

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/22/2023 5:44:11 PM

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Comments: The High Uintas, with its massive alpine terrain separated by 13,000-foot peaks, should be a haven for native Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. However, 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. 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 that carry disease fatal to the bighorns.

Additionally, 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.

In conclusion, the Forest Service should 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 should 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.??

If the Forest Service is unwilling to end grazing to protect the waters, land, and wild animals of the High Uintas then at the very least killing native predators to protect sheep or cows should be prohibited.