

# Options to Minimize Risk Of Disease Transmission





# Complex Issue

## Diversity of Interests



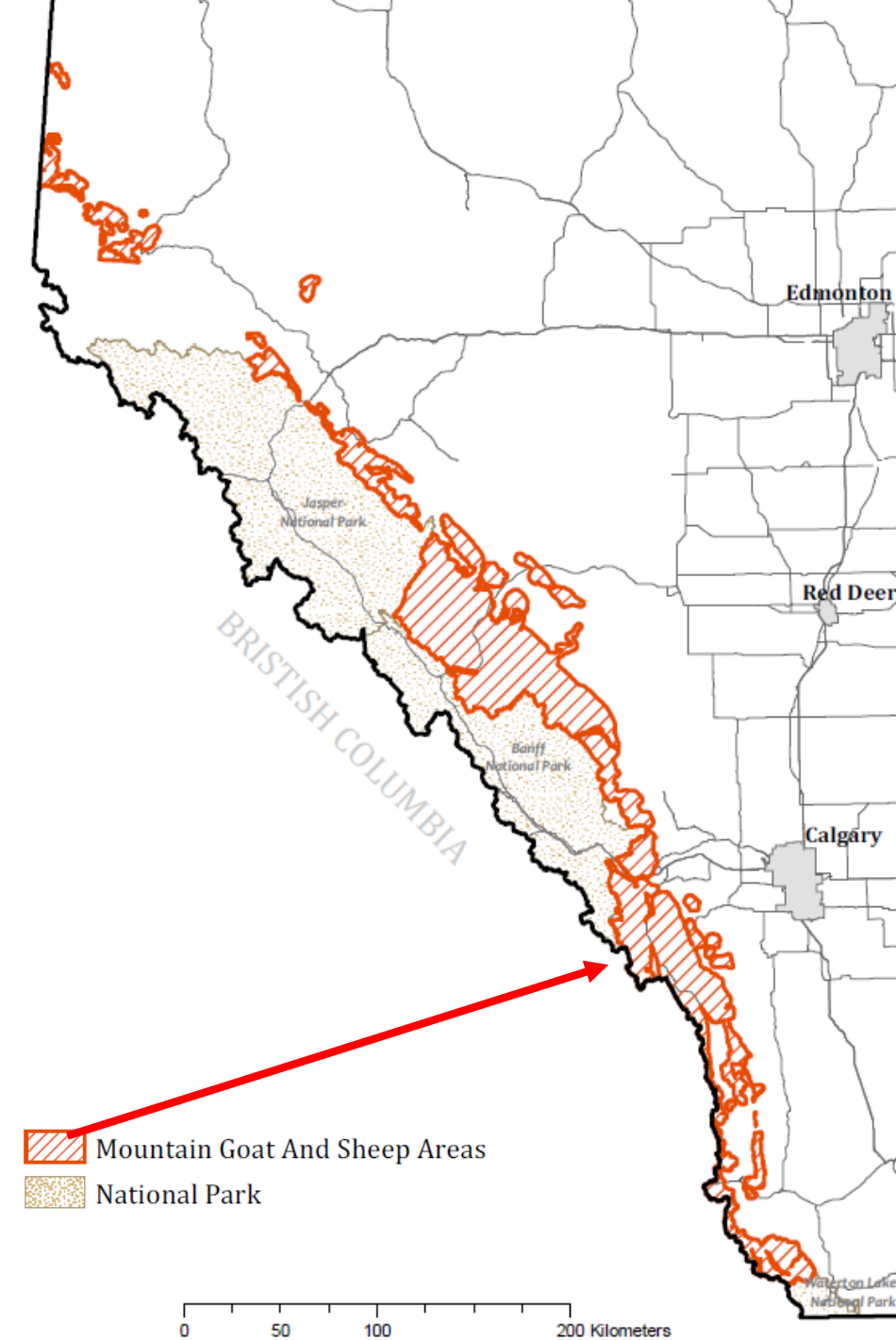
# Topics

- How have Bighorn Sheep Ranges been determined?
- What's allowed under current policy?
- Are there policy changes the GOA is considering?
- What can I do to reduce risk?





# Bighorn Sheep Ranges







## Preferred Habitats



~800 -1500m







### Other Information Sources

- Aerial winter surveys
- Radio- collaring projects

# Movements

- Males move further than females (e.g. ~25-80km)
- Travel for females (Oct to Jan.)
- E.g. Sheep R East of Park





# South-western Alberta (~south Highway 1)



**Where the Mountains meet the prairies**

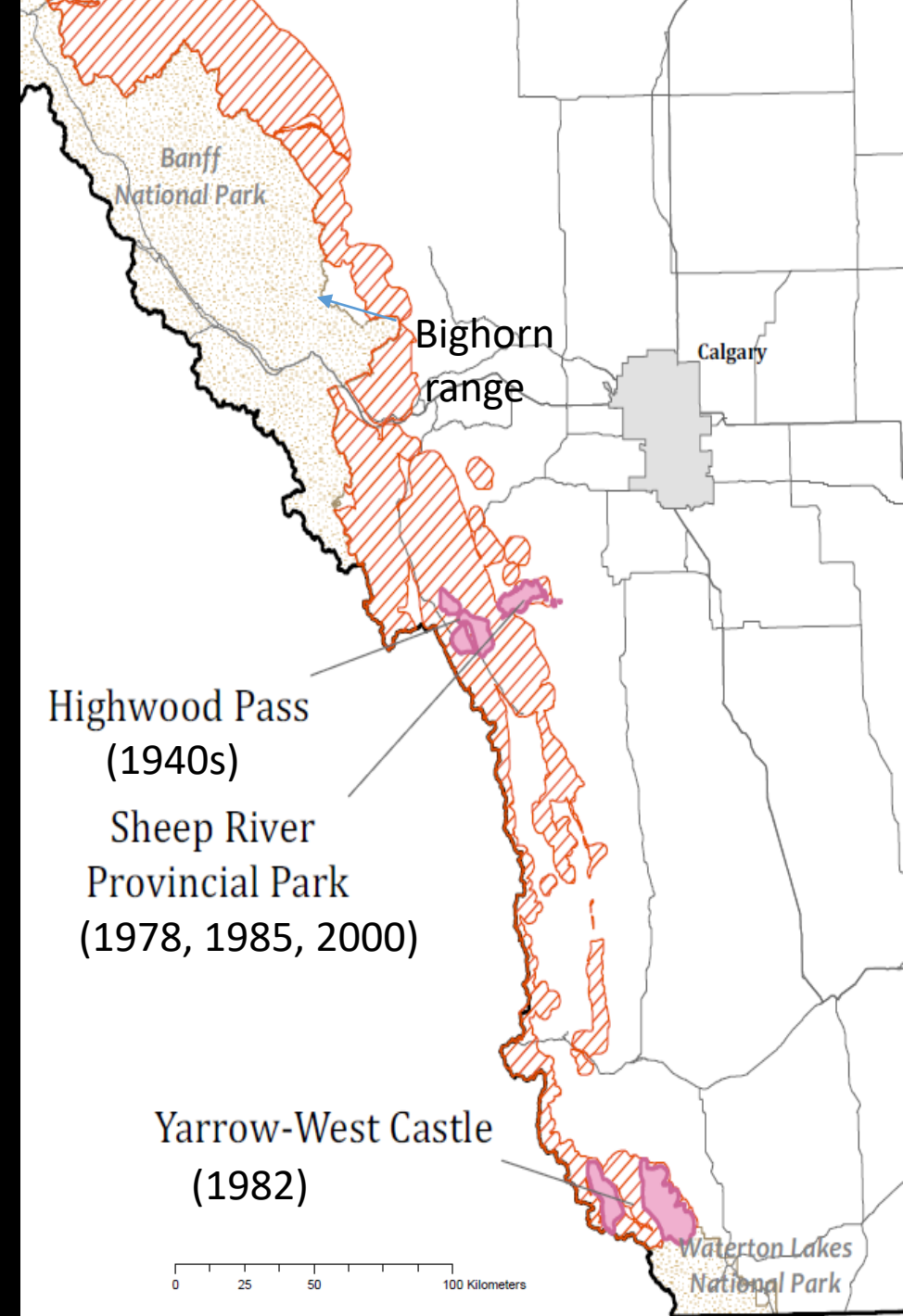


# Past Pneumonia Outbreaks



Population Declines of 10 – 75%

Alberta is 1 of only 2-3 jurisdictions without an outbreak in the last 10 years





# What Can I do Under the Current Policy?



Grazing



Vegetation and Weed Management

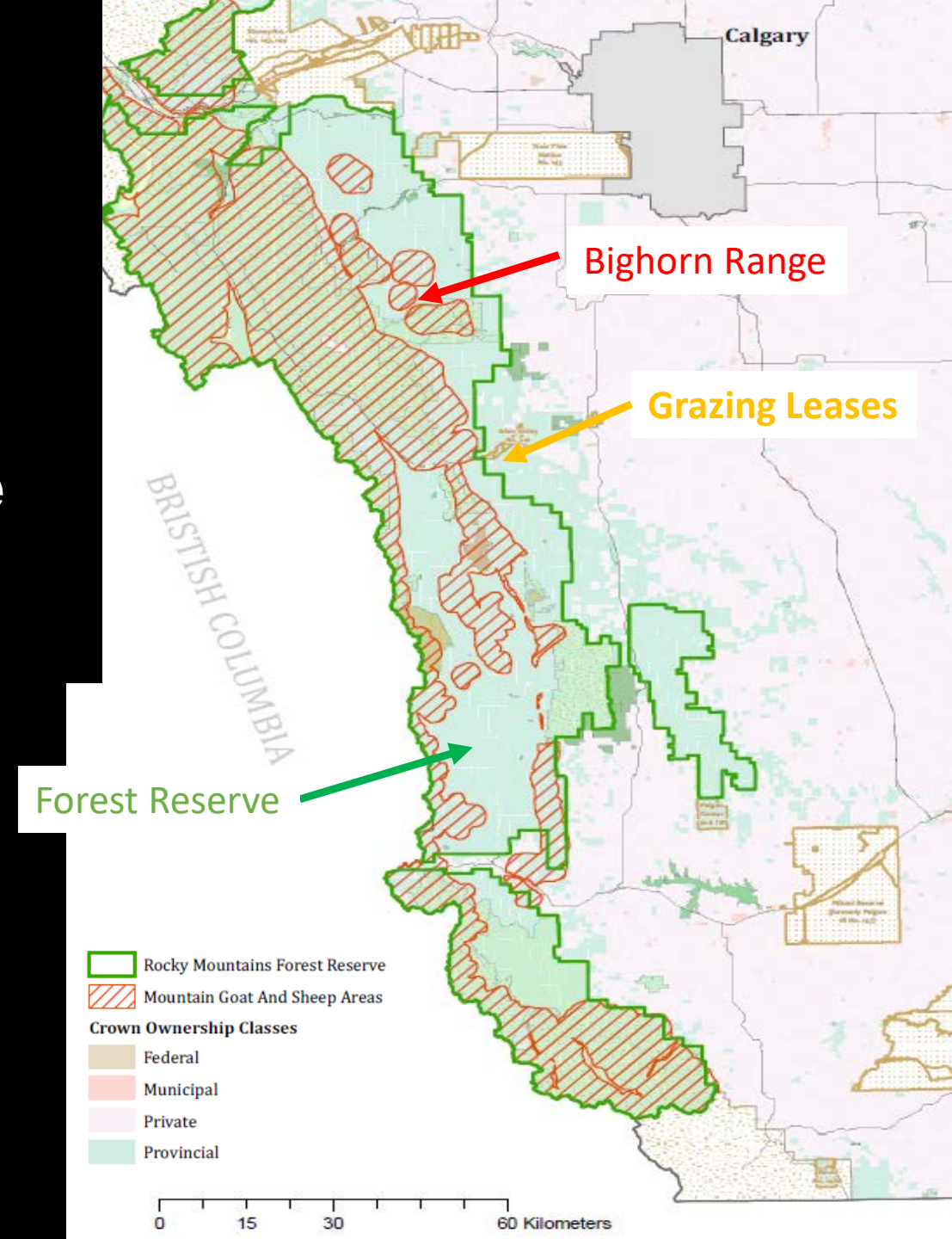


Pack Animals



# Acts and Regulations

- Forest Reserve
  - Rocky Mountain Forest Reserve
- Public Lands
  - Grazing Dispositions
- Provincial Parks
  - Individual Parks Plans





# Domestic Sheep



Forest Reserve - Require Grazing permit

- AEP Rangelands has not been approving applications (14+ years)

Grazing Leases

- No approval required from AEP Rangelands
- List on Annual stock returns



Not “Livestock = No Grazing on Public Lands

## Domestic Goats



Vegetation Management & Weed Control

- Grazing Leases - Require Special Approval from Agriculture & Forestry



# Pack Goats

## Commercial

- Permit required from Lands Division

## Recreational

- Permit is generally not required
- Exception Parks
  - Where allowed, permit required\*
  - Not allowed in Wilderness Areas

\* e.g. Wilmore; Elbow





**What Policies is Alberta considered at this time?**

# Bighorn Sheep Management

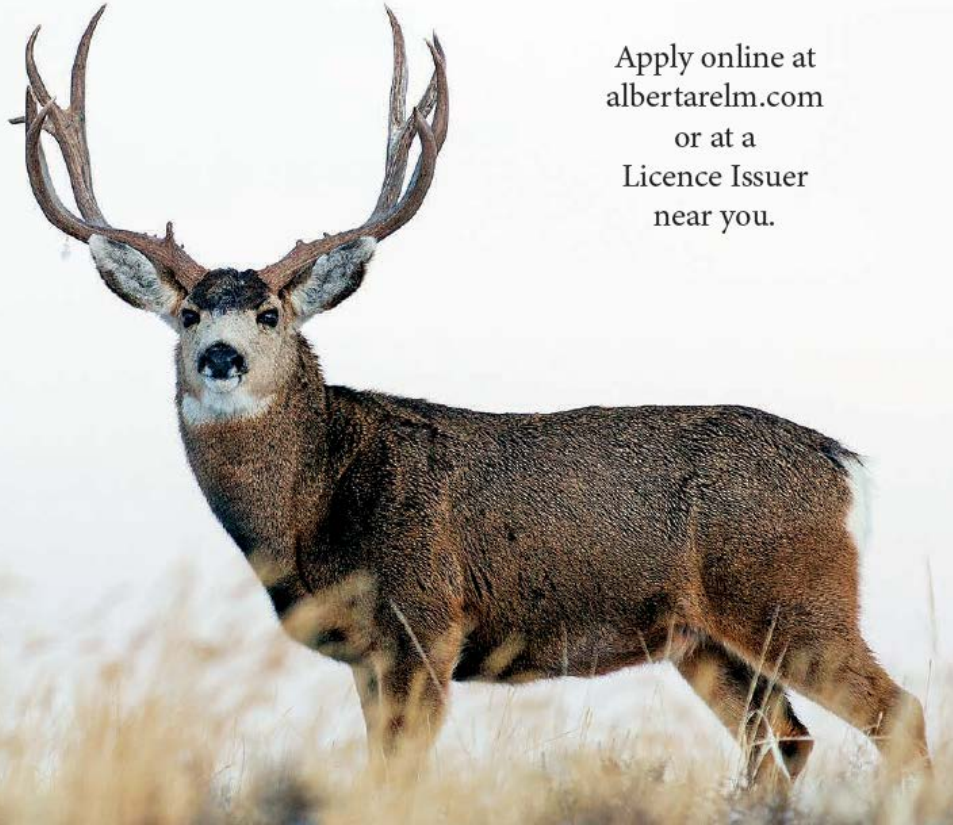


To Discourage Movements & Improve Overall Herd Health



Alberta <sup>2021</sup>  
**HUNTING DRAWS**

Draw Application Period: June 1 to June 24, 2021



Apply online at  
[albertarelm.com](http://albertarelm.com)  
or at a  
Licence Issuer  
near you.

Hunting Regulations



Habitat Enhancements of current ranges

# Health Certification Protocols Vegetation Management

Forestry and Other Industrial Operators  
Alberta and B.C. Disease Experts & resource managers  
Broader than M. ovi and bighorns (wildlife & diseases)

- Buffer Zone from bighorn range
- Health checks (e.g. contagious ecthyma, footrot)
- Unique Id
- Shepherds, herd dogs
- Protocol to prevent strays



# Increasing Awareness

## Bighorn and Domestic

All sheep are not the same

### Bighorn Sheep in Alberta

Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep are an iconic symbol of Alberta, and are the designated provincial mammal. The species is native to the west and was widely distributed throughout the badlands and mountains of western North America. By the late 1800s/early 1900s, populations were severely limited due to overuse as food, particularly for work camps when the railways were laid through the Rockies to connect the east and west as the threat to hold together the new country.

Alberta has 26 bighorn management units and a population of approximately 6400 wild sheep on provincial lands. Approximately 4500 additional bighorns occur in the national parks in western Alberta.



### Domestic Sheep in Alberta

Domestic sheep are relatively new to western landscapes. Ranchers and homesteaders brought them to the foothills of southwestern Alberta in the early days of ranching about 100 years ago.

More recently limited numbers of domestic sheep and goats were used for controlling brush and weeds, particularly in forest cut-blocks and reforestation efforts. Most of this activity took place on public land, especially grazing leases. However, costs were high and the sheep did not fare particularly well. The number of sheep in the foothills is now very limited.

Whenever domestic sheep and goats occur close to the front ranges of the mountains there is increased risk of disease in bighorns.



- Pamphlets
- Web-site (e.g. AGA)
- Articles
- Videos
- Signage

# Considerations In or Near Bighorn Range

Testing in all cases  
(GOA funding is available)

Reporting contacts and strays (310-0000)





# Grazing Lease Holder

With Domestic Sheep currently

- Avoid grazing during bighorn rut (fall)
- Consider applying Health Certification Protocols (e.g. health checks)

Alternatives for weed & vegetation management?



# Packing with Goats

- Test for *M. ovi*. Do not take + animals
- Avoid elevations  $> \sim 1500\text{m}$
- Physical Control- e.g. high-lined at camp
- Unique ID, Bells
- Notify if strays





# Private Lands – Fencing

- Funding \$ available through GOA
- To Exclude Bighorns (Can jump 2+m)



2.4m woven wire with electric outrigger overhang at 45 degrees (double fence to prevent nose-to-nose)



# Summary

- Policy allows grazing, veg management and as pack animals
  - Permits required in some cases
  - Restricting industrial use for veg management; Bighorn Mgmt.
- Increased Awareness – mitigate risk on public lands
- Encourage testing and considerations outlined
- Some GOA funding available – testing, fencing





Thank You for the Opportunity



Questions?





EXTRA SLIDES

**What Policies are in Place Elsewhere?**



# Policy in Other Jurisdictions

- Protocols            Health certification
- Testing Req'd.      Yukon Control Order
- Permits              With testing (e.g. Shoshone Forest) / without
- Pack animals        Hunting restrictions (e.g. B.C.)
- Zones                No-go buffers
  - Distance (many jurisdictions)
  - Elevation (1,000m- Yukon)

# Incentive-Based Programs

- Wild Safe (2013-2015; B.C.)
  - \$ for double fencing or to change stock
  - If within high risk zone ( <100km from bighorn range) must have M. ovi- free flocks to participate





# Other Programs: Incentive-Based

- “Say No to M. ovi” program (WSF, B.C.)
  - Pilot program for meat goats
  - \$ for M. ovi test & compensate if animal culled
  - Advertise meat as disease free

