day. He was fishing and had a broken signal at the lake, but after a few tries, he got the point and said he could be there in two hours. His help and that of host of others was going to be badly needed.

*The Peony Creek Mystery Series, set in the semi-fictional town of Peony Creek (otherwise known as Paonia) are cozy mysteries written by someone with actual knowledge of farm life, rather than someone sitting in an apartment in New York City. If you enjoyed this first chapter, please let myself or the editor know. If you simply cannot wait for Chapter Two, which will be issued in the next volume of Goat Tracks, then simply go to Amazon or Barnes and Noble and order a copy for yourself. Happy Spring, and may all your trails be empty of murder victims!*

Lauren Hall Ruddell

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# Paradise Ranch

## Pack Goats

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Paradise Ranch Research and Development will be offering a large assortment of Packgoat kids in 2021. We have been designing, breeding and training specifically bred Packgoats for well over 20 yrs, our genetics are HUGE. Now is the time to reserve your 2021 Packgoat kids. The reservation list is filling quickly! Don't let another year pass you by. We will sell out quickly!

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Any of these choices will more clearly define a herd’s status to buyers and should be welcomed as a step forward in controlling a disease that is potentially crippling to packgoats.

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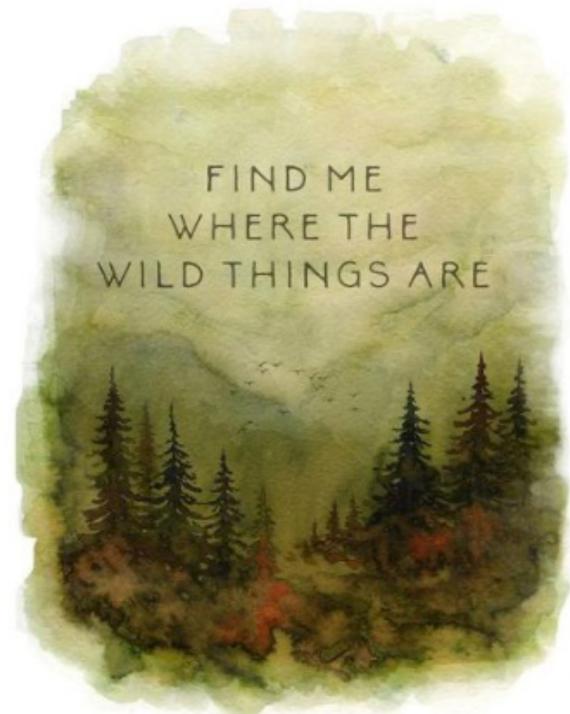
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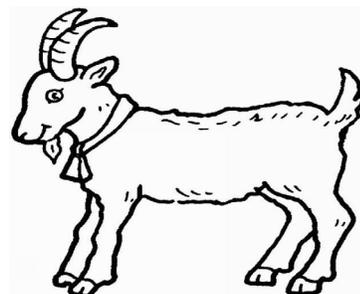
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Presumably this young goatherder is assembling his/her crew in order to get them in before the coming rain