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# Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation

# The **RAMPAGE**

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## Outstanding Bighorn Teacher Award 2019



As you know WY-WSF has a soft spot for kids. So, this year we teamed up with our partner the National Bighorn Sheep Center to honor two outstanding educators in the area of Wild Sheep Conservation.

This year's recipients are Brady Samuelson, from Riverton Middle School and Jordan Seitz, from Encampment K-12. They were recognized at the annual convention of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation in Casper on June 1, 2019.

Brady and Jordan, along with their "herds" of students, are part of a team of scientists, managers and conservationists that strive to ensure the future of bighorns which exemplify Wyoming's most wild and rugged landscapes.

Through this bighorn team, the students are given the opportunity to develop an understanding and ethic for conserving bighorns and other wildlife species. Moreover, we learn from Brady, Jordan and the students how to better connect with our youth and gain their interest in conserving Wyoming's amazing wildlife. They have provided their thoughts on why "they do what they do"!

### Jordan Seitz: I'm a

Michigan native, but transplanted to Wyoming in 2009 to teach 6th grade all subjects, and 8th grade earth science at the rural K-12 school in Encampment. I'm married with three boys ranging from newborn to 4 years old. While my career is public education, my passion is the outdoors. Teaching in a place nestled between the Snowy Range and the Sierra Madre Range, I quickly realized I had a unique opportunity to combine them both. At first I tried really hard to incorporate academics into all my outdoor activities, and while I sometimes still do, I've found

that enrichment activities where they simply experience nature has a longer lasting impact. Now my primary goal is to expose as many students as possible to as many outdoor activities as I can. They may choose not to pursue them when they get older, but at least they will know they can. This goal causes students to appreciate wildlife and the land in a newfound way. They understand what it means to be a steward of the land through conservation, and a recreationalist who utilizes free public lands that are open 24/7.

Over the years my students have had many adventures, such as hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, bird watching, fishing, rock hunting, horn hunting, exploring, orienteering, fire building, and shelter building. They've also been snowed out of two planned rafting trips...hopefully this

upcoming May isn't the third! In 2018 we partnered with the local Game and Fish Department to study our local bighorn sheep population. Of all the things I've done during a decade in education, this sheep study has been my favorite. My students develop a better understanding about the relationship between wildlife, the land, and humans, in addition to a feeling of pride as they become invested in one of America's iconic big game species. What I didn't anticipate early on was how we'd develop a special relationship with Game and Fish biologists Teal Cufaude, Katie Cheesbrough, and Will Shultz. Not only do the students have a greater respect for the department and individuals, but many have been inspired to consider similar careers when they get older. How cool is that?!



Jordan with wife Brooke, Archie (4), August (2), August -new baby not pictured.



# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

## Encampment Sheep Continue To Get Kids On The Mountain

As I write this, we've had some frost in the valley, and some snow on our mountain tops. This means a lot of things, such as big game seasons amping up, and getting back into the swing of things for another school year. This also means for the third year I get to help introduce another group of students to

didn't waste any time and got out with my new sixth graders, and also my eight graders who actually got to be a part of our first capture that was published in the Spring 2018 edition of the RamPage. We saw 40 sheep. One was a young ram, 10 or 11 were lambs, and the rest were ewes (two had working GPS

work, and why this study is so important. Wild bighorn sheep were extirpated from the Encampment River Canyon in the early 1900s due to disease and unregulated hunting. There were three transplant efforts from Whiskey Mountain in the 60s, 70s, and then in 1989. There were 17-20 sheep



our local bighorn sheep herd.

In the spring of 2019, we took a trip looking for fresh lambs, but missed seeing any freshly dropped by a few days. In the beginning of September, I

collars). Not a great lamb to ewe ratio - something worth noting.

Biologist Teal Cufaude joined us and gave the kids a rundown on the sheep's history in this area, how GPS and VHF collars

brought in each time. They really flourished, but the winters of 83 and 84 were devastating to their growing population.

Our current sheep herd is relatively stagnant, with an unknown population size; it could



# GRANT IN AID UPDATES

By Jordan Seitz

possibly be as large as 60-80 sheep. We anticipated gathering a lot of data quickly, so we could get some habitat improvement going sooner than later. And yet, this past winter had other plans. Due to poor health and/or predators - the carcasses were scavenged or cached by mountain lions - we are left with two working GPS collars. The status is currently unknown for two VHF collars and a third GPS collar, which we will try to find before snow falls permanently.

On our September trip, Teal also shared a golden eagle that she'd just picked up with some unique baggage: it was carrying a GPS backpack and had two leg bands! It was neat to discuss the way biologists track the movement of other species in addition to sheep, and how G&F personnel can work together through interstate cooperation...because this Encampment raptor had been fitted with it's tracking device in Arizona!



**Even though we don't have a concrete plan yet for growing our sheep herd, one thing is certain:**

**These sheep are helping put Encampment kids on the mountain!**

