

## **A Review And Comparison Of Management Concerns, Objectives And Strategies For Two Native Montana Bighorn Sheep Populations**

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Native bighorn sheep populations occur across a diversity of environmental conditions in Montana. Not least among these are structural habitat, prevailing weather systems, predator complexes and human social dimensions. Population dynamics also vary and include periods of decline associated, exclusively or otherwise, with chronic poor lamb survival and/or acute all age die-offs. Many biotic and abiotic components, potentially affecting sheep populations or offering some indication of general health, are only partially identified, measured and understood via herd health assessments. These factors and others, as they are tied to specific areas and corresponding sheep populations, interact to generate similar and unique management concerns, uncertainties, objectives and strategies. A brief review focusing on native bighorn sheep in the Spanish Peaks of southwest Montana and the Sun River drainage of west central Montana offers specific opportunity to compare and contrast management interpretations, needs and responses to our oftentimes incomplete understanding of any number of environmental or herd health conditions.