

Message from the Founder

—by Don Peay—

When I gave a presentation to some 65 town-folk in the little farming town of Ovando, Montana last spring, we told them we were uniting a voice of sportsmen across the United States and to save our herds and farms from unmanaged wolves. We also told them it would take Congressional Action to return management to the state. There is probably only 100 people that live in that town, and they maybe doubted our voices would be heard, but most of them joined SFW Montana. Today, hunters and ranchers are now legally taking wolves in Idaho and Montana and soon to be Wyoming. Ovando residents, your voice was heard in Washington DC.

SFW Colorado is up and going. Sportsmen in that great state realize the need to have a voice. We are excited to have them come on board.

Many of our members are politically positioned to help SFW in the fight. Robert Espinosa, a founder of SFW New Mexico, was recently appointed by Governor Martinez to the New Mexico Game and Fish Commission. Corey Rossi, a founding member of SFW Alaska was appointed Game and Fish Director by Governor Parnell. Governor Meade personally thanked me on behalf of all citizens of Wyoming at the summer Governor's conference meeting for our efforts to return wolf management to Wyoming and the West.

SFW is made up of some incredibly dedicated members, volunteers and a few staff folks. If you measure inputs and outputs, SFW is "The Best There Is" to borrow a line from one of our long time sponsors, Browning. Randy Walk, President of Hoyt Archery, another avid SFW spon-

sor, shared a recent week of hunting with his father and son, bows, guns, Utah and Colorado, elk, deer, antelope. As you can see manufacturers in the hunting industry also support our cause.

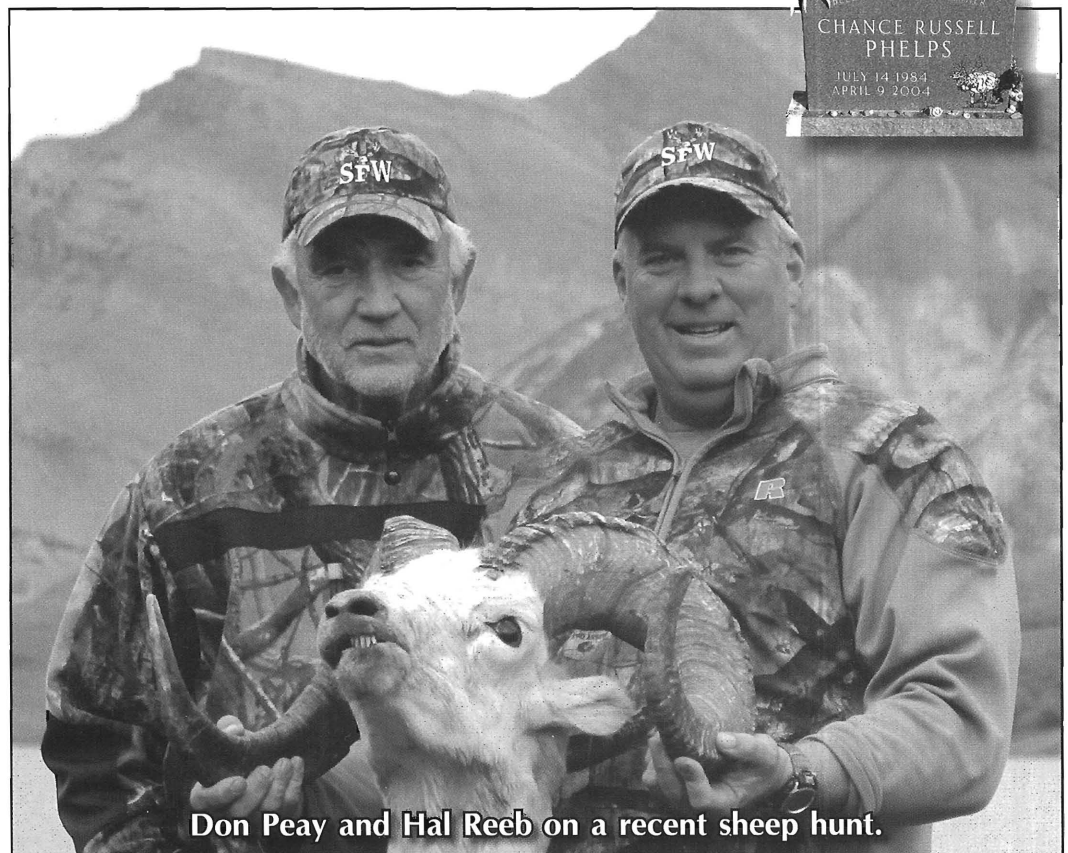
SFW is the place where serious hunters who are willing to get in and fight to produce abundant game herds of bucks, bulls, rams, billies, gobblers, roosters and ganders in all of our great public land western states and Canada. We love our wild places and wild things, we love hunting with family and friends.

In August, I went on a sheep hunt with 78-year-old Hal Reeb. He grew up on a ranch near the Arivipa Canyon country in Arizona. He watched the cougars move in and wipe out the wild sheep there. He played football at the University of Arizona, and was a Judge and land developer in Phoenix. He enjoys hunting mule deer, elk, and other species and has been to Africa with his sons. I asked him why he wanted to hunt sheep at such a young age (he previously had taken a desert ram in Arizona and a stone ram in BC). He said, "I wanted to prove to myself I was still a man, and see if I could rediscover my passion for life." He got a nice ram, and we both found some things we were looking for in the remote mountains of the North West Territories.

Already this fall, I hunted some geese and ducks with my son. Hunting with him reminded me of how important hunting is with family and friends and not just the taking an animal. Two years ago, as we presented a Gold Star mom in Dubois Wyoming with a sign honoring her son. She told us how much Chance loved America, and how one of the freedoms he loved the most was hunting and fishing. Five years ago, there was a town hall meeting in Dubois, the whole town showed up, and I told them we would return wolf management back to them.

Sometimes it takes longer to accomplish things than we want, but SFW is relentless in the pursuit of our mission. Some kids have given their lives for freedom, the least we can do is fight the forces who wish to relegate us to spectators of sports or opera. I can't wait till the wolf hunt opens in Wyoming. There are some scores to settle, and some promises to be kept.

Look forward to seeing you all at the Expo. It is a GREAT platform for conservation and hunters. And, it is a lot of fun.



Don Peay and Hal Reeb on a recent sheep hunt.