



**2021 NORTH AMERICAN POLICY STATEMENT:
REDUCING CONFLICT BETWEEN WILD SHEEP AND DOMESTIC SHEEP AND GOATS
ON PUBLIC LANDS**

Purpose: The intent of policy statements are to provide a formal mechanism for Backcountry Hunters & Anglers to engage in specific conservation issues while establishing clear policy direction that not only defines the parameters of our position statements but the relevance to our mission. As declarations of policy, statements do not direct specific actions, establish policy priorities or allocate BHA resources.

Sponsored by: Originally proposed by the Colorado Chapter of BHA, this policy statement reflects revisions and additions made by the 2020 policy review committee.

North American Board Action: Adopted on February 8, 2021

North American Policy Statement:

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers supports science-based wildlife management and sustainable hunting opportunities for wild sheep and other ungulates based on the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. BHA encourages management agencies, conservation organizations, and other stakeholders working together to develop and implement progressive standards that create policies to advance wild sheep population recovery and interconnectivity on public lands. BHA believes wild sheep populations that are healthy, genetically interconnected and naturally expanding are a strong indicator of the overall health of public lands, and therefore recommend the following policies:

- *Using the best available science, BHA encourages states and U.S. federal land management agencies to vacate or close high-risk domestic sheep allotments to reduce risk of pathogen transfer from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep. To identify areas where domestic and wild sheep have the greatest risk of contact, BHA encourages use of the Bighorn Sheep Risk of Contact modeling tool [currently being updated for U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, state wildlife agencies, and other entities].*
- *BHA encourages allotment conversions from domestic sheep grazing to alternative class of livestock (e.g., cattle) where feasible and deemed environmentally appropriate by managing agencies.*
- *BHA supports and promotes allotment retirement programs facilitated by conservation partners and willing livestock producers. A market approach to changing grazing patterns*

can provide a positive solution to conflicts between domestic sheep and wild sheep on public lands. This conservation model can reduce litigation and help direct grazing to more compatible and sustainable locations while fairly compensating permittees to waive their grazing allotment permits back to federal land management agencies (e.g., USFS, BLM).

- *BHA encourages states, provinces, territories, sovereign tribal entities, First Nations, and federal management agencies to prohibit the use of domestic goats for noxious weed control in/near occupied wild sheep habitat on public lands due to the risk of potential pathogen transmission from domestic goats to wild sheep.*
- *BHA encourages states, provinces, territories, sovereign tribal entities, First Nations, and federal management agencies to adopt policies that disallow the use of pack goats in occupied wild sheep habitat on public lands, as fatal pathogens may be transmitted from goats to wild sheep, even if pack goats appear healthy. Pack goat users are encouraged to follow Best Management Practices identified and recommended by the North American Pack Goat Association (NAPgA).*
- *BHA encourages states, provinces, territories, sovereign tribal entities, First Nations, and federal management agencies to conduct continued research into wild sheep pathogen transmission.*
- *BHA encourages international cooperation and collaboration between U.S. and Canadian governments, wildlife management agencies and sovereign tribal entities in the U.S. and First Nations in Canada.*
- *Using the best available science, BHA encourages development of legislative solutions in the U.S. and Canada to provide testing and research funding and management resources that will aid states, provinces, territories, sovereign tribal entities, First Nations, and federal management agencies in preventing transmission of pathogens from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep.*

