

# The **RAM**PAGE

## Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation

Spring 2016

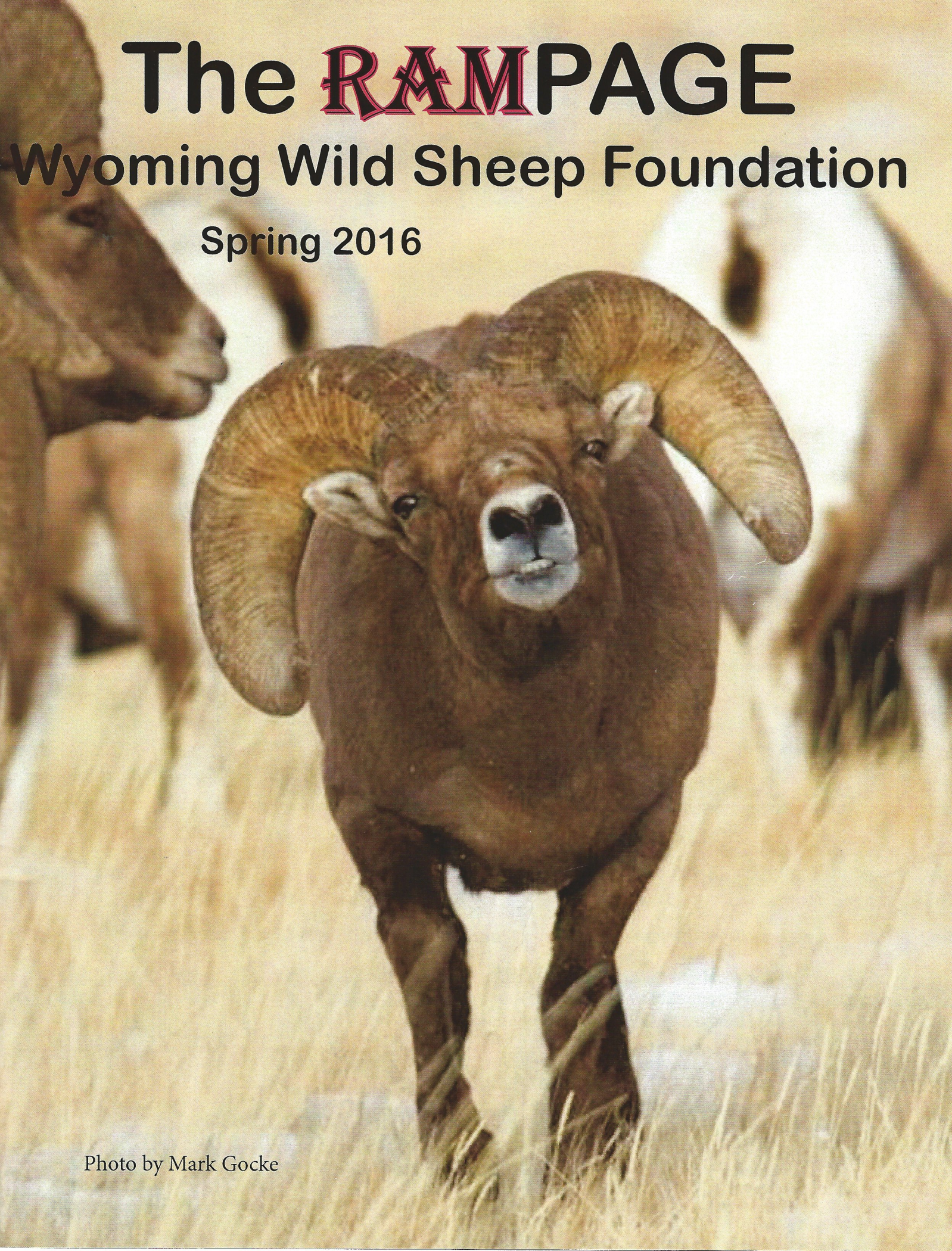


Photo by Mark Gocke



# John Shelton gets his Ram!

**Jon** Shelton harvested the trophy of a lifetime this year, a beautiful ram from Hunt Area 22 in Wyoming's Absaroka Mountains. Achieving his lifetime dream wasn't easy, and Jon needed help to make his dream come true. You see, Jon is a wounded warrior who was poisoned while in Iraq serving his country. But thanks to an organization named "Hunting with Heroes" and especially due to the efforts of Tom Whitmire and Fritz Meyers, Jon found his Big Horn Ram. Jon who is 33, lives in Libby, Mt, with his wife, Tabitha, young son, Rhett, and newborn daughter, Tayten, and he lives for the outdoors, hunting and fishing are his favorite pursuits next to taking care of his kids. He has been able to hunt in Wyoming three times since his medical discharge from the Army as a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Specialist. First an antelope, then an elk, and now the Big Horn Sheep thanks to the "Hunting with Heroes" folks.

The "HWH" non profit was founded just over three years ago by some caring Casper, WY folks whose mission statement reads:

"Giving back to our nation's disabled veterans. Honoring our heroes with unique hunting, fishing and other outdoor experiences." According to their website: <http://huntingwithheroes.org/about/program/>: "Hunting with Heroes is a non-profit and charitable organization, formed in 2013, dedicated to giving back to disabled veterans who served our country and sacrificed to keep us safe. Hunting with Heroes is honored to provide hunting, fishing and other unique outdoor experiences to our nation's disabled veterans. Working with state agencies, landowners and local volunteers, Hunting with Heroes offers custom programs designed for the unique needs of each disabled veteran – programs designed to boost our disabled veterans morale, build lasting memories and enduring friendships. Partnering with the Wyoming Game and Fish, and using

their big game donated license program – a program that allows anyone to donate a big game license to be reissued to a disabled veteran – Hunting with Heroes matches veterans with a license, provides guide services, rifles and other gear, game processing and room and board if



required."

**Tom** Whitmire believes in the HWH mission and he donates his time to arrange hunts and guide hunters on their Wyoming dream hunts but on this one he went one BIG step further. Tom knew that he had about enough preference points saved up to receive a license in some of Wyoming's BHS hunt areas during 2015. He also knew about Jon Shelton, and Jon's dream to hunt a Big Horn ram, if only time and his health would allow it. Jon didn't think it would ever happen because



he knew there wasn't enough time left for him to earn the points needed to receive a Wyoming BHS license.

Tom Whitmire told me he already has one ram and that donating his license back to the G&F so that it could be awarded to Jon was something he thought over and decided was the right thing to do. That should tell you all you need to know about the character of Tom Whitmire. You see he too is a hero. Find about more about the G&F donation process at :<https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Hunting/Licensing-for-Veterans>)

Now Jon had his Wyoming Big Horn Sheep license and some financial help from HWH to make his dream a reality. All he needed was a guide, and not just any guide. Jon has medical issues that prevent him from riding horses or hiking deep into the mountains to find the home of the Wild Sheep. This is where Fritz Meyer enters the picture. If you have been around the Wyoming Wild Sheep chapter you know Fritz. He has a plaque on the wall of his trophy room commending him for being the longest serving board of director's member in the history of our organization. He has life member number 14 in our chapter and never misses an event. Fritz and his wife Connie make their home in Dubois, WY where he operates Wind River Mountain Outfitters. Visit with Fritz at: <http://www.windrivermountainoutfitters.com/>.

Fritz and Connie donated their services to Jon and the hunt was on.

Jon tells me that they hunted for 13 long hard days. Most of it was spent glassing the badlands country around Dubois that Fritz knows like the back of his hand. They endured the Wyoming wind and long days of not seeing any rams. Tom Whitmire was with Jon for 5 or 6 days before he had to return to his job in Casper. At last on the

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12<sup>th</sup> night, Fritz told Jon that he knew the sheep would be moving the next day..... And they were. When Jon saw his ram across a big Wyoming badland canyon at 515 yards he got so emotional that he was trembling. The wind gusted just as he pulled the trigger on his first shot and he missed. He thought his hunt was all over, but Fritz calmed him down and the ram stayed put. Jon sighted through the scope and pulled the trigger again..... another miss. He took a deep breath, remembered his training, and dropped the ram with the third shell.

A wounded veterans's dream of harvesting a Wyoming Big Horn Sheep has been achieved. The veteran is fulfilled and so are the hearts of a bunch of other outdoorsman who helped that dream come true.

Thank God for people like Tom Whitmire, Fritz Meyer, and the Hunting with Heroes crew who give so much of themselves to pay back our veterans who sacrificed so much for our country. They epitomize the spirit that makes our country and our Wild Sheep organizations great.

Tim Sundles collected a beautiful Dall Sheep from the North Brooks Range.

