WAC 220-415-120
Bighorn Sheep Seasons 2019
WAC 220-412-070
Auction-Raffle Special Permits

Rich Harris, Ph.D.
Bighorn Sheep, Moose, Mountain Goat, and Pronghorn Antelope Section Manager, Game Division
Wildlife Program
Bighorn Sheep

- Minor revisions in ram permit levels
- Deliberate herd reduction in Yakima Canyon to assist program designed to remove pneumonia pathogen
GMU open in 2018

Bighorn herd shared with Oregon; Umatilla Tribe also has hunting rights – will rotate access
GMU proposed for 2019
Population
Growing slowly
Good number of Rams:
Add 1 ram permit
(CCT will also)
Growing: Increase ram harvest opportunity
Still over-abundant
Increase ram harvest opportunity

Ewe harvest reduction in your packet was premised on exporting sheep to Utah: weather didn’t cooperate, so restore these ewe permits.
Bighorn sheep pneumonia

- Mortality in all-age outbreaks is highly variable
- Disease can persist for decades in the form of low recruitment due to pneumonia in lambs: also highly variable
- The result is often small (<100 sheep), stable to declining, populations
- Most animals in these populations test negative for respiratory disease pathogens

Slide courtesy of F. Cassirer
Test and Cull

• Capture and test 95% of the herd and remove any individual testing positive (infectious or carriers) for *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*

• Repeat in subsequent years if necessary
Test and Cull

• Evidently has been successful in:
  – Captive population at South Dakota State
  – Custer State Park, SD (compared with control population with pneumonia)
  – Asotin Herd

All much smaller than Yakima Canyon herd at time of testing/culling
Increase ram permits from 2 to 4, both sides of Yakima River

Umtanum/Selah Butte (aka “Yakima Canyon”)
Mt. Hull – pneumonia concern
Public Comments

Supporting Comments
• Three supported the proposed changes

Opposing, Neutral, and Other Comments
• One opposed any reduction in the number of permits in deference to predator populations
• Others were not clear about the rationale for increasing ewe harvest opportunity
Questions?