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Comments:

The "SDEIS" considers two alternatives: maintain the status quo and NO grazing. The choice is simple: the decision MUST end grazing in the "High Uintas Wilderness" in order to protect, native, wildlife, restore the, degraded, watershed, and enhance opportunities for an, increasingly, rare Wilderness experience! To mitigate impacts to the, few, affected, ranchers, the "Forest Service" MUST decide to retire, grazing, permits that are, voluntarily, waived back to the Agency, giving the ranchers the opportunity to seek compensation from, conservation, interests before the allotments are, permanently, closed!??

The "U.S. Forest Service" has released a "Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement" evaluating the future of 10, domestic, sheep allotments-including one which has NOT been grazed in more than 40 years-covering about 144,000 acres in the "High Uintas Wilderness"! Unfortunately, the Agency's proposed, action is to continue the status quo, filling the High Uintas with more than 10,000, domestic, sheep, and, their lambs for two months, every, summer to the exclusion of, native, wildlife!

Rather than remove the threat of, domestic, sheep and, allowing the, bighorn, population, and, other, wildlife populations to expand, the "Forest Service" proposal, essentially, endorses the "Utah Division of Wildlife Resources" approach to maintain bighorn, numbers by killing native predators, especially, mountain lions, and, augmenting the, bighorn, population with translocations, and, by, constantly, modifying the habitat!

The "SDEIS" fails to disclose how many, native, predators-such as black bears, mountain lions, or coyotes-are killed in the "High Uintas Wilderness" to protect, domestic sheep, nor, the effects, continued, sheep grazing has on the potential for recovering, native, wildlife such as wolves and grizzly bears!

Our family is raising our voice to protect, native, wildlife and the fragile, high, elevation alpine basins of the High Uintas Wilderness" from domestic, sheep grazing! ??Protect fragile, high elevation alpine basins in the "High Uintas Wilderness" from, domestic, sheep grazing!

The, 455,000-acre, "High Uintas Wilderness" forms the core of the Uinta Mountains in, northeastern Utah. This, massive, mountain range-the highest in Utah-was named for the Uintah Indians, early, relatives of the, modern, Ute Tribe. The High Uintas contain the largest, contiguous, alpine tundra in the central, Rockies, with, lower, slopes blanketed by forests of lodgepole pine, spruce, and subalpine fir.

The High Uintas, with its, massive, alpine, terrain separated by 13,000-foot peaks, MUST be a haven for, native, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep for, one, simple, reason: the High Uintas has ,more, livestock grazing than, any, other Wilderness in the country!

Years of, extensive, grazing by domestic, sheep has displaced, native, wildlife, led to persecution of predators, like bears, coyotes, and mountain lions, marred the landscape, compromised, water, quality, and, negatively, impacted visitors seeking solitude and an, authentic, Wilderness experience!

Over the past couple of decades, bighorns from a, nearby, reintroduction effort have found their way into the "High Uintas Wilderness" and, a, nascent, herd is becoming reestablished on its, eastern, end where, domestic, sheep grazing ended years ago! But, the future of the, bighorn, herd and, its ability to recolonize its, native, range across the High Uintas is in doubt because much of the rest of the, bighorn, range is filled with, domestic, sheep who carry disease fatal to the bighorns!

