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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hi!

My name is Austin Boese, and I am writing in support of the expanded scope of the EIS concerning Bighorn Sheep and domestic grazing. This is a very important issue to me, and I have been following this for the last few years. I support the proposed scoping that would provide analysis of specific sites and impacts, instead of continuing to allow domestic grazing on certain allotments simply because they have already been labeled as "suitable". Not only have the movements of Bighorn Sheep changed over the years, but also the science showing how easy, and devastating, disease transmitted from domestic sheep can be.

I am born and raised from Chelan County, and have lived here almost all my life. The herd I am most familiar with is the Swakane, and frequently look forward to seeing them while driving US 97 towards Chelan. Sometimes I also go out specifically looking for Bighorns, up Burch Mountain or Swakane Canyon. I also enjoy the area near Ginkgo Petrified State Park, where some of the Quilomene Herd resides. Observing and knowing that these Bighorns are thriving, as well as other native wildlife, plays a huge role in how much I enjoy recreating on our public lands.

There have already been disease outbreaks in Washington State herds such as the Tieton, Quilomene, and Cleman Mountain, all either confirmed or highly suspected of being transmitted from domestic sheep. This is clear evidence that not only disease transmission to Bighorns from domestic sheep can happen, but that it HAS happened, and will likely continue to happen, unless we can minimize contact to the best of our ability. A good step in this direction is developing a new EIS, that thoroughly analyzes and uses the best research and scientific study available, to make key decisions about where domestic sheep grazing should be allowed. These are our public lands, and they should be managed with the general public in mind, not based on the "grandfather clause" that has benefited for-profit sheepherders for too long, at the cost of our native fauna.

I would like to thank the Forest Service for opening up to public comment on this very important issue. I wholeheartedly support the new scope of the EIS, and ask that it be done thoroughly and extensively, and consider the high risk of even one domesticated sheep coming into contact with a Bighorn. I hope that Bighorns will thrive for generations to come throughout Washington, and this new EIS will be absolutely critical in giving them a fighting chance to do so.

Respectfully,  
Austin Boese  
Wenatchee, WA