

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/5/2019 8:37:01 PM

First name: Nicholas

Last name: Norris

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I think the protection of bighorn sheep is very important and love seeing those critters on the landscape. That being said, banning pack goats from the forest is not the answer. There is no scientific evidence that the use of pack goats on the forest poses any significant risk to big horn sheep population (please show me a study). Domestic sheep which graze on the forest in groups of a thousand or more certainly pose a significant risk (which you do not plan on banning from the forest), but the risk from a handful of animals that are under the control of the packer are harmless.. Pack goats can be no more harmful than horses, llamas, etc (none of which you are proposing to ban) and I believe that I just read a new study that deer elk and moose also can carry Movi (so will you ban those too?). While goats can carry Movi, the vast majority of goats used for packing (95%) do not and that has been scientifically documented and the chances of one of the 5% that do carry Movi coming into contact with a wild sheep to pass the disease is miniscule. In short, banning recreational pack goat use, without banning everything else, that can pass Movi to bighorn sheep is silly (especially if you aren't going to stop domestic sheep grazing). There is simply no scientific justification for singling out pack goats and by doing so you are eliminating rec opportunities for older folks that can't carry a pack and young families (where parents have to carry kids and their gear) and don't want to be killed by a horse in the mountains. I think that you would be more effective having seasonal closures on winter ranges and lambing grounds where big horns are concentrated and risk of contact might be higher for all critters that can transmit Movi to them. I think the plan to single out and ban pack goats will fail the arbitrary and capricious test everytime. Thanks for your consideration and hard work to help big horn sheep, but you are literally using pack goats as the scape goat without addressing the real problem that is domestic sheep grazing.