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Comments: Hello, I have spent a lot of time in country that the USDA has allowed sheep grazing in wildlife habitat including bighorn sheep. My concerns are that the majority of the sheep herders cannot keep the herds from concentrating their time in riparian corridors and streams. I have seen very degraded stream banks which leads to poor water quality and damaged riparian vegetation. Hillslopes that have been trampled by a herd of sheep in wet conditions can take more than two seasons to recover. The intensive grazing removes forage for native wildlife and in my experience pushes the native wildlife out of the area where the sheep and cows are actively grazing. Why should the native wildlife and fisheries have to pay the price for an agricultural commodity that is really no longer needed at the levels of the past?

I have also witnessed the rampant predator killing that takes place at the hands of the sheep herders. From my past experience the herders are mostly from south America and do not have the knowledge or desire to follow game management laws of this country. It appears their bosses tell them to kill ANY predator that they see. The old shoot, shovel, and shut up method of protection is practiced at an appalling level on the allotments I have spent time on.

The high probability of the domestic sheep infecting the wild bighorn sheep with deadly diseases is just not justified for the small amount of revenue the grazing leases bring in especially when you take into account all the collateral damage that takes place. Please do not allow domestic sheep grazing in any of the allotment where bighorn sheep live in summer or winter.

Thank you for opportunity to comment on this proposal,
Steve Wegner (retired USFS/BLM watershed specialist)