

Appendix C

Grazing Guidelines for Management of Domestic Sheep in Bighorn Sheep Habitats

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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To: AFO's, SCD

From: Director

Subject: Guidelines for Domestic Sheep Management in Bighorn Sheep Habitats

Attached is a copy of the revised guidelines for domestic sheep management in bighorn sheep habitats which replace those issued via Information Bulletin No. 92-212. These guidelines were prepared by representatives of the organizations listed below at a meeting in Denver, Colorado, on May 22-23, 1992. The guidelines represent consensus among the participants and should be followed in current and future bighorn/domestic sheep use areas.

Foundation for North American Wild Sheep;
Desert Bighorn Council;
American Sheep Industry Association;
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies;
Veterinarians from California (Dr. Dave Jessup), Idaho
(Dr. Dave Hunter), and Wyoming (Dr. Tom Thorne);
An Immunobiologist from Idaho (Dr. Alton Ward);
BLM - Division of Rangeland Resources; and
BLM - Division of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Please note that these guidelines will be reviewed every 3 years. Should you have any questions on these guidelines, please contact Jim Fox (202/653-9193) or Dave Almand (202/653-9202).

1 Attachment

1 - Guidelines for Domestic Sheep Management in Bighorn Sheep Habitats (3 pp)

Guidelines for Domestic Sheep Management in Bighorn Sheep Habitats

The Bureau of Land Management desires progressive bighorn sheep management compatible with appropriate grazing on public lands by domestic sheep.

It is recognized by State and Federal Agencies, bighorn sheep organizations, and the domestic sheep industry that:

- There appears to be some diseases that are shared by domestic and bighorn sheep. There is evidence that if bighorn and domestic sheep are allowed to be in close contact, health problems and die-offs may occur. Some diseases may be transmitted between both species;
- There are bighorn sheep die-offs that occur with no apparent relationship to contact with domestic sheep;
- The above two observations are both valid and not mutually exclusive;
- Bacterial pneumonias are not the only diseases of concern, although perhaps they are the most catastrophic;
- The risks of disease transmission are often unknown; they may, however, be site specific, and;
- Reasonable efforts must be made by domestic sheep permittees and wildlife and land management agencies to minimize the risk of disease transmission, and to optimize preventive medical and management procedures, to ensure healthy populations of bighorn sheep and domestic sheep.

In recognition of the above factors, the guidelines set forth below should be followed in current and future bighorn/domestic sheep use areas.

1. State wildlife and Federal land management agencies, bighorn interest groups, and domestic sheep industry cooperation and consultation are necessary to maintain and/or expand bighorn sheep numbers.
2. When agency and industry agreement has been reached to maintain and/or expand bighorn numbers, the agencies and the domestic sheep industry will be held harmless in the event of disease impacting either bighorns or domestic sheep.
3. Domestic sheep grazing and trailing should be discouraged in the vicinity of bighorn sheep ranges.
4. Bighorn sheep and domestic sheep should be spatially separated to discourage the possibility of coming into physical contact with each other.
5. Buffer strips surrounding bighorn sheep habitat should be encouraged, except where topographic features or other barriers prevent physical contact between bighorn and domestic sheep. Buffer strips could range up to 9 miles (13.5 kilometers) depending upon local conditions and management options.
6. Domestic sheep should be closely managed and carefully herded where necessary to prevent them from straying into bighorn sheep areas.
7. Trailing of domestic sheep near or through occupied bighorn sheep ranges may be permitted when safeguards can be implemented to adequately prevent physical contact between bighorns and domestic sheep.

8. Unless a cooperative agreement has been reached to the contrary, bighorn sheep should only be reintroduced into areas where domestic sheep grazing is not permitted, and the allotment(s) in which bighorns are to be introduced should not have been used for domestic sheep grazing for two or more years prior to the bighorn release.
9. In certain special circumstances, extraordinary precautions will be followed to protect federally listed threatened or endangered subspecies; State listed subspecies; Federal candidate subspecies; and BLM Category II populations (BLM Rangewide Plan for Managing Habitat of Desert Bighorn Sheep).
10. For desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*, *O.c. mexicana*, and *O.c. cremnobates*), the following additional guidelines are recommended:
 - a. No domestic sheep grazing should be allowed within buffer strips less than 9 miles (13.5 kilometers) surrounding desert bighorn habitat, except where topographic features or other barriers prevent physical contact.
 - b. Domestic sheep trailed and grazed outside the 9 mile (13.5 kilometer) buffer and in the vicinity of desert bighorn ranges should be closely managed and carefully herded.
 - c. Unless a cooperative agreement has been reached to the contrary, domestic sheep should be trucked rather than trailed, when trailing would bring domestic sheep closer than 9 miles (13.5 kilometers) to occupied desert bighorn sheep ranges, especially when domestic ewes are in estrus.
11. These guidelines will be reviewed every 3 years by a work group comprised of representatives from the livestock industry, State wildlife agencies, BLM and bighorn sheep organizations.