
MONTANA'S CONSERVATION STRATEGY FOR ROCKY MOUNTAIN BIGHORN SHEEP

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Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is currently in the process of developing a comprehensive Conservation Strategy for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*). The strategy includes the history of bighorn sheep in Montana from decline to recovery. Direction on how FWP monitors and manages populations, herd health, and bighorn habitat is defined. Protocols for resolving situations where bighorn sheep and domestic sheep/goats commingle, recommendations regarding use of domestic sheep/goats for noxious weed control, and a protocol for responding to die-offs have been developed. A Translocation program, including processes for identifying and evaluating potential habitats and prioritizing

transplant sites are included in the strategy. Integral aspects of the strategy are narratives for each hunting district or population. These narratives include a complete history of the individual population, overall management goals, and objectives for habitat, access, and population demographics. As part of the strategy, how individual populations are managed through hunting and translocation is clearly linked to monitoring efforts.