



## WILDLIFE CONFLICT RESOLUTION — ELK MOUNTAINS, CO

# Upper Crystal River Grazing Allotment Agreement

Where conflicts between livestock and wildlife are prolonged and intractable, the National Wildlife Federation believes that public land grazing retirements can provide an equitable solution for ranchers and wildlife interests. In coordination with federal land managers, we negotiate with livestock ranchers to retire public land livestock grazing allotments that experience chronic conflict with wildlife, especially grizzly bears, wolves, bison and in Colorado, Bighorn Sheep. This market-based approach recognizes the economic value of public land livestock grazing permits and fairly compensates ranchers for retiring their leases. This approach establishes a new national model for resolving conflicts between livestock and critical wildlife habitat.

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## The Opportunity

The Upper Crystal River US Forest Service domestic sheep grazing allotment is located in one of the highest elevation and most remote areas of Colorado, high in the Elk Mountains high above the city of Aspen. The allotment is largely located inside the spectacular Maroon Bells Wilderness Area and has been used by a sheep ranching family for decades. But this allotment is also home to one of the highest priority herds of bighorn sheep in Colorado. This extremely rugged mountain range provides ideal habitat for this iconic ungulate and indeed, these bighorn herds rely on the high elevation meadows and peaks found here. Unfortunately, domestic sheep carry a number of diseases that can and often do, decimate entire herds of Bighorn sheep. The good news is that NWF has successfully negotiated a financial agreement with the rancher that holds the permit to this allotment allowing them to give up their grazing rights. This will permanently remove the risk of contact between these domestic sheep and Bighorns and given that this is the only domestic sheep allotment in the area, the agreement will eliminate the risk of disease transmission between domestic sheep Bighorns across the entire Elk Range.



**WHERE: South San Juan Mountains, Rio Grande National Forest, Colorado**

**NEAREST TOWN: Marble, CO; Aspen, CO**

**CONFLICT: Risk of disease contact between domestic and wild sheep**

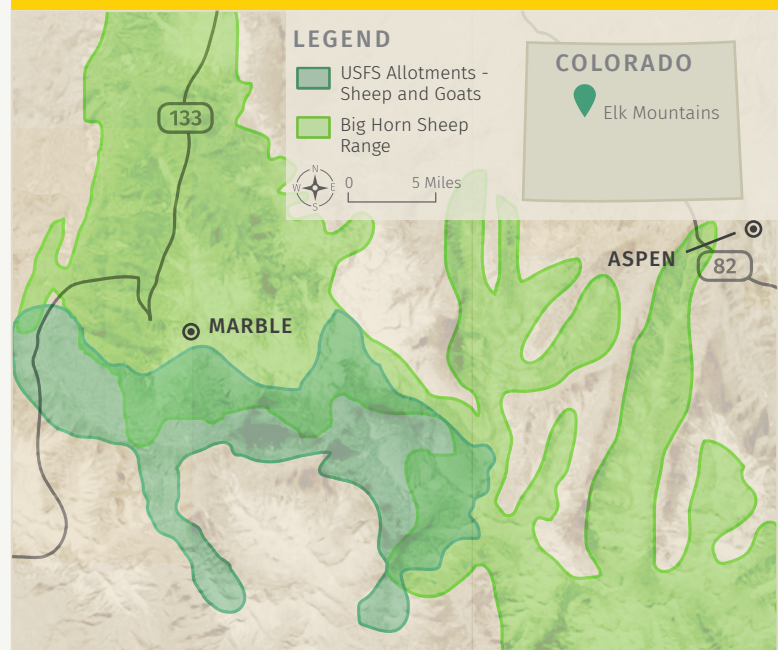
**ACRES: 33,646**

**AUMs\*: 690 AUMs Retired**

**RETIREMENT DATE: August 2019**

**TOTAL ESTIMATED PRICE: \$96,000**

### PUBLIC LANDS, GRAZING ALLOTMENTS, AND BIGHORN SHEEP



**\*AUMS (ANIMAL UNIT MONTHS) IS A STANDARD MEASUREMENT OF THE AMOUNT OF FORAGE USED TO FEED A COW/CALF OR FIVE SHEEP IN ONE MONTH.**

#### PHOTO CREDITS

Page 1: Landscape (Kelly Lyon); Top Bighorn Sheep (Wink Gaines);  
Bottom Bighorn Sheep (John Hammond)

Page 2: Landscape (Kelly Lyon)