WILD SHEEP ADVOCACY GROUPS

KEVIN HURLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NORTHERN WILD SHEEP AND GOAT COUNCIL

KEVIN HURLEY, WYOMING: Today's final session is one that we're very pleased to launch. As we mentioned this morning, a network of wild sheep advocacy groups has grown up in the last quarter century and the accomplishments of all of those groups have been incredible. We think it's a great story, and we think there's a strong partnership between the advocates and the agencies. I really believe this partnership is responsible for the sheep resources we all treasure.

Of the 20 FNAWS chapters, 18 have provided financial support for the conference, and we greatly appreciate that. I know I've seen some FNAWS people here. Are any of the other groups represented? I'd like to have these representatives stand up and identify where they're from and be acknowledged.

CLINT BENTLEY from Las Vegas with the Fraternity of Desert Bighorn.

HERB MEYR from the Idaho Chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep.

MATT WOLFE from Alaska, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep.

TED SCHUTTE from Iowa FNAWS, and National FNAWS President..

HURLEY: We appreciate your support, and we're glad you could make it. Let me just throw a couple of figures out here. In the last 25 years, collectively, FNAWS and its chapters and affiliates have raised in excess of 25 million dollars for wild sheep in North America. I think that's an awesome total.

I've been involved with FNAWS since they moved their office to Cody, Wyoming in 1982. I'm a life member. I'm on the board of the Wyoming Chapter of FNAWS. Like many of us here, I wear multiple hats. What we'd like to do here is discuss the role of the wild sheep advocacy groups over the next 25 years. We tried to select representative individuals to speak to that. Rather than recounting all the acomplishments that have occurred over the past quarter century, we asked for a vision presentation of how these groups collectively or individually see things going for the next 25 years.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our next speaker. Leland Speakes, Jr. is the Immediate Past-President of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, and one of the finest southern gentlemen you'll ever meet. Leland is a charter and life member of FNAWS, and has been involved with almost every facet and activity FNAWS has undertaken during the past quarter century. Leland has volunteered energy and countless hours to wild sheep in North America, and has followed a progression in FNAWS from active member to hospitality chair, convention chair, board of directors, officer, First Vice-President, and most recently, President of the organization. Leland has been succeeded as President by Ted Schutte of Iowa, who is also here with us today. As Past-President, you might think things would slow down a bit for Leland; that is definitely not the case! He continues, and will continue, his lifelong commitment to wild sheep, with a stateman's approach and effectiveness. Please help me welcome Leland Speakes, Jr.

LELAND SPEAKES JR., FOUNDATION FOR NORTH AMERICAN WILD SHEEP, MISSISSIPPI

Leland Speakes, Jr., 527 Robinson Dr., Cleveland, MS

Thank you, Kevin. What Kevin didn't tell you is I'm from Mississippi. The tallest mountain that we have in Mississippi is a levy that runs along the Mississippi River and there are no sheep on that levy. There are some cattle grazing there. And knowing I was coming out here and would be in the midst of these scientific minds, I myself went to the fossil record and I have discovered that while we have had lots of very big catfish, we don't have any sheep.

I want to thank you for inviting me. It's good to be a part of a meeting which I hope will set the stage for wild sheep in the 21st century. Our theme for the FNAWS convention this year and also the theme for the capital campaign we have going on right now is "New Beginnings, Wild Sheep in the 21st Century." I think that will be in your hands.

The objective of FNAWS, as stated by the constitution, is to promote and enhance increasing populations of indigenous wild sheep on the North American continent, to safeguard against the decline and extinction of such species, and to fund programs for professional management of these populations, keeping all administrative costs to a minimum.

We are active in every phase of wild sheep management from Alaska to Baja Sur. We've been very active in selling state permits. We raised lots and lots of money which goes back to the individual states in the form of grant-in-aid for their sheep projects. We have a stipulation that we will not sell any state permits that the entire proceeds of which is not dedicated to sheep conservation. There may be some exceptions made to the rule; recently, a state or two was willing to do just that, but because their legislature doesn't want them to do it, they can't put it in their contract with us.

I feel like we are dealing with very fragile animals living in a fragile habitat, subject to disease and predation at every turn.

If everybody was working with us, this job would be made easier, but that's not the case. You've got the animal rights people that want to lock us out completely. You've got federal and state governmental regulations that tie our hands, so often restricting our progress. We hope that management by professional wildlife biologists will become the way to manage wildlife, rather than by the political arena or by the ballot initiative.

I believe without a doubt the foremost problem we have to face during the next 20 years is disease. We must support research such as being done by Karen Rudolph at the Vet Lab at Caldwell, Idaho, and the work done at Washington State University.

I think everybody probably knows this, but I'm so proud of it, I'm going to tell you about it again. Rocky Crate, a veterinarian from Washington was diagnosed with incurable cancer. The first thing he did was to look for the best cures he could find and the second thing he did was sit down and rewrite his will. He left a million and a half dollars to FNAWS and Washington State, to fund a chair for veterinary wildlife medicine at Washington State University. Rocky had some treatments and he told us, look guys, if I get to feeling better, I'm going sheep hunting. Last year, he went on two sheep hunts. If he gets much better, he'll spend that

million and a half dollars on sheep hunting. This is the sort of dedication we've got among the FNAWS members. FNAWS has for many years supported the work of people like Dave Hunter, Bill Foreyt and several other wild animal veterinarians and scientists. We've supported a lot of you, and a lot of your efforts.

We have worked aggressively with government agencies as well, such as the Forest Service. We have an excellent partnership with the Forest Service. Why shouldn't we? About 90 percent of the sheep in the U.S. live on Forest Service land, so we must work cooperatively with them.

We've also worked with the BLM, the state wildlife agencies, and the Department of Agriculture.

We need to form a solution that benefits not only wild sheep, but also domestic sheep. The domestic sheep people, I think, truly would like to find a solution to the problem that we have with *Pasteurella*. I think they have ongoing scientific work in that line. But if we can find a solution that applies to both wild sheep and domestic sheep, we will have done a world of good.

We continue to be active in the retirement of domestic sheep allotments on wild sheep habitats, whenever they're available. With the help of several FNAWS chapters and sportsmen's groups in the various states, last year we bought out two large domestic sheep allotments, from willing sellers, in Oregon and in Idaho.

The second most important thing I think we have to face is predation and I won't dwell on that. We've already talked about it this morning, and I certainly don't know the cure. We haven't done a real good job making friends with our politicians, like in California. Present wild sheep populations cannot stand constant predation, controls must be put in place so we don't face the crisis we have in California.

We are very active on the political front. We're active at the national level and at the state level.

We feel that while we would like to spend 100 percent of our money on wildlife, wildlife management was getting to the point where every year we spend a little bit more in the political arena.

After all, what would it help us if we had sheep on every mountain and they had no management, no hunting, no sportsmen. It would be of little value to us. And as shown this morning by a couple of the speakers here, sheep and probably other wildlife unmanaged is just going to go one way and that's going to be down.

FNAWS sees itself as a catalyst to bring all these issues to the public.

In this way, we hope to support the wild sheep biologists and the conservation community with their effort to restore and enhance wild sheep populations.

We have an enthusiastic membership. They give of their time, they give of their money, you name it, and they'll help you, too. It's hardly anything that takes place that we don't have FNAWS members from across the country come in and put their shoulder to the wheel to accomplish whatever objective that they have. And by the same token, they're out there ready and willing to support you.

RICK BRIGHAM, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, NEVADA

I live here in Reno, as most of you know. I'm a BLM biologist. I have been pleased to work with two constituent groups for the past 12 or 13 years. Both are chapters of Nevada Bighorns Unlimited and today I want to talk about the Nevada Bighorns Unlimited Reno chapter.

This chapter has been extremely active, starting in the early 1980s with trapping and transplanting bighorn sheep, all species. The members have not only bought equipment which is used by the Nevada Division of Wildlife but the members actually participate in some of the captures, particularly where these occur or where these are made in British Columbia for California bighorns.

They've been extremely active in habitat improvement, not only with dollars, but also with sweat equity. And I've been blessed with at least 20 guzzlers for bighorn sheep in the last 12 years working with NBU Reno.

Not only do they worry about bighorns, they worry about other species as well. They put their money where their mouth is when it comes to rehabilitation of burned areas. There are at least four or five areas, maybe more, in Nevada where NBU has contributed $25,000.00 per burn area.

I went before them in 1994 and I didn't know how much to ask for. I finally hemmed and hawed and Larry Johnson said: How much do you want? And I said: $10,000.00. And he said: Okay. And we got $10,000.00 and we bought some seed for wildlife forage we could not have bought otherwise with the limited funds that the BLM had at the time.

The NBU Reno is also involved in other activities such as public education. They have paid for a slide show that was put together for The Wildlife Society, Nevada chapter on Silver State wildlife. They have established a memorial fund, a scholarship, and they actually pay many thousands of dollars a year for deserving students to go to college where they wish.

They've been involved with "Project Wild" and they provide money for "Operation Game Thief." One of the prime movers from my standpoint, and the standpoint of Craig Stevenson and George Tsukamoto, has been Larry Johnson sitting here on my right. Larry has been on the board since 1982. He's the emcee for the fund raiser that is held annually by NBU Reno. They held it the 12th of March. Some 1670 people sat down to steak dinners and it was one of the extremely well-orchestrated, excellent fund raisers.

And Larry is right there in terms of being right at the forefront of all of it. He owns his own engineering firm and he spends up to a third of his actual work time on wildlife related issues, especially when the Nevada legislature is in session. Right now it's in session and I very much appreciate him taking time from his busy schedule. He's due to testify tomorrow morning in Carson City at the Legislature on issues that affect wildlife, not just bighorn sheep.

He's founder of the Nevada Conservation Coalition, which has given that group enough political muscle to go ahead and be heard and be reckoned with by the Nevada legislators. He was also granted the Wildlife Conservationist of the Year award in 1996 by the Western Section of The Wildlife Society. With that, I'll give you Larry Johnson.

LARRY JOHNSON, NEVADA BIGHORNS UNLIMITED, RENO

Larry Johnson, Reno, NV

Thanks, Rick. I don't know if I'm deserving of all of that. I really appreciate it. I'd like to welcome all of you to sunny Nevada and hope you brought your galoshes.

I want to discuss a little bit of past along with the future, because I'm kind of a student of history and I strongly feel that understanding the past and how we got here really guides us into formulating how to treat and not make these mistakes in the future.

Before the coming of white man (you might gather that I'm Native American here), bighorn sheep were the most numerous of our big game animals and those populations were pretty much decimated by the turn of the century.

We were blessed with three subspecies of sheep; California, Rocky Mountain, as well as the desert sheep, and two of the three went completely extinct in the State of Nevada.

By 1940, a publication stated that wild sheep remained in but 12 of the over 200 mountain ranges that once contained bighorn sheep. These were all desert sheep. We completely lost our California bighorns, completely lost our Rocky Mountain bighorns. There were less than 700 animals estimated at that time in these 12 mountain ranges.

The Division of Wildlife started a fledging transplant program as early as 1967. It really got under way in the late '70s through the '80s and 90's, and we've been on a hell of a roll. I think we've got the most ambitious sheep transplant program in North America. We've got 35 mountain ranges with desert sheep, 12 ranges with California bighorns, seven ranges with Rocky Mountain bighorns. We really appreciate the states and provinces who have donated these animals and made it all possible to us.

It's been a partnership. All of this has been accomplished on public land. A great majority of our land is Bureau of Land Management, with a lesser amount of Forest Service land since Nevada is the most arid state in the union. But again, a tremendous partnership between private interests, state agencies and federal land management agencies.

There is a tremendous number of incredibly dedicated biologists in all of those agencies who have really done the foot work. We have provided money and political support. Quite frankly, we've greased a bunch of skids.

We started off in 1981 when we had a little fund raising barbecue in a cow pasture about 20 miles south of town.

A bunch of sportsmen thought it would be neat to gather a bunch of money to fund a transplant. It's grown to our last fund raiser where we have the Governor and our U.S. Senators and so forth attend our banquets, and we make a whole bunch of money in one night. And at this point, we're averaging about $150,000 to put back into Nevada annually.

Our Board of Directors are all private businessmen and come from all walks of life. We just have a common love of the outdoors and love of wildlife, and are very, very thankful for the opportunity to help make all of this happen.

The challenge in the next 25 years is to keep the momentum going.

We were kind of the model for all of the wildlife fund raisers for a lot of other fund raising groups. In fact, at our last fund raiser, we had a table reserved by the University of Nevada who wanted to come view our operations to see what they could learn from our fund raising because we're pretty successful at it.

We started out as being nonpolitical. We avoided any controversy like the plague. But with changing times, we realize that didn't make much difference how successful we were within a couple of decades. If we could not carry forth our programs in the future, we might as well sit around patting ourselves on the back. We weren't going to do anything in the future or do anything for the future generations.

So, as Rick indicated, we united the major sportsmen groups of the state as a coalition for Nevada's wildlife, and there were 27 sportsmen's groups in that coalition. I chair the group for Nevada Bighorns. We have hired a full-time lobbyist in the Legislature. I was in the Legislature yesterday, testifying in one assembly bill, one senate bill, and I'm there tomorrow on a bill that hopefully will remove elk from the list of alternative livestocks and essentially outlaw elk ranching in the State of Nevada.

It remains to be seen whether we'll be successful in that endeavor, but it's pretty important to us philosophically that we make this attempt.

We work very closely with the agricultural groups in the state. We've come a long way there as well, and that's a necessity for the future. I was just on the phone to the president of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association discussing the elk that will be introduced by the Division of Wildlife. We'll sit down in the morning and try to work out our differences so we can provide a unified front in the legislature and the senate tomorrow.

I told you we've come a long way. At the first state convention of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association which I addressed, in 1983, I was asked to go outside and fight, and I was about to. It was an interesting and spirited discussion. We've always tried to stress that we users of public land and the lovers of the land have a lot more in common than we will ever have differences.

We know the Nevada Wool Growers Association feels threatened. Their numbers are decreasing, particularly with the repeal of the wool subsidy on the federal level. They feel attacked on all sides. In the State of Nevada, these are awfully good people, just magnificent people.

We've bent over backwards not to hasten their demise, although we've participated in willing buyer retirement of domestic sheep allotments. We have never proposed reduction of AUMs or cancelling allotments to make room for bighorn sheep. We never will. That's now a policy in the Nevada Division of Wildlife. We want to be right, we want to be fair, and we want to perpetuate as much cooperation as we can into the future. That's a pretty good challenge here in the next couple of decades.

The agricultural community in an arid state like Nevada also feel attacked on all fronts and they're extremely defensive of domestic livestock and wildlife issues.

About a decade ago, we recognized the importance of education. We studied the statistics on American sportsmen and saw his average age increasing and increasing. I believe the average holder of a hunting license in the United States is now 44 years old.

We need to impart knowledge and love of the outdoors and wildlife to the next generation and that's difficult simply because we're becoming increasingly urbanized. It's tough to believe in the State of Nevada where 86 percent of our total area is under federal ownership, but actually Nevada is the most urbanized state in the nation in that the overwhelming percentage of our population either lives in downtown Las Vegas, downtown Reno, or the suburbs. We are a state where the populations

live in cities, and our youth have almost no exposure to wildlife and the importance of outdoors in general.

So we've embarked on a whole series of programs and some of these are just starting. A tremendous challenge for the next few decades is bringing up a generation that will carry on our work or what we're doing is all for naught. We do all sorts of youth programs. We sponsor fishing derbies, we sponsor science fairs. In fact, right now we're buying little hatcherariums for elementary schools so they can incubate trout eggs, hatch them out into fry, raise them, release them into the local rivers. We give four college summer internships to Nevada high school graduates who are majoring in wildlife management.

We feel one of our challenges is the next generation of biologists. We're seeing more and more wildlife biologists who are not hunters. We feel we are the ultimate conservationists and we would like to perpetuate that versus a next generation of biologists who views hunters as the enemy.

We do newsletters. In cooperation with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, we've put out a kids' magazine to every fourth grader in the state five times a year. We want our youth really appreciating the outdoors and wildlife in general.

We're heavily involved in habitat programs and those challenges. In the next few decades we really are going to see "everybody wanting a larger piece of the pie". Whether that's wilderness groups who essentially want to lock us out, the federal land management agencies' restrictions and needed approvals, etc. Eventually, challenges to our programs are going to involve a lot of time.

We're going to reintroduce animals at a healthy clip as fast as we can go. Sooner or later we'll run out of space. We'll have conflicts in areas that have domestic sheep operations. We'll run out of areas to put sheep where they haven't been for a long time. We can expand our habitat programs and habitat programs of our sister groups, like the Fraternity of Desert Bighorn in Las Vegas.

We have had tremendous success, but sooner or later we're going to run out of space. Then the challenge is going to be disease and predation, and how do we maintain what we've got and what we've worked so hard for.

Like FNAWS, we've funded and cofunded disease studies at Washington State, Idaho, Utah, and UC Davis. A solution to the disease problem is imperative. We've got to work in that direction or we're going to hit a wall and every once in a while we're going to face disaster.

We occasionally have a mountain range that has a die-off and unfortunately, it takes a decade for it to climb back out. As we spread more and more sheep across the state that's going to be an ever increasing problem.

The State of Nevada has increased pressure on our public land. Everybody really wants a piece of it, whether it's military withdrawal of land, where we get locked out, or livestock grazing. Of course, they're defensive and they want protection. Recreation interests, the dirt bikers and the four-wheelers, often aren't entirely conducive to wildlife population growth and maintainence.

Mining is king, of course, in the State of Nevada. We've lost large areas of habitat to the open pit mines. We're the largest gold producer in the nation and the third largest gold producer of any country in the world. Those are areas where we try to work in cooperation. These people have paid tremendous mitigation monies and do wonderful habitat programs. We try to turn these into a positive for wildlife rather than lawsuit battles.

The wilderness is an issue in itself. I personally am a great proponent of wild places. But they must be administered in a sound manner. We had a Rocky Mountain sheep die-off in the Ruby Mountains in a population which was extremely dear to us. We

got them from Alberta. And guess what, they grew huge. We lost a great proportion of that population a few years ago. The Division of Wildlife was precluded from helicopter capture and blood sampling of the survivors because it was in a wilderness area.

While the intent of legislation may be admirable, by the time it gets down to the drafting of regulations, often-times that intent is completely lost and we're faced with completely unreasonable restrictions.

We're going to be faced with a similar type situation when the wilderness bill for the Bureau of Land Management comes before Congress. Right now, we have huge blocks of land that are locked off from us in wilderness study areas. They are treated in the interim as and are administered as wilderness, so there can be no guzzlers, very difficult aerial surveys result, and there are difficulties working around these areas.

One of my goals, after this Legislature is over, is to sit down with all working groups (mining, agriculture, environmentalists, wildlife groups, state and federal agencies), and try to hammer out a reasonable bill and get it passed. Let's get on with life. That's going to be one of our next challenges.

After that, I want to take on the wild horses. So you see, I'm a glutton for punishment. But it's been an absolutely magnificent run. And in conclusion, quite frankly, I'm kind of a lifer at this, as are a lot of the people I see here in the audience. Working together, I don't think there's anything we can't accomplish.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS - SPEAKES/JOHNSON PRESENTATIONS

KEVIN HURLEY, WYOMING: Thank you, Larry. Thank you, Leland. How we envision this next 30 to 40 minutes is for an interactive discussion. I know there are folks out there with questions. Obviously, it has to be moderated. I view it as an open discussion.

What I'm going to do is throw it open to the audience. If you have a question, even if you want to address it to somebody from one of the other groups, it's a structured free-for-all, but please identify yourself for the record. Thank you.

DICK WEAVER, CALIFORNIA: It's not a question, it's a comment on the speaker. If I didn't learn anything else in 40 years of government service, I learned one thing: God bless pressure groups. They are what make government move.

We public servants are relatively ineffective inside the government, so the government stands at whatever level, county on up to the federal, on dead center. They move whichever way they're pushed and God bless the pressure groups. The pressure group sometimes is one person. God bless them because they make it move.

I'm an advocate. You know, we can accomplish anything we want to if we don't care who gets the credit, and I think this is where we work together. One of our members in the Desert Bighorn Council, long deceased, said a long time ago: "We know how to manage bighorn sheep. We have to have the will." I think these people are the will.

RACHELLE HUDDLESTON-LORTON, NEW MEXICO: This is a comment for Larry Johnson. Wilderness areas are set up to protect certain regions from over use, and use might be considered reasonable to other groups. As wildlife managers, if we ask their activities be exempted from those regulations and that protection, don't you think that tends to open the door or set a precedent for other groups to say our use of the wilderness area is reasonable, and therefore we should be able to do what we feel is necessary?

LARRY JOHNSON, NEVADA: I look at my particular example of the die-off of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the Ruby Mountains. We had Rocky Mountain sheep in the Rubys long before we meddled and their die-off was due to our meddling, because we have a domestic sheep operation that runs in the foothills there.

I still see no reason why other scientific studies that greatly benefited not only the resource, but the people of Nevada, could remotely damage the wilderness status of that land, particularly in light of the Forest Service managing the directly adjacent area, which permits helicopter skiing all the way to the top of the mountain range. I think all we're asking for is a degree of common sense in wilderness regulations.

VERN BLEICH, CALIFORNIA: What you had to say with respect to wilderness, first of all, came from the bottom of your heart, and secondly is probably as true as anything I've ever heard said about wilderness. It's problematic in many ways. Modern wilderness has been designed to provide those of us, who sociologists say we need it, the opportunity to have a Neanderthal experience in a pristine environment.

If you improve water flow in the spring, of course, the action might compromise the wilderness experience, but an F16 flying overhead won't.

I'm the biggest critic of wilderness legislation in the United States in this room. If there's somebody who is more critical I'd like to meet you. The programs that I am involved with in California have probably been impacted by wilderness designation more-so-than anybody's activities in this room.

If I can be of any help to you in an official capacity, that is, in terms of providing you with examples of the abuse, misuse and lack of common sense with respect to wilderness designations as you proceed through the legislative process regarding the wilderness study areas, I'd be more than happy to do so. I live four hours south of here in Bishop. I'll make sure that you get my name and I would be voicing my concerns as a private citizen. I think Wayne Heimer has survived as I have, and it's really good to hear the way you've approached it from a common sense approach. What you had to say will become reality if that legislation goes through as it did in California.

DAVE SMITH, ARIZONA: Has any chapter affiliated with FNAWS been involved with the purchase of private land holdings in bighorn habitat, or has ever worked with conservation agreements, in order to prevent these lands from being developed? That's a real concern we have with the Black Mountains. I'm sure we're not unique as far as everybody wanting their 40-acre ranch in the west now. That's a real threat. We're looking at northwestern Arizona now.

LELAND SPEAKES, MISSISSIPPI: We don't participate in any ownership of property. We've been quite active in acquiring domestic sheep allotments. Some of the chapters, in Utah I would say, have acquired land. They are familiar with conservation easements, things like that. We have, in Montana, recently put a piece of bighorn winter range under conservation easement. Yes, some of our chapters have been very active in land acquisition, but I don't think any of them take ownership of it. We have helped other people to acquire land, and buying a piece of prime property and putting a conservation easement on it so it never can be developed is one of the things we're definitely interested in doing.

HURLEY: Larry, do you have an additional comment?

JOHNSON: I probably do. We've facilitated land acquisition. First of all, like Leland said, we're not interested in owning land, although we had many thousands of acres donated to us through the state planning effort. We have facilitated acquisition of prime properties, particularly the Massacre Ranch in Northern Washoe County. It wound up as a federal land exchange when the purchase price was in excess of the appraised value. The federal exchange could not go through because of the difference in costs. We essentially stepped in and made up the difference in asking price allowing the purchase to go forward. The land winds up in federal ownership, our money goes to the seller and everybody walks away happy. We have a willing-seller, willing-buyer type of relationship.

HERB MEYR, IDAHO: We've worked with The Nature Conservancy on a recent project on the Owyhee River in southern Idaho not too far away from here. Fund raising worked out pretty well. We ended up buying the base property, 240 acres, which controlled about 190,000 acres of BLM allotment. They're still running cattle on it, but we have a conservation committee trying to demonstrate that we can manage cattle and wildlife all on the same property. That's worked out pretty well so far.

Also, in an area near Sun Valley, the Silver Creek Area, The Nature Conservancy bought the easements and have a conservation agreement with the ranchers so the lands won't be developed in the future. The big thing is being able to avoid the inheritance problems and their being able to give it to their relatives in the future.

HURLEY: As I mentioned, I'm on the board of Wyoming FNAWS. We're a small chapter, but we have spent money not on ownership but in helping to facilitate easements and acquisitions with The Nature Conservancy, the Jackson Hole Land Trust, or some equivalent land trust alliance.

AMY FISHER, NEW MEXICO: Leland, I understand that the process of reviewing the grant-in-aid applications has been a daunting task. You have hundreds of proposals and they're reviewed by all the chapters and a technical board of three or four biologists.

Would it be helpful to review that whole system again, to help FNAWS choose the best long-term type projects, to improve the status of sheep nationwide?

SPEAKES: I don't think there would be any doubt, the more you fine-tuned, the better you would be able to do it.

HURLEY: I would carry it one step further. During the review process, each chapter gets to look at funding requests, each of the national board members gets to review requests and give their input, and the three individuals who are on the technical review committee provide their input to the board.

I'm wondering how much impact that has, compared with preconceived ideas on the board's part: "I know what we're going to fund, we'll look at this, but we still know what we want to fund."

SPEAKES: This year we had 60 grant-in-aid applications; they were right at 60 applications for various sized grants. Total grant requests were nearly $700,000. Well, that is way in excess of the money that we have and it's usually that way. We put first priority on projects that put sheep on the mountain.

Now, we've had each state chapter, each affiliate, these technical advisors Kevin mentioned, plus the 11 directors go over these applications and they have rated them. Yes, the affect of the advisors that we have is very, very important. We take each project individually and we discuss it, we look at the comments that the advisors have given us there, and then we make our decision.

HURLEY: Again, Larry and Herb and some of the other groups that are represented, do you have the same kind of outside review on submitted projects? What sort of review process do your organizations have?

SPEAKES: Our chapters are all invited to our grant-in-aid meeting, and when they see a project, they volunteer either to fund the project or participate in it and they've already had their little pow- wow back home and they say: "Boy, we like this or we like that."

JOHNSON: We have probably a little bit less formal grant request process. Everything from NDOW is requested to come through the state office through the Chief of Game, and that's so we don't get conflicts within the division itself as far as who gets what. And we're advised from NDOW as to priorities they would like to see first on a statewide basis.

We're kind of inundated with funding requests at board meetings every month, and we approve projects on a monthly basis. In fact, sometimes we even approve projects in between our board meetings on the basis of a simple phone poll if there is an emergency request that is deemed an actual emergency.

We're pretty mobile because we don't have the organization that FNAWS does, and so we receive funding requests on a monthly basis and act on them immediately.

For those that require scientific review, we request it through the NDOW, and, in fact, we oftentimes have NDOW representation at our board meetings, so that we can analyze the technical merit of any individual request.

WAYNE HEIMER, ALASKA: I'd like to speak about the grant-in-aid proposals. I've been on the technical review board for three years and I won't be doing it anymore, because I'm now on the Board. The impression I have from three years of reviewing requests is that the process with National FNAWS could use some refinement.

FNAWS started out as a very grass roots, downhome business and has done a wonderful job. We all appreciate that, and are pleased to be associated with it in every way. However, as a reviewer of grants, I'm afraid I have to tell you that most of the grants that come in are marginal in preparation, many times marginal in thought.

It's perceived that FNAWS has a vast pot of money and any time there is a vast pot of money available to human beings, every human artifice will be employed to obtain part of that money. There's just an amazing array of requests that come in, many times several from a single state that don't seem to hang together in any particular coordinated effort.

One of the things which has troubled me most about the projects that I have reviewed is that the FNAWS protocol calls for somebody from a management agency to sign off on the application, and there's always a signature in that part on the application. I think it is understood that this implies some assent or participation on the part of the management agencies. Many times that simply isn't so. You need a signature. You get somebody to sign it. I've applied for FNAWS grants, sometimes successfully. I've employed every human artifice there is thinking I had the right way to go as well. But to those of you that who will be writing grants, I think you need to take the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep much more seriously than has become traditional or has become common practice. There are excellent proposals that are well-backgrounded and there are many that aren't.

It's depressing as a sheep biologist to look through 60 proposals and find eight that you think are red-hot, eight that you would say don't go near being adequate and the rest are somewhere in the middle.

It takes a lot of time on the part of the reviewers and the board, and many proposals simply don't have biological, technical or management merit or are inconsistent with the goals FNAWS has established.

So my encouragement to you as grant writers and hopeful grant recipients is to take this business a lot more seriously, particularly when you coordinate with the management agency who will be receiving or participating in spending the money, because that is something that has been very casual in the three years that I've looked at them.

HURLEY: For those of you who aren't aware, Wayne's just been elected to the FNAWS Board. He'll be reviewing project requests but in a different capacity.

Ted, you worked your way up from Iowa FNAWS to the national board, and being a nonsheep state, how does Iowa FNAWS sift good requests from the bad ones?

TED SCHUTTE, IOWA: That's right. I came from the Iowa ranks and now I'm on the national board and let me just say that as a board member from Iowa, when I was president of the Iowa chapter, we looked at what the experts said. We basically didn't have any idea on the state chapter level what these projects were. So basically speaking from the state chapter level, I think that they put 50 percent of their faith and their ideas in the opinions of the FNAWS technical reviewers.

Let me say one more thing. A lot of the chapters, and I give them credit, are the growing parts of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep. All of them are holding better and bigger conventions. They're making more money. I've seen this going to a lot of those conventions as a representative of FNAWS. Those people out in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, eastern states, have money. They don't have any wild sheep, but that group, all of those groups in those nonsheep states, I'm telling you, have money and they want to put it towards wild sheep.

So we are counting on them, as Leland mentioned, to come to us at National and help us with our grant-in-aids. That is to help us in funding a lot of these projects, and I think that they will be very major players. I think about FNAWS chapters in states like Idaho, Wyoming, and Oregon. They've got wild sheep in their states, so they tend to spend money on their projects within the state. This is very good, and we need that. But don't forget those chapters back east. They could help you out and they're going to be helping us out. As far as the expertise of the people back there, they don't know much about the wild sheep, the biology end. They will go by the recommendations we give them as a board of what we have determined through the recommendations by the experts.

HURLEY: Matt, do you have anything you want to add from Alaska FNAWS, now that you're on the national board?

MATT WOLFE, ALASKA: In Alaska, we don't have many sheep problems, and our populations are in fairly good shape. We find that a lot of requests that come out of Alaska are for subsistence problems, and we're fighting a huge battle helping some of the organizations. Alaska Professional Hunters Association, for example. We help them work with the Forest Service to try to implement regulations. We were successful with Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service. The unique thing also in Alaska is that with the money the Alaska tag brings at auction, there's a joint committee, two members from Alaska chapter FNAWS and two from the Alaska Fish and Game that look at and spend that money for sheep, I think it's very encouraging.

HURLEY: Clint, we haven't heard from the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn.

CLINT BENTLEY, NEVADA: Our board meets to see who we're going to talk to to help fund our projects. We are the workers. We put projects on the mountain to help put the sheep on the mountain. We will be installing our 99th and 100th project in ten days on the weekend of the 17th and 18th. We're coming to a point, as Larry said, where we don't have a lot of projects left to do. We have a handful left, but we're beginning to close in on all the areas that require or are going to require water for the future. We're going to have an extensive maintenance project that we'll be on from that point forward.

We do have one brain child that they'll definitely be trying to work on. At this point, we have a large tract of land that basically doesn't have any interruptions that it would be an ideal desert bighorn recovery area. We don't know how exactly to attack trying to get this going. It's going to require federal, it's going to require state, it's going to require all other conservation groups and help from these management people. We would like to get this area managed exclusively by the state instead of the federal government.

DALE TOWEILL, IDAHO: I'd like to add a few perspectives from being involved in the process. Beginning in 1985, FNAWS asked me to co-chair and put together a committee to look at how grant-in-aid monies could be expended. I've been involved more or less continuously since that time. There are a couple of things to remember, a couple of things I've learned in the process. Number one, proposals flow to money like water flows down hill.

Wayne put it succinctly that there's always more people to spend money than there is money to go around. So when you review a proposal, what should you look for? What you see depends on where you see it. Where we sit as biologists, we want to see the money put out on the ground to benefit the sheep in our state or province. That's as it should be, but that's not always the best use of those funds.

As Dick Weaver said, it's also important that funds be expended judiciously to make politicians move, to make decisions happen, and that's a difficult issue for me as a biologist to provide real, significant input to. I can provide input based on where I sit, but so can board members who are not biologists.

The second thing is that it's very difficult to evaluate multiple proposals from individual states or provinces that are totally unconnected and totally unprioritized. It's easy to get a signature, it's difficult to make tough choices, and if the states and provinces don't make tough choices, the committee has to, sometimes right, sometimes wrong. Depending on what we know about the proposals and so forth.

So when I evaluate a proposal lacking other kinds of information, I look for partners. If you've got a good project, don't ask for nominal funding, fund the whole thing. If you've got one where you can't find partners, there may be a reason for it. Not always, but things to keep in mind.

JIM BAILEY, NEW MEXICO: My view on proposals for national FNAWS covers ten years. I've been happy with it, enough said about that.

I would like to comment about the main goal being putting sheep on the mountain. I think that has merit, however, at times it's shortsighted. Ten years ago and maybe looking at the next 25 years, it's perhaps even more shortsighted. There's a tendency not to fund research. Maybe that can be justified a little bit, but I think it's shortsighted. There's a tendency not to fund evaluation of the success of projects that FNAWS has funded, which I think is very shortsighted, and there's a tendency not to fund educational issues.

The comment was made that we'd like to see the day that biologists make all the decisions. I used to think that way, too, but I've been in a different job for the last few years. I sure don't think that way any more. I think that's wishful thinking. The public is demanding more and more public outreach and explanation, and we're going to have to develop more and more published reports for what we need to do. I think education is a very important issue and will be in the next 25 years. We will be needing financial support for wild sheep education projects.

MICHELLE BOURASSA, SOUTH DAKOTA: To what extent is FNAWS willing to support the continued introduction and management of bighorn sheep into historical range if it will result in a nonhuntable population?

SPEAKES: Our opinion, or our idea, is that is not the most positive thing. We like to think if we're going to relocate sheep into an area, they should be huntable, eventually. However, we have done some transplants in areas that were not huntable. An example, on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana, we funded a transplant request from the Tribe. They wouldn't give us any sheep to hunt, but they wanted to transplant some sheep into other areas of their land up there, and we financed that. We would do that occasionally, but if we have a choice between a huntable population or nonhuntable population, we would take the huntable.

HURLEY: In Wyoming, both national FNAWS and Wyoming FNAWS have supported reintroduction for non-hunted, nonconsumptive sheep ranges. To me, that's the best ammunition against an antihunter argument. We know we're not going to hunt them, but we're still willing to put our effort and dollars into getting the sheep out.

SPEAKES: Let me say, we are the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep. We're not the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep Hunters.

BLEICH: Leland, thank you for the contributions in California for populations that aren't hunted, may not be hunted, but might be hunted someday. We appreciate the efforts.

With respect to the statements earlier about putting sheep on the mountain, I would urge you to maybe think about the urgency or the critical nature of rephrasing that and saying "We want to keep sheep on the mountain." I think that's what Jim Bailey and others have been alluding to. Putting sheep on the mountain is great, but if you can't keep them there after putting them there, we are in for real trouble.

SPEAKES: I would say that if you looked at the ledger, we probably spent more money on research and education than we do on transplants.

MIKE DUNBAR, OREGON: You say that disease is the number one priority over the next several years, and that you'll probably be funding those projects, I appreciate that. I've been there.

SPEAKES: Right. I definitely think that we will. It will be a prime thing. It's been a prime thing for us here. We like to brag about some of the good things we do. When you had a die-off in Hell's Canyon, we got a call from the guys out there who said we've got all these sheep out here that are sick. They were getting ready to shoot them. We said, wait a minute, let's not do that. Let's capture them and take them and see if we can save the sheep.

We helicopter netgunned 75 sheep, transported them to Caldwell, Idaho, and had them in a pen alive. We tried our very best to treat them. It was unsuccessful. But as a result of that, we had blood, tissue, and swabs. We had more data to use to analyze the cause. Karen Rudolph is our molecular biologist, and she is going through every sample that we have. She's looking for the cause and cure of *Pasteurella*. She's looking for a gene. It's over my head what all she's doing, but she is doing some great things, and we captured the sheep in hopes we would save more sheep. We didn't, but we're getting a benefit from it.

DUNBAR: I was the biologist that did the original studies on *Pasteurella*. One of the greatest obstacles in working with disease in bighorn sheep is not having the opportunity for a lot of people in the field to have the ability to work on captured sheep. We have three or four places in the United States it's being done. Those are political because it's under different state ownership and those sheep projects come and go depending upon funding. Would FNAWS ever consider establishing a captive wild sheep situation somewhere in the United States, so these different people could have an unlimited ability, especially as it relates to disease?

SPEAKES: My answer as an individual is, "Yes", although I can't speak for the rest of the board. We are not going to feed them. Somebody else would have to take care of them, but I wouldn't mind financial support, but somebody else would have to care for these sheep.

DUNBAR: Some other independent group, such as FNAWS with an established committee that oversees projects and funding, would oversee projects working on the sheep, and it could be funded by FNAWS.

SPEAKES: I think FNAWS would definitely be interested in that.

RAUL VALDEZ, NEW MEXICO: The next great frontier in wild sheep management is putting sheep on private lands. Wildlife biologists have been very narrow-minded, nearsighted, downright resistant to that notion. Why shouldn't we transplant wild sheep onto private lands? I bring this up as something to discuss and something that really needs an urgent discussion.

JOHNSON: We've had a controversy here in Nevada for the past decade over whether we wanted to donate desert bighorn sheep to Texas that would end up on private land, and it's kind of an emotional issue for a state in which 86 percent of the total land is federal.

One of the problems in putting bighorn sheep on private land is proper conservation easements to make sure that rancher or his successor, isn't going to allow domestic sheep on that same ranch to cause a disease problem that could spread from range to range and have really widespread detrimental effects.

The Nevada Division of Wildlife has tried to ask the state of Texas for landowner agreements that would allow public access during hunting season, for instance, for a certain percentage of any tags, but it is very difficult on private land. Owners of large holdings don't want to give up what they feel are their private property rights. I think that is the reason there is a reluctance to put wild sheep on private lands. Again, that doesn't mean it can't be done and it can't be done successfully, but it's got to be done very carefully.

HUDDLESTON-LORTON: There are Rocky Mountain sheep on private land in southwestern New Mexico. It's very successful. The sheep were not introduced there. They moved there on their own. In the relationship that I, as a researcher, have with the landowner, I feel that they're excited. They're open to being educated to some of the issues, like diseases, like fences, interaction with cattle, water sources and other things.

I think this goes back to what Jim Bailey was saying, education is not just for those of us in the university setting, but everyone who is old enough to walk. Three-year-olds, four-year-olds, anybody you can reach and educate, whether it's a landowner or a child or anybody else, we have a responsibility to reach out and help those people understand what the issues are. As sheep people, we're not just about wild sheep management, but the land issues.

HURLEY: According to my mental map, most of the states and provinces have at least one wild sheep advocacy group; there are some states and provinces which do not. In Oregon, FNAWS is a brand-new chapter, formed within the last six months.

JON JORGENSON, ALBERTA: Currently, we don't have any sheep advocacy group. Our auction generates funds for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to administer, and those funds currently are not specifically identified as having to go towards sheep projects. They can go towards any wildlife projects. They tend to go mostly towards elk projects, but there are some sheep projects. We don't have a FNAWS chapter at all.

HURLEY: I know there's a strong relationship with Minnesota/Wisconsin FNAWS in North Dakota. Has there been any discussion about trying to getting something going in South Dakota?

BOURASSA: Not to my knowledge.

JEAN CAREY, YUKON: We don't have any advocacy groups specifically for sheep. We haven't had real sheep problems to work with, but there are certainly members of FNAWS living there.

Alasdair Veitch from NWT is not here. I don't think we have anybody here from the Northwest Territories. Perhaps they don't need an advocacy group yet; maybe in time they will.

HEIMER: I believe at the last Northern Council meeting, I alienated almost everyone. It's time for me to take that opportunity here. I'm as grateful as anybody and perhaps more appreciative than some for the work that special interest groups do. Those of you who work as agency biologists, particularly state agencies, assume advocacy groups are necessary. However, when you depend on advocacy groups for funding, ideas, or pressures, it's because you haven't done your job as managers.

It may be to the credit of those who don't have local advocacy groups that they're doing their job. I infer from what Dick Weaver said that the reason special advocacy groups arise is because the government, the people in charge of the public trust and management of everybody's property, are not pleasing the people that they're working for, and when that happens, somebody has got to make the move, and as Dick said, "God bless you."

KEVIN CHURCH, NEBRASKA: I'm not a sheep biologist, but in Nebraska I play with them. I had a chance a couple years ago to do a study of attitudes of state and federal biologists towards non-governmental organizations (NGOs) pertaining to upland game birds. What we found when we queried biologists regarding the contributions that advocates could make, there were four areas where biologists thought there were contributions. One obviously is management, which can be similar to translocation efforts, research, education and political action. Invariably, the biologists felt that political action was probably the most valuable service NGOs provided. They also felt research was underfunded and management was overfunded in terms of how the dollars were spent. Education was also an area requiring greater emphasis. I don't know how it relates to the sheep, but I think it's probably very similar.

HURLEY: We're drawing right up on 5:00 o'clock; we should wrap it up. I guess the way I look at it in any marriage, any long-term marriage, there are rocky spots. I think anybody who has been married for 25 years or more is hopefully happy, and wants to stay together. I see some real issues that need to be addressed. But I also see a very solid foundation. We've had 25 years growth in this network of wild sheep advocacy groups, and I just hope the relationship continues to strengthen. Thanks to everybody for participating.