Something Presidential... (how I address my HOA newsletters... [meant to be tongue-in-cheek!])

Well, summer has pretty much officially arrived. It has turned hotter than the dickens in Boise, and with resultant comfortable temps in the high country.

This last week, I spent six days, and about 30 miles, surveying the damage created in the west end of the Stanley Basin, as well as the north end of the Bear Valley, by the Halsted fire which burned well into the fall last year. It is heartbreaking to see so much of Idaho's high country so 'toasted', especially since some of my favorite lakes in this territory are completely devoid of places to camp due to the intensity of the fire, and potential for trees to fall with wind.

However, any hike is a good one, and as soon as I can get some local details out of the way, it is on to the Eagle Cap wilderness for an extended tour of the Wallowa-Whitman backcountry.

Regarding the Shoshone NF FEIS, we are waiting with 'baited breath' for the outcome of their deliberations late October. However, I unfortunately do not have a good feeling about the results here, since we didn't have anything even remotely resembling a viable alternative for goatpackers in the original EIS. Time will tell, but if it is no more accomodating than I expect, our next step will be to appeal their decision, during the 90 days allotted for that action, which will take us into 2014.

After that action, if the outcome is no more favorable than we expect, the only avenue left for us is to follow up with a court action. Whether or not we can pursue that route will depend completely on our membership's support as no court action is possible without the application of great piles of money!

It is my belief that we MUST prevail here in the first of the national forests to attempt to discriminate against goatpackers, as there are a number of other national forests reaccomplishing their forest plans, and anywhere there are Big Horn sheep, goats find themselves solidly in the crosshairs of the forest's elimination actions. Without prevailing in the Shoshone, there isn't much chance of preventing this action in other locations.

As it now stands: Most of the Wind River range is closed to goatpackers, as is some of the Inyo NF in CA. Further in CA, there are two other NF's reaccomplishing their land use plans, the Sierra and Sequoia (As of this date, I am not aware just what their exact plans are concerning goats). In Oregon the Wallowa-Whitman is progressing with their land use rewrite, and in that NF, their operative statement is, 'No goats in, or adjacent to Big Horn sheep habitat'. That pretty much takes in the entirety of the Eagle Cap wilderness.

In Arizona, Tom & Teri DiMaggio, long-time goat packing outfitters, have been summarily locked out of one of their traditional guiding areas, and could potentially lost more of their normal forest access.

In Idaho, the Clearwater NF is also reaccomplishing their forest plan, but it remains to be seen in that one where goats will fit in... if at all.

Time will tell where this will all fall out, but the storm clouds are definitely on the horizon.

The 2013 Rendezvous!

As most of you should be aware, the 2013 NAPgA Rendezvous was held at Whitney Reservoir in the extreme upper NE section of Utah, and the north edge of the Uinta mountains.

Like all rendys, lots of goats and 30 or so folks attended. With the exception of Carolyn, Alice & myself, plus John Bamberg from Minnesota, and Dwite Sharp from Council Grove, Kansas, most of the attendees were from the local area.

Clay Zimmerman, organizer of this, his third rendy, massaged all the details and organized the presentation of some great LNT, and 'Pasture Care' lectures. Great information, fun times, beautiful temperatures as well as strikingly beautiful territory to hike in.

Rendy pictures on Page 3... More Pictures in the NAPgA Gallery!
The Rendezvous Silent Auction

As it normally does, the NAPgA silent auction provided well the expected annual shot-in-the-arm for NAPgA’s beleaguered finances.

Especially important this year is that we emminently face the potential of more expenditures necessary to fight the Shoshone NF closure.

Thank you so much to those who provided items for this auction, especially Dwite Sharp and the beautiful boys he donated. And thank you as well to those who helped make it a success via their purchases.

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Note well in the following article, that the WY F&G folks themselves are indicating that the wild Mtn. Goat just may be carrying exactly the same pathogens that they suspected our boys of carrying, and for which they locked us out of the Winds. Are they indeed now going to issue an order banning wild mountain goats from the Winds? Right!

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Mountain goats studied in Snake River Canyon

Wyoming Wildlife Magazine, June 2013 (a publication of Wyoming Game & Fish)

JACKSON -- Wildlife managers with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department recently captured four mountain goats in the Snake River Canyon near Alpine in an effort to learn more about their health, reproduction, and seasonal movements. The goats were temporarily tranquilized to collect nasal and tonsil swabs, blood, and fecal samples. The biological samples allow Game and Fish disease specialists to determine the presence of various pathogens, including Mannheimia haemolytica, which can potentially lead to a pneumonia outbreak.

Three of the goats captured were females and were fitted with GPS collars to track their seasonal movements, reproductive success, and survival. The goats are part of the Palisades herd, which straddles the Idaho state line.

The mountain goats, which are not native to Wyoming, were reintroduced to the Snake River Range in Idaho by the Idaho Fish and Game between 1969 and 1971. The goat herd has been increasing in both number and distribution ever since. The herd is managed jointly, with wildlife biologists from both Wyoming Game and Fish and Idaho Fish and Game performing aerial surveys every two years to count the number of goats in their respective states.

In 1994, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department established a population objective of fifty animals for the Palisades mountain goat herd in Wyoming. The initial aerial survey was conducted in 1996 with twenty-four goats being observed. The most recent aerial survey of the herd was completed in August 2012, when managers counted a total of 108 mountain goats in Wyoming. With the steady increase of the population since its inception, Wyoming has offered between four and eight mountain goat hunting permits for this herd since 1999.

Although the Palisades mountain goat herd appears to be doing well, Wyoming biologists believe it is imperative to begin collecting baseline information on the overall health of the animals. “To this point, we have known very little about the health of these mountain goats,” said Wyoming Game and Fish South Jackson Biologist, Gary Fralick. “We have large-scale population trend data that shows numbers are generally increasing, but we have no idea of their fine-scale movements, habitat selection, or what kind of pathogens they may be carrying. It’s important we begin to gather this baseline information for future management of the herd” --Mark Gocke.

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One interesting statement made by one of last year’s researchers into these pathogens and their appearance in wild mountain goats as well as ours, was, and I quote, "We still don’t understand how these pathogens interact." Huh?? But we are going to eliminate the very few packgoat boys that actually get into 'their' forest to fix the problem of the BHS die-offs? This and other fairy tales. But what it does is take the heat off them for a time because they have now 'fixed' the problem.

However, if you believe that...
The Site, the Long View

Whitney Reservoir

The 'Leave No Trace' Presenters

Dinner Around the Campfire

One of the more talented boys, begging for a peanut

Herb Flower's Yurt. A great place to have an auction!