

To: USDA Forest Service
Attn: Objection Reviewing Officer
Use of Domestic Sheep, Goats and Pack Goats
Shoshone National Forest
EMC, Mailstop 1104
1400 Independence Ave.
SW Washington, D.C. 20250
Electronic submittal: objections_chief@fs.fed.us

To Whom It May Concern:

I object to the Shoshone National Forest Draft Record of Decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement for use of Domestic Sheep, Goats, and Packgoats.

In particular, I object to the continued use of the debunked Dr. Besser study in the RADT. This study was poorly conducted, not objective, and full of false conclusions and exaggerations. Therefore it should be completely thrown out when drafting any serious RADT or EIS. The Forest Service is required by law to follow the best and latest available science. The fact that the Forest Service continues to rely on the flawed Dr. Besser study shows that it does not take science or the law seriously but instead is exercising unfair prejudice against packgoats. Please remove all reference to the Dr. Besser study from your documents and plans.

Further, there is no research backing up the claim that bighorns and goats are attracted to each other, or that goats are more likely than other species to make contact with bighorns. This is pure speculation and has no basis in fact or scientific research. Therefore, unless and until this claim can be substantiated by solid research, it should be stricken from the RADT. Given the fact that packgoats are uniquely bonded to humans and are under human supervision at all times, this would seem to make them LESS likely to interact with wildlife than animals turned loose on the range.

The RADT does acknowledge that goats are lower risk than domestic sheep, and it also cites Dr. Maggie Highland's study demonstrating that goats have a very low prevalence of M.ovi, however the conclusion is still drawn that goats pose a disease risk to bighorns! Meanwhile, cattle, which are known to be a disease risk to bighorns, are left completely out of the study! It appears that goats are being unfairly targeted in this document. The Forest Service needs to treat all species equally in its studies, and it also needs to draw conclusions from the best available science. It seems that the conclusions in this study were fore drawn. What good is science if policies can be based on opinion and speculation?

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Nan and Phil Hassey
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