



Bi-annual Newsletter

October 2019

Auction Update for 2019

The NBGS board would like to thank all of the generous donors and bidders who made the 2019 auction a big success. There were many unique items donated by Nebraska Game and Parks and other supportive donors. Some of the items attracting the highest bids were the resident elk permit, lifetime hunt and fish combo, conservation ride along on an airboat or aiplane and the sheep capture. Proceeds from the auction have already been returned to NGPC. A check for \$29,000 was presented for the elk permit and \$20,000 has been earmarked for NGPC projects that will be matched by a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust.



Jim King, Craig Hundt and Justin Hertzl present Jim Douglas, Director of the NGPC (second from the right), with a \$29,000 check.



Jeremy Johnson was high bidder at the NBGS auction, winning the NGPC flathead electrofishing experience. He and his son went out with NGPC staff to Branched Oak in July and had a blast, even in the heat. Seventeen of the 41 flatheads they netted were over 20 pounds with the biggest being 46 inches long and 44 pounds, 12 ounces.

Projects this year

NBGS received approval of a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for \$25,000 in 2019 and \$15,000 in 2020 to match a commitment from NBGS for \$20,000. Projects included will be: new wells at Metcalf and Gilbert Baker WMA; guzzler water catchment at Charcoal Creek; windmill to solar upgrades with pond overflow at Chadron Creek Ranch and Bordeaux Creek; upgrade galvanized tanks to rubber tires; work on additional water project catchments.

Thank you Jon Thomas

The board would like to thank Jon Thomas for his work as Executive Director of the Nebraska Big Game Society. He managed the details of the organization and coordinated many successful banquets. His efforts helped NBGS grow to where it is today, which provides financial support for big game conservation and projects.

Auction April 9, 2020 at Wilderness Ridge

NBGS has been awarded two permits this year from NGPC following submission of the qualifying survey:

- A Bull Elk permit for resident or non-resident
- A combination permit for Antelope, Deer and Turkey for a resident or non-resident

We encourage you to join us on April 9, 2020 at Wilderness Ridge for another great auction to raise funds and support big game in Nebraska. If you would like to be a part of the next auction by making a donation or attending, please contact any of the board members through the website or email below:

Justin Hertzl, President

Tam Allan

Jim King, Secretary

Steve Hornady

Craig Hundt, Treasurer

Contact us at:

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Mule Deer Research Update

By Will Inselman, NGPC Assistant Wildlife Administrator

The fawning season has officially ended in southwest and northwest Nebraska. Overall the season went well as 62 fawns were collared in northwest and 82 in the southwest. Of those, 31 are currently alive in the northwest and 26 in the southwest. The remaining adults and fawns will continue to be tracked in the northwest as that study will continue for another year. The southwest study will wrap up shortly and final results will be presented to the Commission by the end of next year. We are excited to see all of the findings from the study and hope that it provides us the necessary information to help us manage mule deer in western Nebraska.

Bighorn Sheep Research Update

By Todd Nordeen, NGPC Big Game Disease and Research Program Manager

The bighorn sheep research, through South Dakota State University, focusing on cause specific mortality and lamb survival is ongoing. Of the lambs captured during this past spring, in the Pine Ridge, one of nine survived in the Fort Robinson herd (most losses to predation), five of six captured are still alive in the Barrel Butte herd. In the Wildcat Hills, the Hubbard's Gap herd had 14 of 22 survive (most losses to predation). The removal of the identified Chronic Disease Shedders from the study herds was completed during the captures last winter in an effort to bolster lamb survival. The cause specific mortality/survival portion of this study will continue for one more year with additional information to come upon its completion.



2019 bighorn sheep research: photos by Eric VanBeek

The domestic sheep research is currently evaluating pathogens, herd health assessments and potential relationships to bighorn populations. There has been a lot of interest in this research with domestic sheep producers and this research will continue for one more year with an expected completion in 2020.



The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is conducting an analysis on bighorn sheep (ewe) home range and distribution in the Pine Ridge and Wildcat Hills. This project should conclude this year and will help better identify habitat use, movement and overall distribution of bighorn sheep ewes over the last two years in both regions.

Charcoal Creek

By Alicia Hardin, NGPC Wildlife Administrator

The NBGS has committed \$5,000 to the purchase of a 1,520-acre addition to the Petersen WMA called the Charcoal Creek addition (on the west side of the existing WMA). This tract of land will be an excellent addition, providing more land for elk, turkey, and mule deer hunting, and even some steep slopes for bighorn sheep lambing. It will add to the 22,000 acres in the Fort Robinson complex.



Charcoal Creek: photo courtesy of NGPC

The New NET Grant

By Alicia Hardin, NGPC Wildlife Administrator

The NBGS was awarded a \$40,000 Nebraska Environmental Trust grant in partnership with NGPC for water development in the Panhandle. The goal of the project is to provide reliable water sources for wildlife through catchment structures, new wells, and converting windmills to solar powered equipment. Areas that may see improvements from this grant include Metcalf WMA, Chadron Creek Ranch WMA, Petersen WMA, and Gilbert-Baker WMA.