



THE RAM'S HORN

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ARIZONA DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP SOCIETY, INC.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Probably the single most important factor in a bighorn's life is its habitat. The habitat of the sheep in the Sierra Estrella Mountains (just south of Phoenix) is being seriously threatened by a move to locate a hydroelectric power plant in that mountain range. The power plant would consist of two reservoirs, one higher than the other. During low power periods (night), water would be pumped to the upper reservoir and then released during peak power periods.

The project (referred to as Montezuma Project) and related activity, i.e., construction, roads, recreation, would surely eliminate this prime sheep habitat. A concentrated effort by your Society is in process to see that this prime sheep habitat is not disturbed. Your support is needed. It will be strong public outcry that will preserve the sheep in the Sierra Estrella Mountains. Please act now — write your thoughts to federal, state and local officials.

Doug Reynolds

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Your opportunity to participate in the annual general membership meeting is coming up. This year's annual meeting has been set for the morning of October 4, 1975 at the Black Canyon Shooting Range. Reports will be given for 1975 activity and the Board of Directors for 1975-1976 will be elected.

If you wish to become involved in the management of the Society and work on the Board of Directors, contact Mr. Bob Gray, this year's nomination committee chairman. Come out and join in the activities.

Following the meeting will be the 1975 Sheep Hunters Clinic.

SPECIAL MEETING

A Special Membership meeting at the Phoenix Zoo, on September 10th at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of reading the proposed changes and amendments to the By-Laws of the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, Inc. These proposed changes and amendments will be voted on at the October 4, 1975 Annual Meeting.



Little Horn Tank and its rip-rap retaining dam.

LITTLE HORN TANK

by Doug Reynolds

The Society and interested friends met at 9:30 p.m., April 4, 1975 at Dateland, Arizona. After about 40 miles of dusty road, 31 people found the camp and welcome campfire established by AG&F. The projects to be completed this weekend were three fold: 1. Cleaning out and seating a water hole in the White Tank Mountains; 2. Building a rip-rap water diversion dam in the Little Horn Mountains and last, but not least, 3. An unscheduled (but welcome) project in nearby Kofa Mountains which consisted of digging out Charlie Died tank for Bureau of Sport Fishing and Wildlife.

About once a year someone gets lucky and finds a pick-up head — that happened this trip to Harry Hussey while working at the White Tank project. This is the second time we have worked at the White Tanks. This time we cleaned out the upper tank and gave it a lining of thoro-seal to prevent water loss.

Another group in Little Horn Mountains constructed a 35-foot long rip-rap dam to divert the heavy flows of water and

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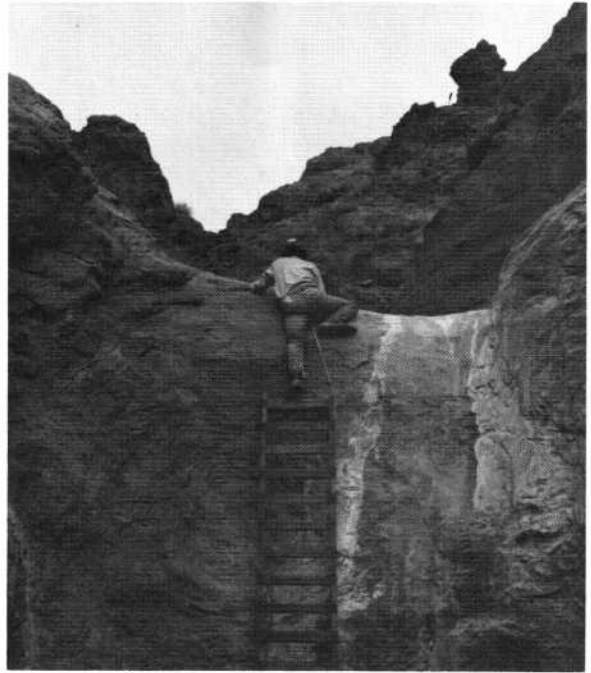
LITTLE HORN (continued)

debris away from an existing catchment that fed a steel holding tank.

Both of the projects were completed on Saturday. Saturday evening everybody filled up on fine Dutch oven stew, corn bread, biscuits, salad and lots of it. The pick-up head was measured that evening at 148 B&C points.

Sunday a group of energetic men drove over to "Charlie Died Tank" in the Kofa's and removed about 15 yards of gravel from that tank. Good exercise for a Sunday morning.

Participating in this weekend's activities were: Robby Robinson, Bill Weiermann, Bob Cavin, Jim Macnab, Eugene Risch, Monte Dodson, John Calvin, John Carroll, Mike Carroll, Jerry Petkovsek, Flip Petkovsek, Dan Schadle, Harry Hussey, David Hussey, Mason Baur, Carl Scrivens, Don Belknap, Bill Snider, Robert Wilkins, Ronny Wilkins, John Houzenga, Jim Stephenson, Ned Smith, Wayne Smith, Jim Machac, Tom Boggess, Ray Howell, Rusty Howell, Craig Cox, Raymond Howell Jr., and Doug Reynolds.



Clean-up operation at Charlie Died Tank.



This is how Little Horn Tank looked when we arrived.



An overall view of the Little Horn Tank area. All photos by Doug Reynolds.



Erecting the wire mesh and supports for rip-rap dam.

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ARAVAPAI SHEEP SEARCH

by Ned Smith

The Society volunteered its membership recently to help the Arizona Game and Fish Department conduct a survey on the population of desert bighorn sheep in the rugged Aravaipa Canyon.

Some 14 years ago, the department decided to try and transplant desert bighorns into the Aravaipa area. They started by constructing a sheep holding area, building an 8-foot hog wire fence with barbed wire on top and every six feet an iron post to give it great strength.

It wasn't an easy task as more than 200 map acres had to be fenced. Inside this 200 acres, a rugged canyon began and if one were able to iron it out flat the area would probably add up to over 1,000 acres.

Its remote area created an ideal spot to release captured sheep as natural waterholes dotted the canyon and lush feed abounded within the enclosure.

It was hoped by Game Department officials that the handful of desert sheep would multiply and eventually increase in numbers to the point the department would be able to release them in an area they had historically been in years before.

As in any new area or environment, problems will arise. The sheep population hung in limbo for years, neither increasing nor decreasing. Over the years, two or three sheep managed to escape and ranchers reported seeing different rams miles away from the enclosure. One was seen as far east as Ft. Thomas, another was reported in the Winchester Mountains just north of Willcox.

A cowboy reported picking up a real record book head below Coolidge Dam while riding the area in search of cattle. A ram that perished in the enclosure would now rank as the No. 4 sheep ever recorded in size within the state.

Finally, something happened to spur an increase and the sheep started multiplying in better numbers. In fact the pasture grew to 22 desert sheep when the Game Department decided to try for a release as the carrying capacity of the pasture had been reached.

The fence was lowered and the sheep were allowed to come and go as they desired. On January 8, 1973, 5 rams, 10 ewes, and 7 lambs were released.

Recently, some of my friends called me and told of seeing desert sheep while hunting for javelina near Aravaipa Canyon and were quite surprised.

I decided to investigate these reports and also hoped to get a few pictures of them as well, if lucky enough to find them.

On my first trip, we were lucky and found sheep on the very first morning and spent hours watching these magnificent animals.

The rams really put on a show for us as they bang horns, playing among themselves.

I've since returned to the area a couple of times and have seen as high as 30 desert sheep in one day. Each time I report my findings to the Game and Fish Department.

The Aravaipa area is very large and the department decided it would like to have additional information and data and decided to try and survey most of the area bighorn sheep might move into.

The Society volunteered help and the Game Department accepted.

Some 30 Society members responded and surveyed the area in two and three man teams as assigned by Game Department officials. It was also asked that members be on the lookout for any other wildlife and report back to give an inventory of the entire area.

The search lasted two days with each team camping overnight in the assigned areas. The only problem encountered was the windy days during the survey and this caused most of the sheep to seek secluded spots out of the wind and out of sight.

The men worked hard walking the areas, glassing hours on end trying to find most of the sheep. At the end, 25 sheep had been seen, all ewes and lambs and each was reported to have a lamb, making a 100 per cent lamb drop.

Not one ram was spotted and I know of nine rams in the area as I'd seen them previously along with Robbie Robinson of Mesa while on a picture taking trip.

Usually at this time of year the rams band up into what is called ram bands and they probably were off somewhere out of the wind in some small canyon and we just missed them. This would be very easy to do in this rugged country.

About August it will be very interesting to return to the area and see the lamb to ewe ratio. In the desert areas of the state, the mortality loss is unreal.

Usually within a three-month period after the ewe drops her lamb there is a high lamb loss — as high as 80 to 90 per cent.

That means that most have died! It will be interesting to compare the Aravaipa Sheep with those around the state.

KINGMAN PROJECT

Our last project of the season was held on the weekend of May 17, 18. On this one, the Society's members travelled to the Kingman area, our farthest project north.

We met at the regional AG&F in Kingman on the evening of the 16th and from there convoyed to our first camp right off Lake Mohave at the foot of Black Mountains. We were met by our old friend George Welsh, the AG&F regional manager, and after exchanging a few greetings most everyone turned in due to the late hour.

Next morning saw us up bright and early and we continued our trek to the project site — the Master Spring. On the way up someone spotted sheep on a distant mountain side and everyone spent some time watching them. All told, there were 11 ewes and lambs. Soon thereafter we arrived at our campsite and up to the project we went.

Up to the project was quite a trip; we used a combination of three ladders to scale a narrow, vertical series of cliffs through a deep canyon. What's more, all the supplies and material had to take the same route! Somehow, everything and everybody got topside in one piece with the exception of a bag of thoro-seal. From the top the rest of the walk to Master Spring was easy and soon everyone was at work.

Master Spring actually is just a seep and was discovered by George Welsh during a recent helicopter survey. However, this seep produces quite a bit of water. Our "scientific"

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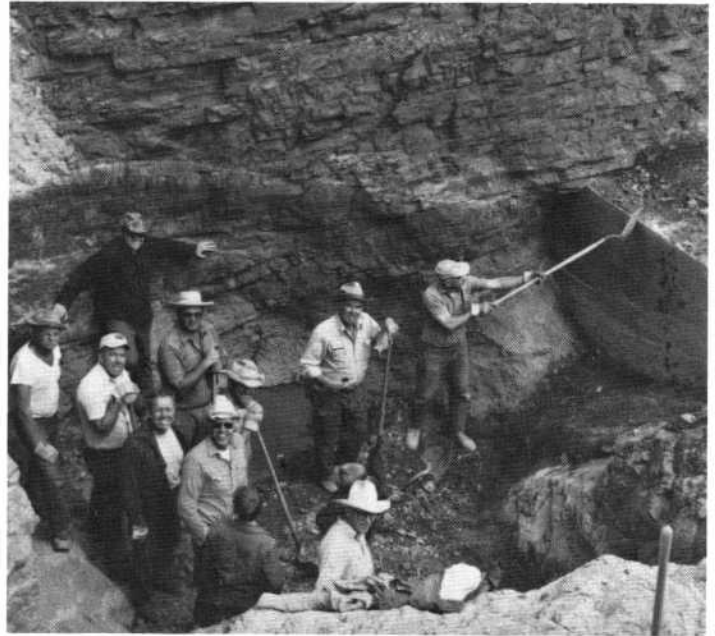
KINGMAN (continued)

measurements established that it flows at a rate of 144 gallons during a 24-hour period.

Our task was to built a concrete box with a lid around the seep and build a dam below it. Once the dam was built, the entire interior was meticulously cleaned out and sealed with thoroseal to prevent any water loss. It is estimated that the holding capacity of this water hole is approximately 2,000 gallons. This was truly one of the most beautiful tanks built by the Society.

The members and friends participating in this project were: Don Belknap, AG&F, Tom Boggess, John Bormanis, Joe Bormanis, John Carroll, Matt Dominy, John Krause, Bill Furedy, Bob Gray, Joe Gundry, C. Hanford, E. A. Higgins, Mike Holt, Jerry Hodges, P. D. Holt, John Houzenga, Max Kinnie, Joe Machac, Jim Machac, Dave Mitchell, Jerry Petrovsek, Ed Pippett, Doug Reynolds, Larry Smith, Gary Sholl, Bill Snider, George Welsh, Bill Welsh, and Harley Young.

As an additional treat, Tom Boggess, Harley Young, Matt Dominy, John and Joe Bormanis saw four rams on the way out and managed to sneak-up to take some pictures. This certainly was a great way to finish an outstanding project season!



On the way to Master Spring. All photos by Doug Reynolds.



Front view of Master Spring.



Master Spring work party viewing the final product.

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SPECIAL PROJECT BULLETIN

SIERRA ESTRELLA

APRIL 10 & 11

We will be meeting on Friday night, April 9th, at the Rainbow Valley store which is situated at the junction of Rainbow Valley Road and Riggs Road. To get there turn south on Jack Rabbit Road off U.S. 80 west of Avondale. You will make a jog east on Elliot Road and then south on Rainbow Valley Road. All totalled, it is 12.3 miles from U.S. 80 to the meeting point.

One group will depart for the base camp about 8 p.m. and another about 9:30 p.m. Starting at the meeting point there will be "ADBSS" signs posted for those who come in later; as a double check, look for the double orange plastic tapes tied to bushes.

There will be two crews this time: one up the mountain at the project site and one at the base camp mixing mortar for the helicopter to fly up.

If you plan to go up the mountain, keep several points in mind. Be in base camp Friday night as they plan to get an early start on Saturday and don't want stragglers. Your bedroll, food and other gear will be flown up, so all of this will have to be packed before you depart. You should be in good physical condition and have good foot gear - it is a hard 2+ hour climb from base camp to the project site. Finally, you will have to bring your own gear off the mountain on Sunday, so you will need a pack frame and/or back pack (this is a late change - we will not have use of the helicopter on Sunday). If all goes according to plan, you should be back in base camp by noon on Sunday.

EVERYONE NOTE:

- 1) Bring your own food and water; there will be no Saturday night feed on this trip.
- 2) No one under 16 will be permitted in either camp due to the use of the helicopter on this project. Sorry.
- 3) The track in is an old one, so keep it to high clearance vehicles. 4WDs should not be necessary.

If you have any last minute questions, contact P. D. Holt in Gila Bend (683-2208), Ned Smith in Mesa (834-5889) or John Krause in Phoenix (995-0988).

CABEZA PRIETA

MAY 1 & 2

The final project of the year, originally planned for the Kingman area, has now been switched south along the Mexican border. We will meet Friday, April 30th, at milepost 48 on U.S. 80/Interstate 8 east of Yuma. Because of the distance to the project site, departure time from the meeting point will be 9 pm. Allow yourself extra time or plan to arrive early for this one - we will be going thru a locked gate, so those who arrive late will simply miss out.

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