Casey McQuiston, Resource Staff Officer
Shoshone National Forest
808 Meadowlane Avenue
Cody, WY 82414

Dear Mr. McQuiston:

I wish to comment on the Shoshone National Forest Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Risk Analysis of Disease Transmission.

I understand that the goal is to have low risk of disease transmission between pack goats and Bighorn Sheep. However, a recent study, conducted by Dr. Margaret Highland, veterinary researcher with the USDA, found that there was a much lower level of disease-causing bacteria than previously thought.  Even Dr. Tom Besser, the Chair for the Wild Sheep Disease Research Unit at Washington State, stated the following:  "I believe that M. ovipneumoniae test-negative pack goats represent a negligible risk for triggering pneumonia outbreaks in bighorn sheep and that it would be reasonable to take this into account when setting public lands policies" (Wild Sheep Foundation Newsletter, Summer 2016).  I am asking you to take this new research and professional opinion under consideration when choosing the best alternative.

I currently own ___ pack goats.  I take excellent care of my animals and I follow many of the Best Management Practices suggested by NAPgA.  If these practices were required, I would have no problem following them and using other methods to reduce the risk of contact between my goats and Bighorn Sheep.  I feel that when these practices are used, the risk of contact would be low to very low, or even as close to zero as possible.

I'm interested in the conservation and survival of Bighorn Sheep.  However, the recent recent research and professional opinions of research veterinarians needs to be considered.  Pack goats are a much lower risk than originally thought.  In addition, requiring Mitigation Measures (Best Management Practices) should result in Bighorn Sheep being at low-to very-low risk from disease caused by contact with Pack Goats.  Please do not close off the Wind Rivers to goat packing.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,