



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Disease-event in area ravaging wild sheep and deer populations.**

*Granby Project area suffering massive die-offs*

#### **Penticton BC- August 25, 2021**

A disease-event has been found in the Grand Forks area of British Columbia and has ravaged the local bighorn sheep herd. Bluetongue is a virus with no specific treatment, and it has been found throughout this area. This virus is spread by a *Culicoides* biting fly/midge (no-see-ums).

As of 1030 am August 25, 2021, over 75% of our collared animals have been found dead so far, bringing the total loss to over 20. That number is expected to climb as our members attend the area to investigate. This disease-event was found due to the collaring work the WSSBC and Wild Sheep Foundation had done in the area over the last 2 years. When a collared animal is found via GPS to not move for a set number of hours, our volunteers attend in a timely manner to investigate.

“In an area where we would expect to see 50 sheep at once, it was heart-wrenching to witness so much death” said Peter Gutsche, Director for WSSBC. “Our members will be on site again over the next few days to get a better idea of just how many animals are affected. We know that there are many sheep and whitetail deer that are lost to this disease so far.”

The WSSBC contributed funds to support the purchase of DL 492, 109.2 hectares (269.9 acres) of open, rolling bunchgrass grassland interspersed with patches of trembling aspen-rose thickets and scattered black hawthorn shrubs located just east of Grand Forks, British Columbia. This land purchase was in support of the Southern Interior Land Trust (SILT) and we will be working with them on this project once again in the future.

To learn more about bluetongue virus please visit;

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/wildlife-wildlife-habitat/wildlife-health/wildlife-health-documents/epizootic\\_hemorrhagic\\_disease.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/wildlife-wildlife-habitat/wildlife-health/wildlife-health-documents/epizootic_hemorrhagic_disease.pdf)

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#### About the Wild Sheep Society of BC

The Wild Sheep Society of BC is a non-profit registered Society dedicated to the protection and enhancement of wild sheep and wild sheep habitat throughout “Beautiful British Columbia”. Putting tens of thousands of volunteer hours and dollars into conservation projects in BC since 1998, the WSSBC is committed to its vision statement of 'Putting more sheep on the mountains’.

#### Media Inquiries

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