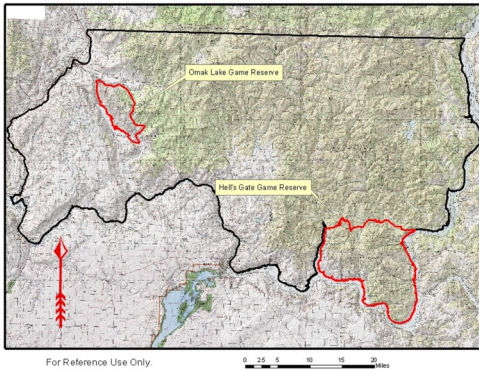


## The Return of Bighorn Sheep to the Reservation

Historically tribal members of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR) harvested bighorn sheep in their traditional territories for subsistence use. The meat was consumed and many parts of the animal were used for tools and clothing. Overtime the once abundant herds were diminished, primarily due to the transmission of disease from domestic sheep and goats.

Omak Lake Game Reserve and Hell's Gate Game Reserve on the Colville Reservation



In 2005, CTCR Fish and Wildlife (F&W), started planning to accomplish bighorn sheep's traditional and ecological significance to the reservation. At that time there was a small herd on the Omak Game Reserve. Historical data showed that augmentation efforts would be successful in the Hellsgate Game Reserve. With this knowledge in 2009 bighorn sheep were reintroduced to the Hellsgate Game Reserve.

Table 1. Bighorn Sheep Transplants on the Colville Reservation

Year	Capture	Released	Total
2009	Mt. Hull	Hellsgate	6
	Tieton	Hellsgate	30
2010	Clemens	Hellsgate	37
	Tieton	Hellsgate	29
2011	Mt. Hull	Hellsgate	12
2012	Clemens	Vulcan Mt.	4
	Clem/Tet	Omak Res	18
<b>Total</b>			136

Six additional translocations followed with a total of 136 bighorn sheep being released in their traditional lands that includes; Hellsgate Game Reserve, Omak Game Reserve and Vulcan Mtn. Ground and aerial capture methods were used .

Currently, in the Hellsgate Game Reserve, the bighorn sheep population has acclimated to their traditional territories and continues to populate. In 2015, 215 were counted. This successful reintroduction means that CTCR F&W can offer special hunts to their membership.



Pictured Above: Aerial Capture at Mt Hull.

The Tribe invested significant time and funding to accomplish the goal of successfully re-establishing and managing a thriving population of bighorn sheep. We now strive to ensure these populations continue to persist and flourish on the reservation. Please do your part and help ensure these animals can survive for future generations. Please visit the Tribes website to learn more about bighorn sheep at the link below.

<https://www.colvilletribes.com/fish-wildlife>

## Big Horn Sheep Management



### Bighorn Sheep

Yilík<sup>w</sup>əlxkn (Nsəlxcin)

yiʕálx<sup>w</sup>qən (Nxaʔamxčín)

tǐ-nún (Titoqatimt)



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# Domestic Sheep And Goats – Big Problems for Bighorn Sheep!

## History

Bighorn sheep are one of the most sensitive big game species in North America. Historically they were wide spread throughout the western parts of North America including here on the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and many of the tribes traditional territories.



Pictured above: Bighorn sheep in the Hellsgate Reserve on the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

It is estimated that in the 1800's there may have been 2 million bighorns across North America. With the introduction of domestic sheep and goats, populations declined to less than 5,000 individuals. Currently bighorn sheep numbers have increased to an estimated 80,000 primarily due to proactive efforts such as habitat restoration, population reintroductions/augmentations, and limiting domestic sheep and goat interactions .

## What's So Bad About Domestic?

Domestic sheep and goats commonly carry the bacteria *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae (M. ovi)*. In fact, many domestic animals can appear healthy. Biological testing using a nasal swab is the only way to confirm if an individual animal carries the bacteria.

Seemingly healthy individuals can spread the bacteria to wild bighorn sheep when grazing by leaving the bacteria on any contacted ground surface or vegetation, and/or by direct contact with bighorns. If bighorns come into contact with the same area or interact with infected domestics, they have a high chance of becoming infected.

Once a bighorn sheep comes into contact with *M. ovi.*, it triggers pneumonia outbreaks, which can kill between 75 -100% of the population in that herd. The individuals that survive the outbreak are resistant to the bacteria, but their lambs are still exposed. *M.ovi* infections have led to large scale die-offs of bighorn sheep across every western state and have been reported as the primary cause of bighorn sheep population declines throughout North America.



Photo credit: Jeff Bernatowicz WDFW

**M.ovi infection is the largest battle that bighorn sheep face today.**

## What Can You Do

In order to help prevent or reduce the potential for a pneumonia outbreak on local bighorn sheep populations we need to maintain separation between domestic sheep and goats from wild bighorn sheep. We encourage private landowners to make every effort to ensure that their domestic sheep or goats are continually fenced in, and separated from wild bighorn sheep. Private land owners with domestic sheep or goats within bighorn range should:

- Consider double fencing to keep domestics in.
- Only purchase disease free domestic sheep or goats.
- Have their domestics tested for *M. ovi*.
- If at all possible, domestic sheep and goats should not be in close proximity to wild bighorn sheep populations.

Current Tribal code is set to help protect our bighorn sheep populations and can be found at the link below.

<https://www.colvilletribes.com/current-code?rq=code>

-CCT current code 4-11-35-C states “Fencing: The Range Department is not responsible for maintaining the fences on private or lease land...”

-CCT current code 4-11-35-B states “If a parcel of private land is located entirely within the boundaries of a range unit, it is the responsibility of that landowner to “fence out” the range unit and livestock therein.”

-CCT current code 4-1-300 states “ Unless modified by rule or regulation, no person shall import to the reservation, or possess, or release within the boundaries of the reservation any live animals, without first obtaining a permit from the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Department.”

**The Department will test your domestics for bacteria at no cost to you!!**

When importing animals onto the reservation you must fill out the CTCR F&W Importation of Animals form that can be found on their website shown below.

<https://www.cct-fnw.com/news/>