



The NAPgA Bleat!

The Official Newsletter of the North American Packgoat Association

February 2013

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Well, there has only been incremental improvement in my general mood since the January issue of this NL, but I *have* begun to work on my hiking areas and maps for the summer so there is some brightness at the end of the winter tunnel. ;-)

There *have been* a couple of new developments in the Land Use issues, and they will be explained later in this NL. If you have anything to contribute to this effort, please send it on to me by the first of the month. Send to: napga@napga.org

The NAPgA Store

We seem to have had a couple of issues with the NAPgA store recently, in that payments sent to us via PayPal, are going to napga@hisurfer.net. That is a very old and non-functional address, and the funds will eventually be returned to you.

Payments should go to: napga@napga.org. If anything else comes up in the PayPal window, PLEASE let me know immediately. I believe that I have the problem fixed, but if it is still not completely rectified, I definitely need to know *ASAP!!*

Reality Rears its Ugly Head

The Shoshone NF has released the most recent version of its monthly periodical, **The Centennial**, and I have to tell you that their stats on the received comments during the DEIS open period, were more than a little discouraging, at least to this writer.

Essentially, the stats from the Shoshone FS looked as follows:

"The comment period generated 23,475 comment letters and emails. The breakdown of comments are as follows:

- 11 government agencies
- 60 non-government organizations
- 994 individuals
- Over 22,400 form letters

Below is the preliminary breakdown of form letters:

- Wilderness Society – over 17,540
- Pack goat community – over 150
- Snowmobile community—270
- Greater Yellowstone Coalition—3710
- Sierra Club—850"

I hope that I don't have to explain that there isn't anyone on this list of contributors that enthusiastically threw in their support for packgoats other than our PG community; and the numbers boil down to 150 for, 23325 against. Them's not real good odds, folks.

I have to mention at this point, that having only a little over 150 responses from a 2100+ item mailing, sent my discouragement meter right up against the peg! And it remained for the rest of the day. On a purely personal note, since in order to accomplish that mailing, I spent one week of my life in the following scenario: eat, sleep, do the mailing, eat, sleep... it certainly triggered the '*whatever for*' response.

However, and this is a large however, the following day I contacted our legal guy for a whine session, and he responded thusly, which I believe puts it in a far better perspective than I was able to do:

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"Quality, not quantity. Fortunately, it's not a popularity contest. We provided at least one set of well-reasoned comments to the Forest Service and that's all we needed. The Forest Service is required to adequately consider and respond to those comments in the EIS. Note that the comments provided by the Wilderness Society, Greater Yellowstone Coalition and Sierra Club are "form letters." If you've read one, you've read them all, literally -- they all say the same thing and are easy for the Forest Service to respond to. Our comments on the other hand are thoughtful and detailed, and will be more difficult for the Forest Service to respond to. We're asking for compliance with the law. The Forest

Service can't escape that, no matter how many form letters they receive from the "other" agencies. -- Andy

Andrew A. Irvine
Holland & Hart LLP

So...

That having been said, I resolved to put my worries at rest, and continue the wait for the Final DEIS which is due October 2013.

However #2, I certainly cannot claim at this point, that if we succeed in this effort, it will be because goatpackers finally woke up and supported it with more than a cheering section. If we have to eventually go to court over this, it will involve far more money than is currently in our bank account. I would like to think that we can be successful without that eventuality, but I don't believe it for a minute... time will tell.

USFS Pushing Ahead with its General Agenda

As a result of my research efforts so far, I have determined that my assumption about an overall agenda was correct, in that, at this point, at least 8 forest service districts have been 'ordered' to renew their forest plans. They include the Nez Perce/Clearwater (ID), the Chugatch, (AK), the Cibola (NM), El Yunque (Puerto Rico), and the Inyo, Sierra, & Sequoia (CA).

You may have noted that the Shoshone NF and the Wallow-Whitman NFs are not on that list, but they are definitely working hard at revising their plans as well, and in the WW, the operative statement concerning goats in the revision is, "No goats in, or adjacent to, the BHS habitat." That would just not leave a lot of forest for hiking.

Although I have not found anything directly concerning goats in the letter that ordered the FS districts to revise their plans, it stands to reason that if it is a core issue in the Shoshone nad Wallowa-Whitman, it will also emerge as an integral part of these others. As I said, if we are to hang onto our ability to hike it will require a long-term effort... *by all interested goatpackers!*

NAPgA... & Goat Tracks Magazine

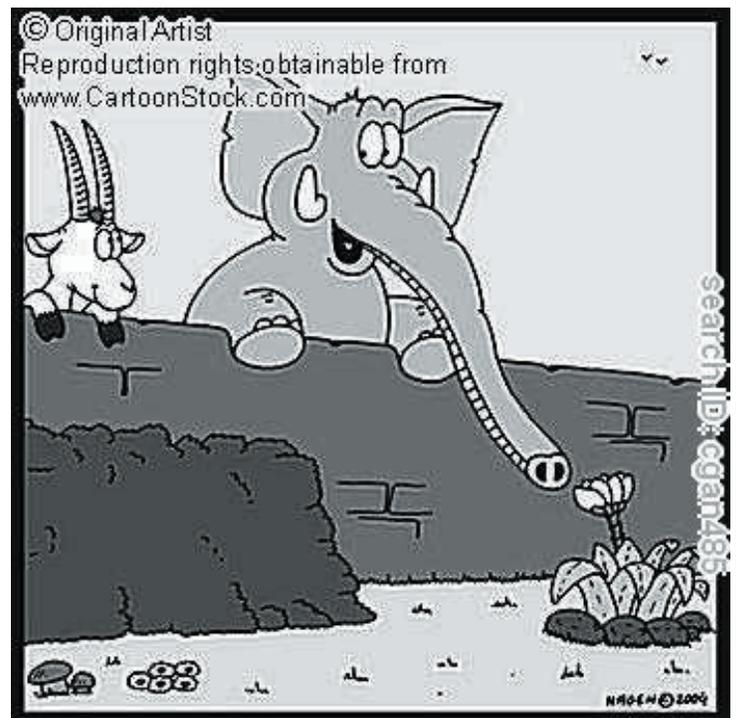
It would seem from the various communications I receive, that there is a great deal of confusion regarding these two entities. In other words, they don't seem to be perceived as two completely separate entities, which they definitely are!

It would seem that since I am the president of NAPgA, and the editor of the magazine, that they must be a joint effort... but they are NOT.

And I do recognize the perceived potential conflict of interest here, but took on both projects with a high degree of reservation, and because I seemed to be the only one willing to do them.

Let it be known that NAPgA and GT have entirely separate bank accounts and are maintained that way... separately.

As an aside, I keep hoping that someone will come along that is simply dying to take on the NAPgA 'president thing' for a time, but the list of volunteers is abysmally short. Until then...



It's a pity you can't smell it: Such a perfume...