



United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Washington, D.C. 20240

July 10, 1998

In Reply Refer To:  
6500 (230/220) P

EMS TRANSMISSION 7/16/98  
Instruction Memorandum No. 98-140  
Expires: 9/30/99

To: AFOs

From: Deputy Assistant Director, Renewable Resources & Planning

Subject: Revised Guidelines for Management of Domestic Sheep and Goats In Native  
Wild Sheep Habitats DD: 9/30/98

In June 1992, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued Instruction Memorandum 92-264, *Guidelines for Domestic Sheep Management in Bighorn Sheep Habitats*, as part of an ongoing effort to restore bighorn sheep populations into historically occupied habitats on public lands. In order to ensure that the Guidelines reflect the best available scientific knowledge about bighorn and domestic sheep interactions, we initiated a review of the Guidelines in June 1997 and followed up with a meeting of bighorn and domestic sheep specialists in April of 1998. The revised guidelines, which reflect a balanced approach for management of domestic sheep and free-ranging goats in native wild sheep habitats, should be followed whenever reintroductions, transplants, or augmentations of wild sheep populations, or proposed changes in a livestock grazing permit on BLM administered lands are being considered (see attachment 1).

North American native wild sheep did not evolve with domestic livestock and therefore they are vulnerable to a variety of diseases and parasites carried by livestock, particularly domestic sheep and goats. There are numerous documented cases of native wild sheep interacting with domestic sheep which resulted in devastating consequences to the wild sheep. As a result, there is consensus among both wild and domestic sheep specialists that the most effective tool for minimizing disease problems is to keep them physically separated. Two recent documents provide additional information on the health consequences to native wild sheep from contact with domestic sheep (see attachments 2 and 3).

In order to effectively implement the revised Guidelines each State Office is to work collaboratively with Field Office managers and resource specialists to initiate the following action items by **September 30, 1998**.

- . Provide copies of the attached 1998 Guidelines to the following individuals and organizations within your State:
  - Each BLM Range Management Specialist, Use Supervisor, Wildlife Biologist and Recreation Specialist;
  - All appropriate offices and officials within the State Wildlife Agency and State Department of Agriculture in your State;
  - State-level domestic sheep organizations (e.g., Woolgrowers Associations);
  - State-level organizations of goat owners including recreational pack goat associations; and
  - Each BLM permittee that grazes domestic sheep or goats in close proximity to occupied bighorn sheep habitat and other affected interests as appropriate.
- . Provide copies to all National Forest, National Parks or National Wildlife Refuges that adjoin BLM administered lands within the State.
- 3. In cooperation with the State wildlife agency, develop procedures for rapid notification and response whenever there is a documented cases of probable physical contact between domestic and wild native sheep. *It is imperative that any wild sheep that has come into contact with domestic sheep be removed to avoid possible contamination of other wild sheep.*
  - . In areas where there is a risk of interaction between domestic sheep or goats and native wild sheep, we recommend that each field office set up procedures for the permittee to notify BLM of any observed interaction between their sheep and wild sheep.
  - . Recreational pack goats are increasingly being used on public lands. These goats are generally closely tended and not as likely to come into contact with native wild sheep as are free-ranging goats. However, you should evaluate the need to develop additional outreach information or public contacts with individuals or pack goat organizations in order to ensure a level of knowledge and awareness regarding their care whenever they are being used in occupied bighorn sheep habitats.

- . Assess and implement as necessary, additional public information and outreach activities with your State regarding the revised Guidelines. Additional copies of the brochure titled "*The Compatibility Between Bighorn and Domestic Sheep*" can be obtained at no charge from The Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, 720 Allen Avenue, Cody, Wyoming 82414, or by calling (307) 527-6261.
- . In certain circumstances and locations, additional site specific guidelines may be warranted. In these cases, Field Office Managers should develop and implement additional measures that will help ensure adequate protection of native wild sheep populations, after close coordination with the State wildlife agency, your State Office, domestic sheep permittees and other affected interests.

If you would like additional information regarding domestic sheep and goat management in native wild sheep habitats, you can contact Cal McCluskey WO-230 at (208) 373-4042, Mark Hilliard WO-230 at (208) 373-4040 or George Ramey WO-220 at (202) 452-7747.

Signed by:  
Tom Walker  
Deputy Assistant Director  
Renewable Resources & Planning

Authenticated by:  
Robert M. Williams  
Directives, Records  
& Internet Group, WO540

3 Attachments (attachments 2 and 3 will be sent under separate cover)

- 1 - Revised Guidelines for Domestic Sheep and Goat Management in Native Wild Sheep Habitats (3 pp)
- 2 - Brochure: The Compatibility Between Bighorn and Domestic Sheep (2 pp)
- 3 - Literature Review Regarding Compatibility Between Bighorn 7 Domestic Sheep (5 pp)

**1998 Revised Guidelines  
for  
Domestic Sheep and Goat Management in  
Native Wild Sheep Habitats**

The Bureau of Land Management desires progressive native wild sheep management compatible with appropriate grazing on public lands by domestic sheep and free-ranging goats.

It is recognized by State and Federal agencies, native wild sheep organizations, and the domestic sheep industry that:

- There are some disease agents that occur in both domestic sheep and goats and native wild sheep. There is evidence that if native wild and domestic sheep are allowed to be in close contact, health problems and die offs may occur. Some disease agents may be transmitted between both species. There is evidence indicating that some disease agents could be transmitted between domestic goats and native wild sheep;
- There are native wild sheep die-offs that occur with no apparent relationship to contact with domestic sheep or goats;
- The above observations are both valid and not mutually exclusive;
- Bacterial pneumonia's are not the only diseases of concern, although perhaps they are the most catastrophic;
- The risks of disease transmission are often unknown; they may, however, be site specific, and;
- Reasonable efforts must be made by domestic sheep and goat permittees and wildlife and land management agencies to minimize the risk of disease transmission, and to optimize preventive medical and management procedures, to ensure healthy populations of native wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats.

In recognition of the above factors, the guidelines set forth below should be followed in current and future native wild/ domestic sheep and goat use areas unless a specific cooperative agreement that includes the State wildlife management agency, the BLM and the livestock permit holder is in place. When such agreement is in place, the agencies and the livestock permit holder will be held harmless in the event of disease impacting either native wild sheep or domestic sheep and goats.

1. State wildlife and Federal land management agencies, native wild sheep interest groups, and domestic sheep and goat industry cooperation and consultation are necessary to maintain and/or expand native wild sheep numbers. When agency and industry agreement has been reached to maintain and/or expand native wild sheep numbers, the agencies and the domestic sheep industry will be held harmless in the event of disease impacting either native wild sheep or domestic sheep and goats.
2. Domestic sheep or goat grazing and trailing should be discouraged in the vicinity of native wild sheep ranges.
3. Native wild sheep and domestic sheep or goats should be spatially separated to reduce the potential of interspecies contact.
4. In reviewing new domestic sheep or goat grazing permit applications or proposed conversions of cattle permits to sheep or goat permits in areas with established native wild sheep populations, buffer strips surrounding native wild sheep habitat should be developed, except where topographic features or other barriers minimize physical contact between native wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats. Buffer strips could range up to 13.5 kilometers (9 miles) or as developed through a cooperative agreement to minimize contact between native wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, depending upon local conditions and management options.
5. Domestic sheep and goats should be closely managed and carefully herded where necessary to prevent them from straying into native wild sheep areas.
6. Trailing of domestic sheep or goats near or through occupied native wild sheep ranges may be permitted when safeguards can be implemented to adequately prevent physical contact between native wild sheep and domestic sheep or goats. BLM must conduct on-site use compliance during trailing to ensure safeguards are observed.
7. Cooperative efforts should be undertaken to quickly notify the permittee and appropriate agency to remove any stray domestic sheep or goats or wild sheep in areas that would allow contact between domestic sheep or goats and native wild sheep.
8. Unless a cooperative agreement has been reached to the contrary, native wild sheep should only be reintroduced into areas where domestic sheep or goat grazing is not permitted.
9. Extraordinary precautions will be followed to protect special status subspecies, e.g., federally listed threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate subspecies, State listed subspecies and BLM sensitive subspecies.

- . For desert bighorn sheep, (Ovis canadensis nelsoni, O.c. mexicana, and O.c. cremnobates), the following additional guidelines are recommended:
  - a. No domestic sheep or goat grazing should be allowed within buffer strips less than 13.5 kilometers (9 miles) surrounding desert bighorn habitat, except where topographic features or other barriers prevent physical contact.
  - . Domestic sheep or goats trailed and grazed outside the 13.5 kilometers (9 mile) buffer and in the vicinity of desert bighorn ranges should be closely managed and carefully herded.
  - c. Unless a cooperative agreement has been reached to the contrary, domestic sheep or goats should be trucked rather than trailed, when trailing would bring domestic sheep or goats closer than 13.5 kilometers (9 miles) to occupied desert bighorn sheep ranges, especially when domestic ewes or nannies are in estrus.
- 11. These guidelines will be reviewed at least every 5 years by a work group comprised of representatives from the domestic sheep and goat industry, State wildlife agencies, BLM and native wild sheep organizations.

**From:** Directives Washington  
**To:** ilmwocls.ilmwodls.BLM\_ALLFO  
**Date:** Thu, Jul 16, 1998 3:57 pm  
**Subject:** IM98-140, Revised Guidelines for Management of Domestic Sheep & Goats in Native Wild Sheep Habitats

Attached is a copy of IM 98-140, with a due date of September 30, 1998.

**ISSUE SUMMARY:**

In June 1992, the BLM issued Instruction Memorandum 92-264, *Guidelines for Domestic Sheep Management in Bighorn Sheep Habitats*. The attached Instruction Memorandum transmits an updated version of guidelines & provides additional direction to State Directors on their implementation. We are asking the States to implement several action items by **September 30, 1998**.

**CC:** ilmidaso.ilmidbso.cmclusk, ilmidaso.ilmidbso.mhil...