

**From:** Stan Ebel [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 9, 2018 2:59 PM  
**To:** 'Mike Cox '  
**Subject:** RE: WSWG posting of Risk Assessment

Dear Mike,

I very much appreciate your serious consideration of the points I presented in my earlier message and your prompt response on behalf of WSWG. I think you have made a good decision as a committee to take the risk assessment off the WSWG web page. That you responded in a thoughtful manner is very heartening and a new experience for us. I would very much welcome the opportunity to speak with you either in person or by phone. I think we are very much in alignment and agreement regarding your statement: "my passion for wildlife and wild places continue to force me to move forward and seek solutions". Llama owners and packers have specifically chosen llamas because of their compatibility with, and enhancement of, wildlife and wild places. We see ourselves as part of the process to move forward and seek solutions. We understand the significance of the economy generated around wild sheep and do not want that disturbed. We see the developing economy of llamas as a synergistic contributor to the vitality and growth of the wild sheep economy.

WSF's portrayal of the issue is "wild sheep or llamas" where the true picture is "wild sheep and llamas". Llama owners are conservationists by nature and we want the preservation and expansion of wild places that are conducive to a healthy and expanding population of wild sheep and the many other species of wildlife occupying those places. Owners such as myself that have a livestock and hunting background marvel at the low maintenance requirements and inherent hardiness and healthiness of llamas. My experience with llamas in the back country demonstrates their use and presence fosters an unmatched level of sustainability, compatibility, and inclusion between all users and resident wildlife populations. The expanding use of llamas in the back country corroborates this reality.

I and my fellow llama users want very much to be able to expand wilderness awareness and wild sheep as a part of that. Obviously, we take strong exception to WSF designating llamas as a target species for banning. Their tactics have been neither fair, transparent, or scientific and require a very emphatic response that continues to unfold. Beyond the impact on llamas, we see this expanding into other domestic species and user groups and degenerating into a territorial battle that will install ill-will, tension, and legal confrontation as basic elements of the

wilderness experience. Wilderness is supposed offer escape from those aspects of daily living and we very much want to preserve that escape.

There is obviously work that needs to be done. You mentioned "contagious ecthyma" as a pathogen of interest and I am prepared to initiate that discussion immediately. I will put together the information we have on the significance of CE in llamas as well as wild and domestic ruminants and send that to you as a point of initiation. I would like to get your feed back and I'm particularly interested why that pathogen is the one you specifically mention. When will the link to the Risk Assessment will be taken down? Please let me know so I can give that information to the various organizations to disseminate. Thank you.

Again, I look forward to the opportunity to work with you. My contact information is included in the signature below. Feel free to call me on my cell [REDACTED].

Best regards, Stan

Stan Ebel, President

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[REDACTED]

**From:** Mike Cox [mailto:mcox@ndow.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 08, 2018 11:35 AM  
**To:** Stan Ebel [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: WSWG posting of Risk Assessment

Mr. Ebel,

I was able to do some homework, did some reading, and reached out to a few people on the topic. The bottom/punch line is the Wild Sheep Working Group (WSWG) nor I as the WSWG chair had any intentions to pursue a new document or policy that would suggest or recommend banning of llamas from public lands in the United States. I had no involvement in the Camelid Use Risk Assessment in BC, nor the Wild Sheep Foundation's NA Conservation 2020 document. I do however have the utmost respect for and strong professional relationship with Dr. Helen Schwantje and the Wild Sheep Foundation.

Based on my desires and those of the WSWG members, we have agreed that our webpage hosted on the main WAFWA website needed to be upgraded with a commitment to make it more of a clearinghouse of information (new and old) to benefit all wild sheep managers and other associated professionals involved with wild sheep. There are many documents that are currently on our website that are simply informational with zero intentions to discuss them in detail within the WSWG let alone take action on them. Along those same lines, I also realized that all the previous WSWG chairs have been from the U.S. focused on bighorn sheep and that we needed to make more of an effort to post information on thornhorn sheep management issues and issues of concern in Canada.

I asked the WAFWA staff earlier this week that manages the website, to remove the Camelid Use Risk Assessment in BC from our webpage out of respect to you and the llama community. I believe you are correct in referencing the only 2 studies by Besser and Foreyt that show no impacts to wild sheep when the placed in captivity with llamas. Until such time someone disproves these 2 studies, my scientific discipline and common sense is that llamas do not pose a serious threat to wild sheep with regards to pneumonia. Do they pose a threat to other pathogens that were not the focus of these 2 studies? That can't be answered until research is conducted specifically for other pathogens of interest like Contagious Ecthyma.

I sensed in your letter a desperate and defensive nature that at first was upsetting, but placing myself in your shoes and having your livelihood threatened would have put me on edge. I could ramble on but I'm one that would rather talk on the phone or meet face to face. I have been humbled and challenged as the WSWG chair and will continue to be uncomfortable at times

with my role, but my passion for wildlife and wild places continue to force me to move forward and seek solutions. Last Thursday I drove 5 hours to meet face to face with the Nevada woolgrower's leadership to continue my efforts to develop open communication, vigilance for wandering sheep of any kind and long-term relationships with individual permittees, our field biologists, and local land management staff. We certainly didn't agree on every point, but we respected each other and had some great dialog and greater appreciation for our respective industries. Yes, I consider wild sheep viewing, hunting, and population management an industry, worth millions of dollars west wide, no different than the livestock industry.

If you would like to talk about specifics, feel free to call me and we can better appreciate each other's situation.



*Mike*

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