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Comments: Our efforts to preserve native ecological communities in the high Unitas Wilderness must include the progressive elimination of domestic sheep grazing.

Domestic sheep grazing exerts a significant impact on montane vegetation because of the animals' sheer numbers and their concentrated herd structure. John Muir called them "hoofed locusts."

In region after region in North America, domestic sheep on native bighorn range have adversely affected the native sheep. Not only do domestic sheep compete for high quality forage, but they also introduce their own suite of diseases that are transmissible to bighorns.

Domestic sheep in wild places demand predator control efforts (money and people), and predator control is the antithesis of what is "wilderness." Thrifty bighorn sheep populations need predators to ensure their genetic/adaptive fitness.

Eliminating domestic sheep grazing in the High Unitas Wilderness eliminates predator control costs and grazing allotment administrative costs, improves montane range quality and water quality, benefits native herbivores (bighorn sheep and others) with whom domestic sheep compete for forage, reduces the source of some diseases, and restores the "wild" to wilderness.

Domestic sheep interests must be addressed as long as they exist. However, domestic sheep belong in pastures where they can be sustainably raised and protected-- places more appropriate for human-dependent livestock..