



LANA NEWS

Llama Association of North America
Winter Edition 2025





LANA NEWS

Winter Edition 2025



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ON THE COVER
Gobi playing his part
in a drive-thru living
Nativity scene

LANA BUSINESS OFFICE

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Please contact the LANA Business Office for Member Services, Advertisements, Event Calendar updates, and any llama-, alpaca-, or LANA-related questions you may have.

Visit LANA at: www.lanainfo.org
Instagram @llamassociationofnorthamerica
Facebook: Llama Association of North America



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THANK YOU for CONTRIBUTING

Thank you to the following for their contribution to this newsletter:

David Armer, Stan Ebel, Sabina Karr, Phil & Linda Nuechterlein, Joy Pedroni, Stephanie Pedroni, Susan Rich, Cali Roberson, Cyndy Rodriguez, Toni Strassburg, and Scott Woodruff

Editor's Message:

Is this the *LANA Newsletter*? It looks different. Since the Board of Directors are developing new projects, I felt it was time for a new look for the inside of the newsletter. However, I didn't break tradition as the cover page remains original.

There's a new section called "What's Happening in LANA" that lets the readers know what projects and activities the LANA BODs are working on along with upcoming LANA events.

Another new feature will be articles from ranches near and far. The "who, what, why and where" of their involvement with their camelids. The first article comes from way up north from our Alaskan friends, Phil and Linda Nuechterlein.

Read about the PackLlamas.org's Ad Hoc Committee's on-going struggle with WAFWA who want llamas to be tested for disease before they can pack into the Wild Sheep ranges.

In here are a couple of articles from previous *LANA Newsletters*. While older, they are still relevant today. With the show season approaching, one of these articles has helpful information for newbies as well as gentle reminders for the veterans. The other article is about shearing as a business.

Such talented youngsters! The entries for the Youth Art & Essay Contest are featured on pages 23-25. This yearly contest is open to any youth - they do not need to be a LANA member.

Camelids out and about. Enjoy the articles from our friends sharing their animals and Holiday cheer in their communities.

I hope you like the new look of the newsletter. Any feedback, positive or negative, is appreciated. Reading our newsletters should be an enjoyable experience for you. If you are interested in writing an article about your ranch (or anything else), please let me know.

Kathy

From the President

At the beginning of each new year, I think to myself "this is going to be a good year." Then something happens, then another thing and another and...well, you get the picture. It takes a toll on my soul and wears me down. So this year I'm just going to be a llama.

While searching for something on the internet, I came across this on google for "llama":

"The llama stands as a symbol of endurance, community, and gentle strength. At the core of the llama's symbolism lies the essence of cooperative spirit. With their ability to traverse challenging terrains while bearing heavy loads, llamas epitomize the virtues of resilience and reliability."

I wish you all a Happy New Year! And remember, when things get tough, be a llama.

Kathy



LANA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathy Nichols
President, Newsletter Editor

Stephanie Pedroni
Vice President, Social Media

Joy Pedroni
Treasurer, Office, Webmaster

Sue Rich
Secretary, Youth

Lee Beringsmith
Director

Margaret Drew
Director

Emily Muirhead
Director, Social Media

Cali Roberson
Director, Youth

Cathy Spalding
Advisory Chair

You may contact any of the directors at lanquestions@gmail.com

LANA's Mission Statement:

Established in 1981, the Llama Association of North America (LANA), serves the camelid community by sponsoring medical research specific to llamas and alpacas; providing current and accurate information about camelid health and care; advocating for pro-camelid legislation and access to public lands; encouraging, educating and mentoring camelid enthusiasts of all ages in their interactions with camelids; supporting rescue for camelids in distress; and hosting a variety of activities including youth programs, hiking trips, shows, parades, fiber clinics, educational events and more.

Calendar of Events

Bold type denotes LANA sponsored events
*(asterisk) denotes discount for FOL Sponsors and LANA members

NATIONAL WESTERN STOCK SHOW
January 23 - 25, 2025
National Western Stock Show Complex
Denver, Colorado
contact: judy.glaser@yahoo.com
<https://nationalwestern.com>

***LANA'S HOBO CLASSIC SHOW**
January 31 - February 2, 2025
Merced County Fairgrounds,
Merced, California
contact: lanquestions@gmail.com
www.lanainfo.org

FLORIDA STATE FAIR OPEN LLAMA &
ALPACA SHOW
February 14 - 15, 2025
Tampa, Florida
www.floridastatefairag.com

MIDWEST LAMA ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE
February 28 - March 2, 2025
Best Western
Rochester, Minnesota
www.mwla.force.com

RIVERSIDE COUNTY FAIR & DATE
FESTIVAL
March 1 - 2, 2025
Indio, California
<https://www.datefest.org>

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW & RODEO
LLAMA & ALPACA SHOW
March 9 - 11, 2025
NRG Center
Houston, Texas
<https://www.rodeohouston.com>

*** LANA KIDS & CAMELIDS SHOW**
April 12, 2025
Wilton, California
contact: susan.rich9631@gmail.com
www.lanainfo.org

ORVLA CLASSIC
April 26 - 27, 2025
Coshocton, Ohio
contact: janicekschilling@gmail.com
<http://www.orvla.com>

LOS ANGELES COUNTY FAIR
May 3 - 4, 2024
Pomona, California
<http://www.lacountyfair.com>

ALLEN COUNTY OPEN LLAMA SHOW
June 7 - 8, 2025
DeKalb County Fairgrounds
Auburn, Indiana
contact: timothyln@gmail.com

ESTES PARK WOOL MARKET & LLAMA
SHOW
June 7 - 8, 2025
Estes Park Events Complex
Estes Park, Colorado
<https://www.estesparkeventscomplex.com/llamas.html>
contact: talltailllamas@gmail.com

ORANGE COUNTY FAIR
July 18 - 20, 2025
Costa Mesa, California
<https://ocfair.com>

HAPPY CAMPER LLAMA SHOW
July 19 - 20, 2025
Hidden Oaks Llama Ranch
Estacada, Oregon
columbiarivercamelids@gmail.com

**CALIFORNIA STATE FAIR LLAMA &
ALPACA SHOW**
July 24 - 27, 2025
Cal Expo
Sacramento, California
contact: KathySVA@aol.com
www.calexpostatefair.org

If you have an event you would like added to the Calendar of Events,
please contact: lanquestions@gmail.com or KathySVA@aol.com

What's Happening in LANA

Exciting New Projects

Your LANA Board of Directors is busy working on new projects and activities for 2025. Some of those are:

- UC Davis SAVMA Symposium - LANA-sponsored hands-on workshop
- Sponsorships/Grants for Youth members
- Co-hosting clinics with other organizations

And while we are excited about these new ones, we're delighted to bring back a former one too - the LANA Youth Sportsmanship Award.



The results are in

2025 LANA Board of Directors

There were four Board of Directors: Emily Muirhead, Joy Pedroni, Susan Rich and Cali Roberson (who filled the vacated position in October '24). whose terms concluded at the end of

2024. The four directors ran for another term and were re-elected. Board positions were decided at the January BOD's meeting and are listed on page 4. Thank you to the LANA membership who voted.

LANA's 16th Annual Hobo Classic

is just around the corner

The LANA Hobo Classic is January 31 - February 2, 2025 at the Merced County Fairgrounds in Merced, California. We're pleased to have Phil Feiner coming from New York to judge our show. The Hobo Village will be arranged differently to accommodate our caterer. Lots going on Saturday evening: Dinner, LANA's annual Membership meeting, annual Awards presentation, live dessert auction and silent auctions (one silent auction with higher end items benefits Lama Lifeline). Show information, registration forms, auction tags and sponsorship opportunity can be found on LANA's website. We hope to see you there.





SAY HELLO TO OUR 2025 MEMBERS

Kris Barnes
Adventure Ranch
Ahwahnee, CA

Eileen Ditsler
Icehouse Llamas
San Dimas, CA

Don and Janice Keller
Rockin' K Ranch
Hayward, CA
rockink-llamaranch.net

Rob and Jill Knuckles
Tall Tail Llama Ranch
Collbran, CO

Kimberly Korff
Vacaville, CA

Kaycee Lusk
PPO Gems

Crystal Myers
Friendly Hills Llamas
La Habra Heights, CA

Michael Nelson
Faith Farm
Sandwich, MA

Kathy Nichols
Lamarah
Wilton, CA

Patti Oxenham
PPO Gems
Hesperia, CA

Ron and Joy Pedroni
Stephanie Pedroni
Black Cat Llamas
Vacaville, CA

Fred, Sue and Kenny Rich
The Rich Ranch
Oakdale, CA

The Roberson Family
Goodness and Mercy Llama Ranch
Escalon, CA

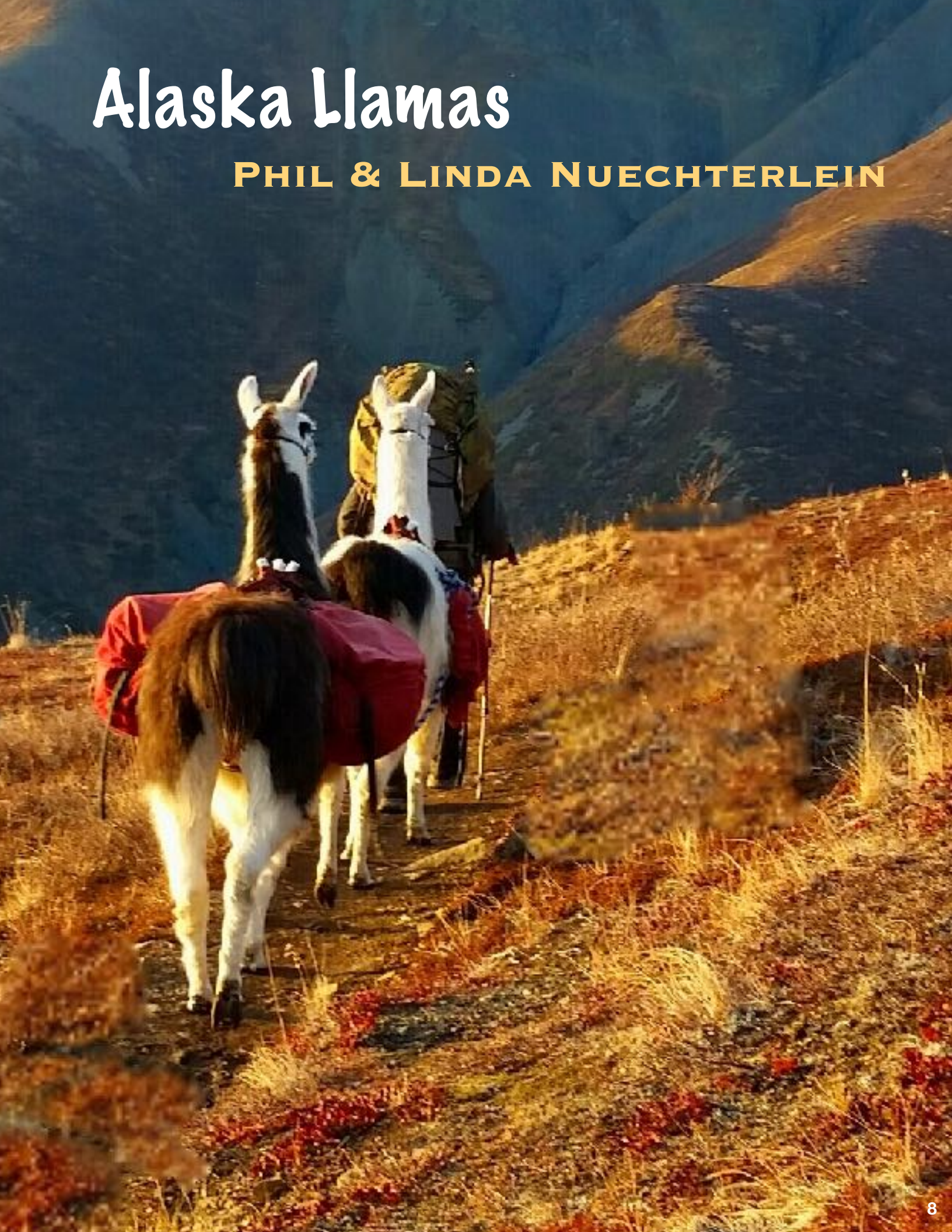
Kayla Rogers
4R Llama Ranch
Madera, CA

Walt Schaff
Fair Oaks, CA

Sierra 4-H Llama Project
Oakdale, CA

Alaska Llamas

PHIL & LINDA NUECHTERLEIN





Our "llama story" started back in the early 1980's when we noticed several llamas for sale in the now defunct "Early Winters" catalog. We knew nothing about llamas, but these amazing creatures looked like they could actually be a "backpack with four legs." This seemed too good to be true, but the more we learned about llamas, the more they looked like the ideal pack animal, especially for Alaska (with all that wool.)

Rewind back to the 1980's when demand and prices for llamas were at their peak. During this era waiting lists for llamas (especially in Alaska) were the norm. We started searching in the "lower 48 states" and found four male llama weanlings in Oregon. With a little help from a llama "wrangler," we loaded all four weanlings in the rear pit of a 727 Western Airliner and took off for Alaska - llamas "in tow."

During the mid 1980's our unbridled enthusiasm got the best of us and we ended up with a breeding herd. However our passion remained with backcountry llama packing so when "opportunity knocked" we sold our breeding herd and continued packing with our remaining male llamas. You could say we went full-circle.



At left:
Phil and Linda at the Root Glacier in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park which is one of the places the Nuechterlein's fought (successfully) to keep open to llama packing.



To this day, we have never found a better pack animal for Alaska, nor a better companion in the backcountry. Sadly there has been a campaign of misinformation and propaganda being spread by special interest groups that llamas pose a "disease threat" to wildlife, in particular wild sheep. As a result we have spent countless hours countering proposals by various government agencies attempting to ban llamas on public lands.

Linda established "Alaska Llamas" on Facebook and a blog at www.alaskallamas.com to provide updates on government proposals to ban llamas on public lands in Alaska, and other relevant information associated with the unfounded camelid disease threat. To date our efforts have paid off, and we have been successful in educating government agencies so that pack llamas are allowed on most public lands in Alaska.

In addition to Linda's blog posts, you will find a complete history and relevant documentation on scientifically unfounded proposals and disease issues at <https://www.packllamas.org>. This website is supported by a volunteer public lands access committee that is working hard to protect your right to access our public lands with pack llamas.



Upper left:
Phil with
Cerveza and
Raul

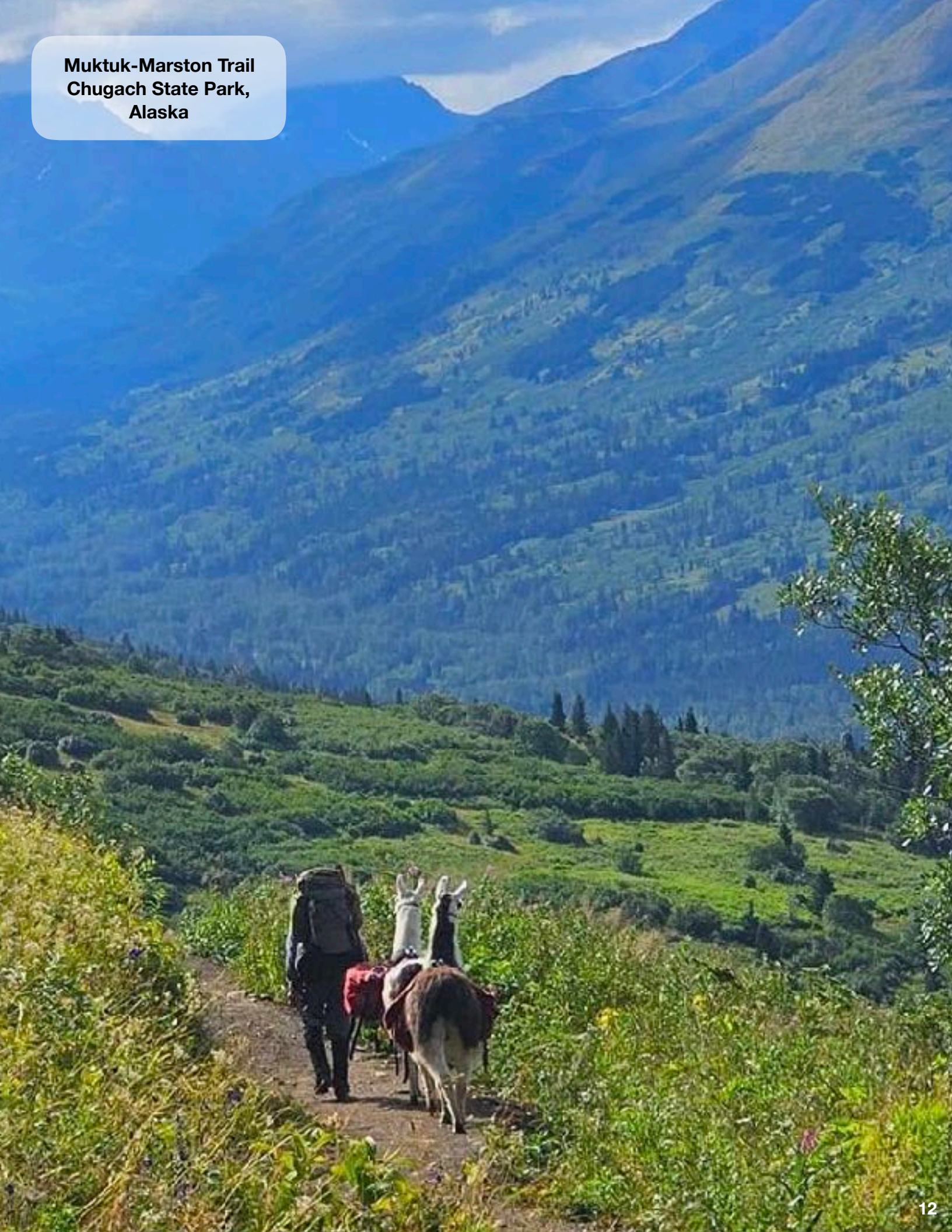
To the left:
Linda with
Cerveza and
Raul

Heritage Falls
across the
Eagle River



The trail up to Hunter Pass
which goes into the
Arctic Valley,
Chugach State Park, Alaska

**Muktuk-Marston Trail
Chugach State Park,
Alaska**





View of the Eagle
River from
the Perch
on the
Historic
Iditarod Trail,
Chugach State Park,
Alaska

to the left:
During Summer

Below:
During Fall







CONGRATULATIONS

Kylie and Prym

LANA's online Halloween costume contest winner
Kylie Stafford and her Llama Prym

Thank you to everyone that submitted photos.
it was SO fun to see all the creative costumes
and very patient animals.



LANA HOBO CLASSIC

LANA's 16th Annual Hobo Classic Show

ALSA Halter & Performance Show

January 31 - February 2, 2025

Merced County Fairgrounds, Merced, CA

Judge: Philip Feiner, Stephentown, New York



SHOW SUPERINTENDENT: Kathy Nichols

SHOW SECRETARY: Joy Pedroni

FACILITY: Merced County Fairgrounds
900 Martin Luther King Jr Way
Merced, CA 95341

ARRIVAL: Arrival time for all exhibitors is
anytime on Friday, January 31st

SHOW SCHEDULE: **Saturday - February 1st**
8:00 am Driving Classes
Exhibitors' Meeting
Performance Classes
6:00 pm Hobo Dinner
Annual Membership Meeting
Annual Awards
Introduction of 2025 LANA Board
Dessert Auction

Sunday - February 2nd
8:30 am Showmanship
Halter Classes
Best in Show Llama & Alpaca



2024 Llama Best in Show

**4R SHAKIRA
SKANSEN'S LLAMAS**

**Registration, Show Information
and all Forms on LANA's website**



Special Price Packages

NO Groom Show

Relaxed & Casual Atmosphere

Hobo attire encouraged

Fun Awards

Outstanding Silent Auction

LANA Annual Membership Meeting

LANA Annual Awards

Youth Art & Essay Winners Recognized

Dinner Saturday evening

Dessert Auction

COME JOIN THE FUN!

Common Sense *and* Courtesy IN THE RING

by Cyndy Rodriguez

Showing llamas is not only fun, but also a way to promote your ranch.

ATTEND PRE-SHOW MEETING WITH JUDGES

Have your questions prepared. Ring procedure, enter ring in a particular order, does judge want the handler to negotiate obstacles in performance classes.

BE AT RING SIDE FIVE MINUTES BEFORE YOUR CLASS

If possible, tie up your llamas at ringside that are in successive classes. Have a “gopher” to check on class status. Enter only what you can handle or hire help. One late person per class can make a show at least one hour late.

PHYSICALLY CHECK IN WITH YOUR GATE KEEPER BEFORE YOUR CLASS

Let your gate keeper know if you are handling several llamas in performance or successive halter classes. Give your gate keeper all your number so he/she can inform the ring steward.

POTTY YOUR LLAMAS BEFORE CLASSES

Your llama will walk better and pay more attention to you if he/she does not have to think about a potty break. It also holds up the class and makes the show late.

PASS TO THE OUTSIDE OF THE RING

If possible, when you need to pass, pass to the outside of the ring so as not to block the view of the animal you are passing from the judge. This should only be done with the ring steward's okay. If you have a llama that you know moves out, be the first in line for the class, don't cut corners and use every inch of the ring.

AT ALL COSTS, PROTECT YOUR JUDGE FROM SPITTING, KICKING, OR GETTING RUN OVER, ETC.

If your llama is in a mood, keep the nose turned away from the judge or use your hand in front of your llama's mouth if spitting is eminent. Keep your llama's weight on his haunches to discourage kicking and warn your judge if your llama has that tendency.





TRAIN YOUR LLAMA TO STAND FOR INSPECTION

Start with tying your llama at home for short periods of tie. Increase the time tied but keep your llama always within your sight. Make sure you always tie with a quick release knot. Practice approaching your llama from all directions. When he is used to this, add family members and do the same approach with you holding the lead. Lastly, have strangers approach your llama and show your animal that he will not be harmed.

HOLD THE LEAD LINE WITH RIGHT HAND 8-12 INCHES BELOW THE CLIP

Holding the clip may cause an accidental rearest of your llama. Holding your llama too close to his head may cause your llama to be shy or not want to move on.

FIGURE 8 THE LEAD LINE IN YOUR LEFT HAND

Looping the lead line around your hand is dangerous and may cause damage to you fingers, hand, or wrists if your llama bolts. Also, never tie your llama around your waist or belt loops in training.

TRAIN AT HOME — NOT IN THE RING

There is no greater turn-off to the public and other llama owners than to see a handler jerking their llama around by the head or punishing their llama in the ring. All you are doing is reinforcing to you llama that the ring is a bad, scary place.

BE POLITE TO THE JUDGE AT ALL TIMES

Answer all questions but do not initiate conversation.

STAND AND WALK TO THE SIDE OF YOUR LLAMA

Obviously you could be in trouble if you were standing or walking in front of you llama whether in halter or performance class and your llama jumps forward.

IF YOU HAVE WON FIRST OR SECOND PLACE IN HALTER — DO NOT LEAVE THE AREA

Again, I am stressing the importance of not holding up a class. If you have won first or second place you have to return to the ring for the championship class, So be proud and hang around the ring for a while.

BE A GOOD SPORT

You are paying for that judge's opinion on that day. Respect it.

SHEAR PROFIT

By Toni Strassburg



SHEARING AS A BUSINESS

As we know, llamas are an extraordinary breed of livestock with an expansive list of uses to capitalize on. Their fiber and shearing is likely one of the most popular and easiest bi-products to exploit for profit. I'm going to use this article to take an in depth look at my personal experience shearing and how it creates a substantial profit for my farm.

My own shearing business was born in the Spring of 2010 due to stark demand in my local area for the service. I started by shearing roughly 45 head every spring and am now, in 2015, shearing on the upwards side of 300. Being a shearer requires heavy financial investment, a lot of physical labor, more patience than you should need, and prolific social skills in order to work and coordinate with customers. This is certainly not an adventure for the light hearted. Almost everywhere in the country llamas need annual shearing in order to tolerate our climate. Depending on your local demand, experienced camelid enthusiasts have the capability to capitalize on this opportunity and generate revenue. Below are a list of tips I have put together after 5+ years of shearing as a business.

- Always have a preset, published list of your services and their cost. Be sure to share this information with your clients before and arrive and make sure they acknowledge and agree to those prices.
- Come prepared. Nothing is more troublesome than running out of blades, having a motor freeze up or running out of oil mid-way through a job. You should have at least 3 sets of shears and enough blades to get through 3 x the amount of animals you have to do. Do not forget toenail clippers, blood stop powder, towels, iodine, extra blades, bandaging, oil, cooling spray, your receipt book, cleaning/maintenance tools, halters/leads, disinfectant, and most importantly a patient attitude. It may seem excessive, but the list comes from experience.
- Do not let your shears run unless they are cutting the fiber or getting lubricated. It's easy to get distracted by talking to clients. Building positive relationships with your clients is good but ruining your clippers and letting them get unnecessarily hot is not.
- Do not give out veterinary advice. Sharing personal experiences and what has worked for your farm is great, but you do not want to be caught liable for a misunderstanding. ALWAYS recommend them to consult a licensed DVM.
- PAY ATTENTION to your shears or clippers. Do not use them if they are too hot. Not only can you seriously damage your equipment but more importantly it's very easy to

unintentionally burn a llama's skin.

- Be clear with your customers when preemptively communicating. Make sure they understand what you will be doing and what you need from them, including having the llamas penned up. Do not be afraid to institute a 'Catching Fee' for animals who are not prepared for your arrival. Your time is just as valuable as your skills and equipment.
- Blow out the fiber if at all possible. This will maximize potential profit by increasing the lifespan of your blades and the amount of work necessary for your shears to function.
- Establish prices that are fair and profitable. Do not undercut yourself and do not take advantage of people trying to maintain the health of their pets/livestock. Check with other camelid shearers around the country.
- Always bring extra clothes and dress appropriately. It is inevitable that your outfit will be completely ruined. Come prepared.
- Build a customer base by word of mouth, advertising through llama related events, social media, and even craigslist! Advertising in web space can be intimidating but there are many llama owners out there that have either inherited or picked up animals without any experience and their only direction to turn to for help is the World Wide Web.
- Remember when dealing with clients that inexperienced and unknowledgeable people are *not necessarily bad*. Education, providing resources, and positive reinforcement could lead to the next big-wig enthusiast in the llama industry! Remember: Patience. Patience. Patience.

SHOW CUTS

If you are at all experienced in the llama industry, you know how popular (addicting) the show ring is for both breeders and fanatics. It's where our animals get the most exposure to potential customers. Just like with humans, no matter how cute you are, a bad haircut can send people running. There are many styles popular in the show circuit today but what's most import is not to follow trends, but provide a cut that accentuates all the positive traits your llama has to offer.

Assess your llama's conformation and be honest with yourself. If you need help with this, don't

be afraid to ask a trusted friend/individual. If your llama has a long back, do not give him a lion cut. If your llama's neck is short? The Argentine/Nudie cut is not what is going to show off your beast to its best ability. Once you have the style picked out, take your time doing the clipping. Go over areas multiple times from all directions to remove any and all lines. Take it slow. You can always take fiber off but you can't put it back on. All cuts should be completely symmetrical from both the left and right side. Special attention should be paid to the rear legs if the animal was give a lion cut. The cut-off line should be unquestionably even when viewed from the rear. A better appearance of your animal/show string will not only escalate the presentation of your farm/program but will in turn generate more serious interest in your stock/product. Like a good showman, a flattering cut can take a llama from the bottom of a class to the top.

FIBER

First, let me tell you that anyone who says you cannot make money from your llama's fiber is lying. Llama fiber is a high end, natural product whether it measure at a luxurious 17 or a durable 40 microns. It does take work, time, patience, practice, and people skills.

To maximize your profit while shearing you need to make sure your subjects are clean which means grooming, blowing and washing your llamas a couple days before shearing and keeping them in a cool, clean space. This will not only keep the work of your clippers minimal and save your blade usage, but also severely reduce the amount of heavy work post shearing. Make sure the space in which you are shearing is safe, efficient, and clean with minimal dust/debris, a restraining chute and a team there to help if possible.

Take care to set a tarp or mat is below your shearing area in order to catch any non-prime fiber (neck, legs, tail) that falls to the ground. As you are shearing the prime location of the animal your second person should be present to catch the prime fiber in a clean bag as it comes off. Try to make one swipe per area and wait to clean up small patches or lines until you are finished. This will avoid soiling your prime fiber with the small, uneven remnants know as "second cuts."

Do your best to not let your product hit the ground. When you are finished with your prime area, label your bag with the llama's identification and shearing date. Sort your non-prime fiber into larger bags by colors. This coarse fiber is best used for felting projects, rug making, and socks which oftentimes requires larger quantities where it is less important know which animal(s) contributed to the product.

Now that you have bags of clean fleece you have got to dig into your marketing skills. Don't have them? Read a book, check out the internet, ask knowledgeable friends, and get resourceful. Llama fiber can be sold raw to avoid additional investment or sent in for processing to create unique specialty yarns and products you can later sell. Consumer research is incredibly important. There are plenty of media to sell your product to enthusiastic buyers, you just need to develop some creativity and find them. Determine where and how you will sell your product before you invest your time and money to maximize your profit. If all that research and work isn't your thing but still want to be active with your fiber? Consider joining a Llama Fiber Coop.

*This article is from a LANA Expo notebook
The author was a presenter at LANA Expo*

LANA'S ANNUAL YOUTH Art & Essay Contest Winners



"This is a felted canvas I made using llama fibers. "



Bird on a Branch

by Victoria Alvarenga-Seals
Age 14
Intermediate Art Winner



Drawn in pencil

"I chose to draw this llama because I liked this pose."



Fluffy Llama

by Charlotte Roberson
Age 9
Junior Art Winner



Audrey Roberson
Age 11
Junior Essay Winner

“I wrote an essay about members of the camelid family because they are intriguing, and I wanted to learn more about them.”



Who are the Members of the Camelid Family?

Do you know the five members of the camelid family? A camelid is a group of animals that are even-toed, ruminant, and mammals. The Camelid group includes llamas, alpacas, guanacos, vicunas, and camels. Llamas, alpacas, vicunas, and guanacos can be classified into a smaller group called Lamoids. All members of the camelid family are fascinating and unique.

Llamas are one of the more common members of the camelid family. Llamas are the domesticated version of the guanaco. Llamas have long necks and legs, small heads, a split upper lip, banana-shaped ears, and short tails. Llamas are typically 40-50 inches tall at the withers and 60-72 inches tall at the poll (top of the head). Adult llamas weigh 290-440 lbs (131-199 kilograms). Their life span is 15-20 years. Llamas come in a variety of colors such as gray, black, white, beige, brown, red, and mixes of these colors. Llamas have been bred to be beasts of burden. People use llamas as pack animals, guardian animals, therapy, fiber, carting animals, raising for profit, and fun pets! Llamas are a vital part of transport in the Andes Mountains. Llamas can be used for a wide range of fun activities.

Alpacas are the teddy bear of the camelid family. They are the domesticated version of the vicuna. Alpacas are slender-bodied animals with long legs and a long neck. They have a small head and tails. Alpacas have small, spear shaped ears that point outward. Alpacas are 31-39 inches tall at the withers and 47-59 inches at the poll (top of the head). Alpacas weigh around 110-190 lbs (49-86 kilograms). An alpaca's lifespan is 15-20 years old. Alpacas come in colors such as white, fawn, brown, gray, black, or mixed colors also called “fancy”. Alpacas can be used as therapy or 4-H projects but they have been bred primarily for their fiber. Alpaca fiber is very soft and is used in jackets and clothing. There are two types of alpaca Suri and Huacaya. Suri alpaca fiber hangs in silky locks. Huacaya alpaca fiber is dense and wooly, giving them a teddy bear appearance. Huacaya alpacas make up 90% of the population. Alpacas are sweet and manageable creatures.

Guanacos are the wild ancestors of the llama. Guanacos are slightly smaller than llamas. Guanacos have a long neck and long legs. They have a small head and tail with large pointed ears. Guanacos stand about 57-61 inches at the poll (top of the head). Guanaco's life span is 20-25 years old. Guanacos are light brown, yellowish brown, and rusty red. Their belly, rump, and back of legs are white. Their head and ears are gray. This helps them blend into the grassland and desert habitat they live in. Guanacos are herd animals. You can find them roaming throughout the Andes Mountains, Peru, Bolivia, and southward to the Tierra del Fuego archipelago. Guanacos eat grass and other small plants. They gather most of the water they need from the grass and vegetation. If you want to see these amazing creatures check your local zoo!

Vicunas have the finest fiber of any known animal. It is about twice as fine as cashmere. Vicunas are the ancestors of the alpaca. Vicunas are shorn every three years. After being shorn they are tagged and released. Vicunas are the smallest member of the camelid family. Vicunas are about 36 inches at the withers and weigh 110 lbs (49 kilograms). Vicunas are pale white or light cinnamon. They are found at altitudes of 12,000-16,000 ft in the center of the Andes Mountains. They are also found in Chile and Argentina. Vicuna wool costs 250-300 U.S. dollars per one-ounce skein of vicuna yarn.

Camels by far are the largest member of the camelid family. There are two main types of camel: bactrian and dromedary. Bactrian camels have two humps. Dromedary camels only have one hump. Bactrian camels weigh about 660-2,200 lbs (299-997 kilograms). They are 84 inches or 7 feet tall. Dromedary camels weigh 660-1,320 lbs (299-598 kilograms). Most camels are light brown. They can be white or black. Some west African camels can even be spotted. Camels are used for transportation, milk, and wool. The nomads of Africa's Saharan region still use dromedary camels. Camels can carry 200-1,000 lbs (90-453 kilograms). If a camel is well nourished its hump stands upright. If it is not well nourished the hump flops to one side. Despite popular belief, camel's humps don't store water. Bactrian camels are native to the Gobi Desert in China and the bactrian steppes of Mongolia. Domesticated dromedary camels can be found throughout desert areas in North Africa and the Middle East. A feral population of dromedary camels also lives in Australia.

Now you know who the five members of the camelid family are. They are used for a wide range of activities. They are all unique. Lots of people enjoy hanging out with their camelid friends.

Kids & Camelids Show



Sat., April 12, 2025

Start Time: 9:00 AM

Registration Deadline: Monday April 7

Location:

**Nichols Ranch
12514 Plum Lane
Wilton, CA 95693**

Go to www.lanainfo.org
for registration forms



Designed for Youth ONLY

No Groom

Lots of fun

Performance classes + some fun stuff!!

Part Show - Part Clinic

- Consultations with the judge
- Opportunity to practice on obstacles
- Showmanship clinic and class



Show Superintendent:

Susan Rich

(209) 847-2981

(209) 605-2055

Cross that off *my* Bucket List

By Sabina Karr





Participating in a parade has always been on my bucket list. What better way to get into the holiday spirit than being a part of the Thanksgiving Parade. Miners' Ravine 4-H group club in Loomis, California, has a very active group of participants. The beautiful 4-H float captured all the different projects including poultry, rabbits, sheep, goats, and of course llamas and alpacas.



From the marching bands, colorful floats and people dressed as life-sized turkeys, this was a new experience for Ophelia, the llama, and Halston, the alpaca. Certainly, there is no other way to recreate this opportunity. As we walked along the parade route, the energy was intense - such excitement and festivity. The Thanksgiving Parade was the perfect way to embrace the wonderful community that we call home.

Happy Holidays to all!





DOWNTOWN

Christmas

By Cali Roberson

The “Downtown Christmas” event in Oakdale, CA, is an all-day kickoff for the Christmas season in my hometown. The event begins in the morning with roads and parking lots dedicated to vendors selling gifts, local products, and a variety of food trucks. As the day progresses, more streets are closed down and the lighted floats arrive for the annual parade. Just after sundown the parade makes its way through the downtown area to a park in the center of town. The long day comes to a close with the lighting of a large fir tree in the middle of the park.

Sierra 4H participates in this event every year by commandeering an entire parking lot where we set up a petting zoo and booth to sell hot chocolate and cotton candy. The petting zoo is made up of animals that the 4H kids and leaders bring, and this year included: goats, sheep, rabbits, turkeys, chickens, and of course llamas. We had three llamas and three 4H kids in attendance this year. Audrey Roberson with McClure, Charlotte Roberson with Don Pedro, and Dominic Toste with Gaia.

Each 4H member groomed their llama and McClure and Don Pedro sported some festive jingle bells. Llamas are always a huge crowd favorite and the kids enjoyed sharing and teaching the public about them. For Dominic, this was only his 3rd time handling llamas. He had the friendliest llama of the group and was very eager to show her off her sweetness to everyone concerned that they might be spit upon. Our other two llamas stood in the middle of their pen just out of arm’s length, but at least they looked good with their bells.



We packed up just before dark. The kids loved leading their llamas through the crowd and down the sidewalk of a residential neighborhood to where we had parked several blocks away. While this all-day event does test the llamas' patience, it is so great to get the kids talking about their animals and for the public to see how gentle and kind they are. There is something special about the kids bringing their "own" animal out to share with the world.



the Living Nativity

By David Armer



Photographs of my Bactrian camel, Gobi, participating in a drive-thru Nativity at Grace Community Fellowship in Eugene, Oregon.

Gobi, accompanied by several goats and a miniature donkey named Opie, brought smiles to many attendees' faces. Gobi added an extra experience to the beauty of the season.



Llama Access to Public Lands

The following is a memo from the ad hoc Committee for Llama Access to Public Lands that was scripted from the original first communication sent to the WAFWA-WSI (Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies - Wild Sheep Initiative) and the WHC (Wildlife Health Committee), and all western state wildlife directors. Also included is the Dr. Cebra Letter wrote September, 2024, and the Post-Cebra Brief Response followed by the WAFWA-WSI and WHC Brief dated April 10, 2023.

The latest WAFWA brief date.(07/03/24, advocating testing llamas for conditional access to wild sheep ranges, is based on two assumptions: 1) There is not adequate data regarding diseases carried by llamas. 2) There is not enough history regarding disease transference between llamas and other species known to carry diseases that affect wild sheep.

Dr. Cebra, DVM, noted camelid/llama veterinary researcher at Oregon State University, has written the attached letter that responds to the brief and exposes the error to these base assumptions. It calls into serious question the recommendation of the brief to require testing for llamas entering wild sheep habitat.

Please read the letter in its entirety but take particular note of the following points:

- Llamas are not new to North America, in fact it's their point of origin, specifically western North America.
- Llamas have been commingled with sheep, domestic and wild, for eons with only sporadic and terminal disease crossover, typically involving llamas being atypically infected by the sheep.
- Llamas have been under direct human control and observation for thousands of years and no endemic diseases have been identified.
- Llamas are noted to have a robust immune system and the emphasis in llama disease research is focused on researching and trying to develop a means of replicating the immunity in other species. This emphasis and effort validates the first three points. Researchers and scientists have observed the historic lack of endemic disease and the lack of disease transfers in llamas and are putting a lot of effort and money into understanding and replicating the phenomenon. The promise of using llamas' immunity to cure/prevent disease in other species and humans has created a lot of excitement. It completely undermines WAFWA's position that llamas require testing because they are new to veterinary observation and research and are without documented history.
- He addresses the error of WAFWA equating disease titers with indication of infection. It is simply an indication of their predicate and dependable immune response. It also points out the constant presence of ruminant pathogens.
- He points out the arbitrary reality of zero tolerance/precautionary principle applied to llamas and not to other species.
- He characterizes the "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" statement as unrealistic and paralyzing in the real world.

The ad hoc committee for Llama Access to Public Lands will follow this message with their own response to the brief. There are additional substantive issues that require WAFWA's response.

The Ad Hoc Committee for Llama Access to Public Lands
Stan Ebel, Scott Woodruff and Phil Nuechterlein
PackLlamas.org



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September 11, 2024

To the WAFWA Wild Sheep Initiative & Wildlife Health Committee,
I am writing this letter as a veterinarian and scientist who has worked with camelids, among other species, for over 30 years. I have never owned a camelid nor participated in any activity involving wild sheep, except for treating a small handful of Bighorns in my clinic over the years. As a large animal internist, biomedical researcher and university professor, I have worked with camelids in both clinical and scholarly capacities. I am the primary editor and author of a leading textbook about them and hold an endowed professorship of camelid medicine at my university. I host an international conference of camelid veterinarians every two years, and am involved in several strong networks of information exchange about camelids. I have no financial interest in camelids, but feel I am knowledgeable about them, and constantly wonder at their unique features. Some of those are of great interest in the research community: camelids' high altitude and dry climate adaptations, diabetes-like metabolism and unique heavy-chain antibodies may all offer pathways to improve the lives of humans and animals in a variety of domains.

I have read the most recent Brief on South American Camelid Disease Risk to Wild Sheep prepared by the WAFWA Wild Sheep Initiative & Wildlife Health Committee. The recommendations in this document are that camelids who enter wild sheep territory should be kept isolated from animals known to carry pathogens transmissible to sheep, that they should not enter thin horn sheep range and that a comprehensive microbiologic catalog for camelids should be created. The catalog should enable "reasonable and science-based decisions" about access of camelids to wild sheep territory.

Science is essentially using observations to explain things. It has the inherent weakness that observations always represent a subset of all possibilities, such that exceptions and remote occurrences can rarely be excluded. We hear more and more today, that "more science is needed," but that call often reflects an appetite that cannot be sated. It has often been stated that the absence of evidence is not the same as evidence of absence; this is being used as an anti-science weapon, not a serious tool. Science rarely proves facts; it uses facts to make predictions. Currently, we have the following facts: there is no evidence that camelids carry *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, and years of interactions between camelids and wild sheep have led to no evidence of disease transference. Science would tell you that those facts predict that a future transmission event would be unlikely. Demanding 100% confidence would require a draconian, zero-tolerance policy such as the

one suggested in the thin horn sheep areas, and in all fairness, if imposed, should also extend to every other species of mammal, including man. Not applying the ban broadly makes it arbitrary, and defies the definition of a reasonable decision.

Camelids are natives to the North American west and most likely were only completely exterminated with the arrival of man. They doubtless cohabited with ancient breeds of sheep for millions of years. This is borne out in the fossil records. They continue to cohabit with domestic sheep throughout the Americas, mainly in combined flocks in South America and as camelid guards for sheep flocks in North America. In spite of this, there is extremely little information about pathogen transmission between the two families of animal. Where it exists, it is overwhelmingly evidence of domestic ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats), passing disease to camelids. There is copious evidence of seroconversion of camelids exposed to domestic ruminants, meaning that the camelids have been exposed to the ruminant pathogens and have had an immune response. There is far less information that those transmissions cause serious or long-term disease in the camelids.

Using this paucity or lack of evidence as a tool to highlight uncertainty is a weak parlor trick: "there's no evidence that it does, but we don't know that it doesn't." There is undisputedly less information about infectious diseases in camelids than there is in domestic ruminants. This relates to a number of factors, most importantly the lack of major disease outbreaks in camelids. Why study something that you can't find and doesn't seem important? There have not been comprehensive studies to identify the flora of the camelid respiratory tract because decades of routine diagnostic postmortems and body fluid samples of camelids around the world have failed to yield evidence of consistent important pathogens. The few pathogens that have been identified invariably come from ruminants, and camelids clear them or succumb to them quickly. Resident pathogens and carrier states of most studied viruses and bacteria in camelids have barely been identified, and many of the early suspects have been disproved by decades of clinical experiences.

Rather than playing the uncertainty game, which suggest no willingness to find a broadly accepted solution, WAFWA should consider working with health experts. Let's use science as a tool and not a weapon, and work together to find a path forward.

Respectfully,



Christopher Cebra VMD, MA, MS, DACVIM (Large Animal)
The Pfefferkorn and Wendorf Professor of Camelid Medicine
Chair, Department of Clinical Sciences

Post Cebra Brief Response

Dr. Cebra's response to the 07/03/24 Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Final-South American Camelids (SAC) Brief addresses WAFWA's advocacy for granting conditional access for llamas to wild sheep ranges based on disease testing. His statement highlights this advocacy as lacking historical information and being out of context regarding llama disease history.

The WAFWA brief is based on two assumptions: 1) There is not adequate data regarding diseases carried by llamas. 2) There is not enough history regarding disease transference between llamas and other species known to carry diseases that affect wild sheep. WAFWA made these assumptions without consulting the llama veterinary research/clinical community or llama producers. Over the last six years our ad hoc committee has pointed this out and repeatedly attempted to provide the Wild Sheep Initiative (WSI) (formerly Wild Sheep Working Group-WSWG) the information they lacked regarding llama veterinary medicine and natural history. That information has never been responded to or acknowledged by WSI.

The same information and perspective Dr. Cebra provides in this letter has been presented in our responses to the previous WSI briefs. We gleaned that information from Dr Cebra's retired contemporaries: Dr. Murry Fowler, Dr. LaRue Johnson, and Dr. Gregg Adams who studied llamas as disease threats to other species, wild and domestic. This topic emerged 30 years ago when the National Park Service (NPS) attempted to ban llamas as a disease threat to desert bighorns in Canyonlands National Park Service-South East Utah Group (Canyonlands NP). Dr. Cebra simply restates, focuses, and amplifies that information, specifically to address this current brief. He does so with a high degree of credibility as the leader of international llama research and veterinary medicine.

-Llamas are not new to North America, in fact it's their place of origin, specifically western North America (NA). WAFWA and the wild sheep community have always referred to llamas as South American camelids and non-native. Cattle and horses are never referred to as European bovids and European equids and are afforded quasi-native acceptance, though relatively recently introduced to western NA. As Dr Cebra notes, they are markedly less adapted to the altitude and dry conditions of western NA in which llamas thrive because it's their place of origin. To ignore cattle and horses as disease threats to wild sheep while seeking conditional access for llamas is arbitrary as Dr. Cebra notes.

-Llamas have been commingled with sheep, domestic and wild, for eons with only isolated and terminal disease crossover, usually involving llamas being atypically infected by sheep predictably carrying ruminant pathogens. These ruminant pathogens comprise the list of diseases the RISK ASSESSMENT ON THE USE OF SOUTH AMERICAN CAMELIDS FOR BACK COUNTRY TREKKING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA (CCH '17) ascribed to llamas and characterized by WAFWA as the most current list of pathogens for llamas. Dr Cebra notes that llamas harbor no endemic disease, specifically the ruminant diseases named in CCH'17. This list has no relevance to llamas.

This echoes the summary statement* from the 1995 Canyonlands veterinarians who conducted the Canyonlands summit addressing llamas as a disease threat to desert Bighorn Sheep. Additionally, the 2020 AASRP* statement from the 1000+ practicing and research veterinarians comprising their membership specifically name the diseases in the CCH'17 and dismiss llamas as a threat to carry or communicate any of the listed diseases to wild sheep. We have provided these statements to WAFWA in several of our responses and discussions without acknowledgement or discussion.

-Dr. Cebra notes that llama exposure to disease pathogens typically elicits an immune response resulting in a blood titer. If isolated infection occurs, the llama typically clears the infection or succumbs quickly. They do not harbor the disease nor communicate it within their own population or to other species. WAFWA's recent brief acknowledges this phenomenon as curious. Uninformed by historical observations and documentation that show this to be normal, WAFWA attributes it to uncertainty that needs to be resolved through testing. Page 2 of the WAFWA Final Brief *"To date, no peer-reviewed literature exists on confirmed disease transmission from SACs to any mountain ungulates; however, given the environmental and health risks wild sheep currently face and the ability for diseases to be transmitted from other domestic animals to wild sheep (e.g. domestic sheep and cattle), a preventive approach should be taken."*

-Llamas have been under direct human control and observation for thousands of years and no endemic diseases have been identified. How does WAFWA employ a narrative that counters thousands of years of observation corroborated by 50+ years of modern veterinary management based on their recent conjecture that ignores the preponderance of evidence?

-Llamas are noted to have a robust immune system and the emphasis in llama disease research is focused on researching and trying to develop a means of replicating this immunity in other species. This emphasis and effort validates the previous three assertions. Researchers and scientists have observed the historic lack of endemic disease and the lack of disease transference in llamas and are putting a lot of effort and money into understanding and replicating the unique aspects of their immunity. The promise of using llamas' immunity to cure/prevent disease in other species including humans has created a lot of excitement. It completely undermines WAFWA's position that llamas require testing because they are new to veterinary observation and research, and are without documented history.

Wild sheep have a notoriously weak immune system that leaves them vulnerable to the polymicrobial pneumonia that devastates entire flocks. Would it not make sense for WAFWA to investigate the possibility of developing vaccines or palliative treatments from the template of llama antibodies?

-Dr. Cebra addresses the error of WAFWA characterizing disease titers as indication of infection. Antibody blood titers are an indication of llamas' predictable and dependable immune response. It also highlights the constant presence of ruminant pathogens that elicit those titers.

-He points out the arbitrary reality of zero tolerance/precautionary principle applied to llamas and not to other species. This is particularly relevant to this circumstance where llamas, documented not to carry or transfer disease, are targeted for conditional access to sheep ranges while other species (specifically horses, cattle and humans), documented to carry all or some of the listed pathogens, are allowed unconditional access to those same ranges.

-He characterizes the "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" statement as unrealistic and paralyzing in the real world. To apply this axiom as guidance for wildlife/wilderness management would require a total shut down of all activity.

The lack of transparency and adherence to scientific decorum by WSI and the administration of WAFWA undermines and calls into question their mission statement:

**Advancing Collaborative, Proactive, Science-Based
Fish and Wildlife Conservation and Management Across the West.**

The current brief we are commenting on was prefaced with a [cover letter from Dr. Zach Lowe addressed to committee member, Scott Woodruff](#). Our committee had submitted a response to WSI's 04/10/23 final brief on 05/16/2024 as requested by WSI chairman Daryl Lutz. Daryl wanted to discuss that response prior to presenting it at the June WAFWA-WSI meeting. Without that discussion occurring, another *Final Brief* dated 07/03/24, was issued, accompanied by a cover letter from WAFWA executive director, Zach Lowe who stated "This final version addresses many of the concerns you brought forward this past spring." Thus begins the string of contradictions that define this brief.

It addressed none of the many issues we raised in our response and in fact raised new issues. He further stated, "Careful consideration" by the WAFWA BOD and executive committee resulted in the approval of this brief. We doubt the BOD was even aware of our response this new brief was directed toward. This laundered and vague statement depends on nuance that triggers opposition only from those with knowledge and understanding of the issue.

We asked Dr. Lowe for signatures and the research supporting the new 07/24 brief contents. We received a defiant refusal to reveal any supporting documentation or attribution of those who wrote the brief or BOD members who contributed input or approval. We were informed the brief was final and not open to discussion. Consult the [attached email chain](#) to follow this bizarre sequence characterized as transparent science.

Zach informed us the brief would not be posted on the WAFWA website but would be made available to anyone requesting it. Then he sent the brief to Daryl who in turn sent it to all the members of WSI and Wildlife Health Committee (WHC) who were free to distribute it. We assume the brief has passed through WAFWA and their contacts as well as the wildlife agencies WSI contributors work for. This explains our broad distribution of Dr. Cebra's letter as we attempt to factually counter Zach and Daryl's distribution of the brief.

Analysis of the brief presents many head scratching moments. None of the supporting background information they provide proves valid against the facts and background Dr. Cebra presents in his letter. Based on their uninformed assumptions and projections, WAFWA concludes the only solution is to require testing of llamas to gain information that has been in existence for decades, in some cases centuries.

After making this recommendation for testing that would lead to a required passport for llamas to have conditional access to wild sheep ranges, WAFWA makes this statement: **"WAFWA's WSI or WHC has no official position concerning disease or pathogen transfer risk from SACs to wild sheep."** This statement disqualifies their simultaneous call for required testing before access to federal land.

Another interesting recommendation is the **"Suggested Next Steps"**: *The WSI and WHC recommend a facilitated collaborative forum with leaders from the SAC community, domestic animal and wildlife health professionals, wild sheep and land managers, and conservation organization representatives with the goal of learning and sharing perspectives.*

How does this work against the backdrop of Zach's email refusing to identify signatories authoring the brief or documentation of references supporting their position, and declaring the subject decided and closed? We don't feel collaboration really describes what WAFWA is proposing.

WAFWA talks about collaboration and discussion; ... *engage with domestic livestock owners and users that share the same landscapes inhabited by wild sheep.*

Mission Statement, Revised January 2020

So why have they avoided every exchange scheduled with our committee over the last 6 years as they initially pursued an outright ban and now pursue a testing protocol? WAFWA has used proposed discussions as a pretext to get our input and subsequently issued a peremptory revised brief, using our comments to edit their response and present it as a new brief.

WAFWA-WSI/WHC has never responded directly to our comments on any of their 3 briefs. There has been no interaction, just editing and resubmission to better defend their suppositions. Zach stated this brief addressed most of our committee's concerns. The brief addressed none of our concerns.

Our response to the 04/10/23 brief was a comprehensive treatment of the issue of llamas as a disease threat to wild sheep starting with the **1995 Canyonlands Summit/CSU Summary Veterinary Statement**. That 1995 statement echoed Dr. Cebra's current observations regarding llama disease. Though focused on Johnes disease, Canyonlands findings supported the llama veterinary health history that included no endemic diseases and no transmission to other livestock or wildlife. The letter was signed by CSU veterinarians: Dr. LaRue Johnson DVM, Leading llama researcher 1980-2010, Dr. Frank Garry DVM Johnes research in dairy cattle, Dr Dave Getzy DVM, Director Diagnostic Lab, and Dr Terry Spraecker DVM, Diagnostic Laboratory Wild Sheep Pathologist. It is significant that 30 years later there are no new or emerging disease considerations as confirmed by Dr Cebra's recent letter.

Dr. Helen Schwantje was negligent not to consult the Canyonlands Summary and the veterinarians writing it before she initiated her own questionable, independent testing of llamas in 2001. Her undisciplined interpretation and presentation of her test results further compromised her work. This current llama disease issue could have been avoided if she had only employed some professional decorum and consulted the llama research community.

In view of this gaffe, it is incredible that WAFWA is attempting to force the llama industry into another round of ill-advised testing without substantiated disease occurrence or identification. It's even more incredible that WAFWA is attempting to require testing for the diseases Helen Schwantje's hypothetical Risk Assessments (RA) identified and that Dr. Cebra just disqualified. Beyond amazing is the fact that WAFWA included Dr. Schwantje in writing and editing the 3 unsupported briefs they have issued advocating testing llamas. Since the CCH'17 Dr Schwantje has failed to defend her work and has downplayed its significance as was documented in our previous comments.

In the preceding 30 year span of unchanging llama disease status, a number of issues have been created by WSF and WSI pursuing llama bans and testing to support the Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) llama banning agenda. Despite Zach's characterization of WAFWA's response addressing our concerns, these concerns still remain unaddressed:

1. Provincial wildlife veterinarian Helen Schwantje, DVM received funding (\$25,000) from the British Columbia (BC) agency The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and

Rural Development (FLNROD) to create the CCH'17 to provide retrospective scientific support for their 2016 legislation banning llamas in a northern BC province for hunting. WAFWA failed to vet the RA's against US veterinary science, allowing BC research lacking peer review to influence U.S. wildlife and land use policy.

2. Allowing anti-llama WSF members serving on WSI to write policy recommendations and to participate in writing the briefs advocating testing of llamas.
3. Failure to respond to documentation of WSF control of the llama ban narrative. The paper, **"Still Hasn't Found What She's Looking For"**, was included with our response. Besides showing Dr. Schwantje's substantial role in supporting the WSF llama ban campaign, it shows WSF's THINHORN SHEEP SUMMIT II SYNTHESIS & SUMMARY 2017 (THS'17) as a WSF collaboration to establish a basis for banning llamas
 - a. Dr Schwantje's advocacy for using "domestics" as a pejorative term selectively applied to sheep, goats and llamas as disease threats while not including other domestic species.
 - b. Quid pro quo offer from WSF (Thornton/Hurley) to **fund WSWG/WAFWA projects from tag auction funds (Chairman, Mike Cox) at WSF's THS'17**
 - c. Collaboration with Non Government Organizations (NGO's) to advocate llama bans.
 - d. Advocating political influence to effect llama bans.
 - e. Crafting the CCH'17 to effectively cast llamas as a disease threat.
 - f. WSF and WSI dual member **Kevin Hurley's Comment letter to ANWR** on behalf of WSF advocating llama ban based on the false information in CCH'17.
4. Not responding to our calls for financial accountability regarding tag auction funds (public funds) being controlled and allocated by WSF, a private industry lobbying group. Public funds need to be controlled by public institutions.
5. Ignoring input from U.S llama researchers, vets, and vet schools regarding Helen's RAs and her lack of scientific discipline. * **Dr. LaRue Johnson, Dr. Murray Fowler, and Dr. Gregg Adams.**
6. Intentionally citing the Chugach National Forest Draft ROD that proposed banning llamas instead of the Final ROD that allowed llamas, that we submitted.
7. Intentionally misquoting an Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) letter with the implication the agency was continuing to watch llamas as a disease threat when in fact they said they were no longer considering them as a disease threat.
8. Calling the **Foreyt** pen studies outdated and inconclusive when they are in fact foundational to current understanding of sheep disease.
9. Arbitrarily not considering research studies published prior to 2010 though most WAFWA citations of isolated disease in llamas predate 2010.
10. Failing to respond to our concerns regarding the stress and disease transmission potential of WSI's current "test and remove" strategy as well as the program's ineffectiveness.
11. Failure to address our comments highlighting the reduced impacts of using llamas for backcountry packing (especially for sheep hunting) to reduce the impacts of equine stock used by WSF OG's

We've attached original copies of the **WAFWA 04/10/2023 brief** and a copy of **our response 05/16/24.** This is the exchange that resulted in the **current Final WAFWA 07/03/2024 brief** that ignores all the points we raised in our response. This provides the full context of this exchange to appreciate the obstructive and dismissive attitude WSI maintains while calling for llama testing. WAFWA and State wildlife agencies need to address the abuse of science that WSI has allowed while trying to limit llama access to wild sheep ranges in favor of WSF commercial hunting interests.



BRIEF

on

SOUTH AMERICAN CAMELID DISEASE RISK to WILD SHEEP

by

WAFWA Wild Sheep Initiative & Wildlife Health Committee

Final 4/10/2023



INTRODUCTION

There has been concern and misunderstanding regarding use of South American Camelids (SACs are llamas and alpacas, vicuñas, and guanacos) in occupied wild sheep range. Of the group, llamas and occasionally alpacas are used as pack animals in North America; the others are not. Some wildlife- and land-management agencies have prohibited or proposed to limit pack llama use based on concern that SACs might be able to carry and/or transmit pathogens known to cause disease in wild sheep (see Appendix 1). The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Wild Sheep Initiative (WSI) and Wildlife Health Committee (WHC) provides this brief, including a suggested path forward and recommendations for use of SACs in wild sheep range. The scope of this document is limited to the use of SACs in North America. We recognize that other nonnative domestic species, notably horses or yaks may be used for packing in wild sheep ranges and that use of these animals around naïve populations may also represent a risk for disease and/or parasite introduction.

The 2017 *Risk Assessment on the use of South American Camelids for Back Country Trekking in British Columbia*, is the most recent published risk assessment that reviews the literature on pathogens of SACs. The Centre for Coastal Health (CCH) was contracted by the British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations, and Rural Development and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to update a previous risk assessment, completed in 2003. The focus of the 2017 Assessment was to update the previous assessment of the risk of SACs used in backcountry trekking in British Columbia and for other jurisdictions in western Northern America.

The objective of the 2017 Risk Assessment was to identify potential risks to the health of bighorn sheep populations posed by llamas and alpacas used in wild sheep habitat. From the literature reviewed for this assessment, seven pathogens were identified as potential disease risks (*Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella* spp., contagious ecthyma, bovine viral diarrhea virus (BVDV), *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis*, Bluetongue virus, and *Mycobacterium bovis*). While presence of these diseases in SACs appears to be rarely reported, the potential for SACs to serve as vectors or disease carriers should be considered. The risk assessment also stated that should llamas and alpacas be found to be susceptible to infection with *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (M. ovi), a bacterial pathogen considered to be an initiating agent in pneumonia in wild sheep, then the level of concern would be increased. It should be noted that M. ovi was not detected from limited nasal swab sampling of llamas kept alone or comingled with domestic sheep in British Columbia. The 2017 Assessment also stated that other pathogens associated with wild sheep and mountain goat disease (e.g., bovine viral diarrhea, contagious ecthyma, parapox virus, *M. haemolytica*, *Pasteurella* spp, Johne's Disease, and Bluetongue virus) are rare to uncommon in SACs. However, a publication reported significant prevalence rates for BVDV in North American llamas and alpacas (Kamil et al. 2009). Additionally, Rivera et al. (1987) reported the detection of antibodies to (and inferred infection by) parainfluenza-3, bovine respiratory syncytial virus and Diaz et al. detected antibodies to *M. hemolytica* and *Pasteurella multocida* in camelids in Argentina. Bovine respiratory syncytial and parainfluenza type 3 viruses, *P. multocida* and *M. hemolytica* have been found in cases of acute pneumonia in neonatal alpacas (Rosadio et al. 2011).

To date, no peer-reviewed literature exists on confirmed disease transmission from SACs to any mountain ungulates; however, given the environmental and health risks wild sheep currently face and the ability for diseases to be transmitted from other domestic animals to wild sheep (e.g. domestic sheep and cattle), a preventive approach should be taken. It is understood that agencies managing wild sheep may consider risk assessment in varying degrees, depending on the situation. For instance, the WSI and WHC acknowledge that herd health assessments of some populations of thimhorn sheep (i.e., Dall's, Stone's sheep) conclude that they are naïve to domestic livestock pathogen exposure, compared to most bighorn populations in the western U.S., southern British Columbia, Alberta, and Mexico. Recently, a unique strain of enzootic *M. ovi* was detected in several wild ungulate populations in Alaska, including Dall's sheep. Exposure of thimhorn sheep to novel pathogens could be catastrophic to thimhorn sheep populations in northern Canada and Alaska. Therefore, to preserve their health, any reasonable management actions that can be taken to reduce the risk of disease introduction to thimhorn sheep should be employed. Lastly, the number of llamas and alpacas tested and reported for many key pathogens (e.g., *M. ovi*) is less than is needed to determine whether or not they may act as carriers. A more robust sampling of SACs is required to confirm the absence of pathogens, and to fill in such knowledge gaps. In addition, the lack of reported disease in SACs due to *M. ovipneumoniae* and other pathogens is not a proxy for the inability to carry the pathogen. Because of recent developments in molecular and non-culture methods for the detection and identification of pathogens, tests conducted prior to 2010 should not be used to support the lack of risk of pathogen exposure from llamas.

While llamas are the most frequently used SAC for packing, the occurrence of pathogens in other SACs can be used to inform the risk of pathogen transfer. To ensure reasonable and science-based decisions are made by wildlife- and land-management agencies/jurisdictions, more SAC pathogen-testing data is desirable and necessary to safeguard wild sheep. The WSI and WHC provide the following summary of the issues, current knowledge and data gaps, next steps, and recommendations for future action(s).

A. Issue Summary:

1. SACs, primarily llamas, are currently used as recreational pack animals in the United States (U.S.) and Canada.
2. There is no current comprehensive and published dataset of SAC test results for pathogens considered a threat to wild sheep, particularly *M. ovi*.
3. Risk Assessments completed by independent contractors for agencies utilize data from various sources and are just that, risk assessments for agency use. The purpose of a risk assessment is to qualitatively and/or quantitatively determine the risk of disease introduction or emergence from an identified action or change in the environment. Risk assessments may also identify prevention or mitigation strategies and rank them in terms of costs and benefits. WAFWA's WSI or WHC has no official position concerning disease or pathogen transfer risk from SACs to wild sheep (SACs are not addressed in the WSI's 2012 *Recommendations for Domestic Sheep and Goat Management in Wild Sheep Habitat*). The WSI and WHC encourage development of data sets and research designed to best complete our knowledge and understanding of this issue.
4. Individuals and associations that use SACs as pack animals are generally opposed to land-management agencies developing policies, positions, or regulations limiting SAC use on public lands associated with wild sheep with no scientific basis. This opposition is largely based on outdated and minimal pathogen/disease sampling.

B. Current Knowledge and Information Gaps

1. Based on limited testing to date, *M. ovi* has not been identified from a SAC.
2. Only one published experiment, nearly 30 years ago, was conducted to study pathogen transmission to bighorn sheep involving llamas, domestic goats, mountain goats, cattle, domestic sheep, and mouflon sheep. (Foreyt 1994). Bighorns only became sick and died after contact with domestic and mouflon sheep. At the time of the study, *P. haemolytica* was a pathogen of concern. It was isolated in all the study animals except llamas. However, because animal testing did not include *M. ovi* and other pathogens of current concern, results are inconclusive relative to current diagnostic methods.
3. In general, SACs, specifically llamas, do not appear to have many endemic diseases. However, bacterial pneumonia (*P. multocida* and *M. hemolytica*) has been identified in individuals. Antibodies to parainfluenza-3, bovine respiratory syncytial virus, and *Pasteurella* spp. have been detected. Such an immune response suggests that infection without clinical signs may occur and therefore transmission during a transient infection may also occur.
4. To date, infectious disease transmission from SACs to wild sheep has not been documented

C. Recommendations

1. Generate a comprehensive SAC pathogen profile in western North America using current molecular microbiome methods. Use this data to support policy and guideline development to include recommendations for management of SACs for outdoor recreation in occupied wild sheep range, including no restrictions, if SACs are found to be void of pathogens of concern to wild sheep health.
2. Determine whether or not camelids housed with domestic sheep or goats infected with pathogens of concern can become carriers of the pathogens and act as short- or long-term reservoirs.
3. Until the comprehensive pathogen dataset is created the following measures should be employed to reduce the risk:
 - a. SACs should be segregated from other livestock known to carry pathogens of concern to wild sheep if those SACs are to be used to recreate in occupied wild sheep range.
 - b. Avoid use of SACs in thornhorn ranges where populations are known to be naïve to pathogen exposure.
 - c. Develop recommended health protocols (vaccination, deworming, etc.) for llama and alpaca owners that will be packing with their animals in wild sheep ranges.
 - d. Proposed regulations and recommendations on the use of SACs in wild sheep ranges should consider the wild sheep population history, including exposure and carriage of pathogens of concern.

D. Suggested Next Steps

The WSI and WHC recommend a facilitated collaborative forum with leaders from the SAC community, domestic animal and wildlife health professionals, wild sheep and land managers, and conservation organization representatives with the goal of learning and sharing perspectives. This forum would:

1. Allow wild sheep managers and SAC users to find common ground and gain a greater appreciation for each other's interests/concerns, wild sheep conservation and health issues, animal husbandry, recreational use, and management practices.
2. Seek agreement in developing policy/guidelines for west-wide management of SACs used for trekking and hunting.
3. Identify funding for the recommended testing needed to improve the knowledge base on SAC pathogen profiles and potential risk to wild sheep.

APPENDIX 1 –

REGULATIONS OR PERSPECTIVES VARY BY AGENCIES ON RECREATIONAL USE OF SACs IN WILD SHEEP HABITAT

1. On August 9, 2005, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) issued a News Release stating their concerns over use of llamas when hunting Dall's sheep, mountain goat, and/or muskox (Caprinae family).
2. Alaska Board of Game in 2013 prohibited using pack goats for hunting but not SACs.
3. National Park Service in Alaska beginning in 2015 prohibited domestic sheep and goats. SACs are prohibited except as pack animals with superintendent authorization.
4. In 2016, AK-BLM-EI banned pack llamas based upon pathogen/disease transmission from pack llamas to wild sheep using referencing "2013 HERRIGES - AK-TWS" paper.
5. British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations, and Rural Development has regulations for the use of pack goats and SACs for hunting, but do not apply to trekking use. BC Parks Act (through Park management Plans) prohibit the use of pack sheep, goats and SACs for trekking in Northern Provincial Parks (i.e., those overlapping thinhorn sheep range).
6. In 2018, AKDF&G Director Bruce Dale submits letter to the Greater Appalachian Llama & Alpaca Association stating that no intentions to promote or limit the use of SACs on public land in Alaska, but the Department will continue to focus and enhance evaluations of disease risk from SACs.
7. In 2019, through revision of their Wildlife Act Phase II, the Northwest Territories enacted regulations to prohibit domestic sheep, goats and SACs from the Mackenzie and Richardson Mountains, as a measure to reduce risk to wild sheep.
8. 2019: Idaho Department of Fish and Game completes Mountain Goat Management Plan.
9. Arctic National Wildlife Refuge proposed regulations in 2020 to ban all pack goats and SACs.
10. American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioner's (AASRP) February 2020 policy opposes banning camelid pack animals on public lands.
11. In 2019/2020, the USFS-Chugach Nation Forest in Alaska issued a Draft Record of Decision to propose a ban on the use of llamas in the CNF.
12. 2020: Arizona's Tonto National Forest limits use of SAC's requested through special use commercial permits that are within designated wild sheep habitat.
13. Bureau of Land Management proposed regulations in 2021 in the Central Yukon Planning Area Alaska - Resource Management Plan, that the use of domestic sheep and goats would be limited, and camelids would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

LITERATURE CITATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN REFERENCED AND REVIEWED

1. 1987: Publication of “*Serological Survey of Viral Antibodies in the Peruvian Alpaca (Lama pacos)*”. (Rivera H, Madewell BR, Ameghino E)
2. 1994: Publication of “*Effects of Controlled Contact Exposure Between Healthy Bighorn Sheep and Llamas, Domestic Goats, Mountain Goats, Cattle, Domestic Sheep, or Mouflon Sheep*”. (Foreyt, W.J.)
3. 2003: Publication of “*Communicable Disease Risks to Wildlife from Camelids in British Columbia*”. (Schwantje and Stephen 2003).
4. 2005: Publication of “*Examining the Risk of Disease Transmission between Wild Dall Sheep and Mountain Goats and Introduced Domestic Sheep, Goats, and Llamas in the Northwest Territories*”. (Garde et al 2005).
5. 2009: Publication of “*Viral diseases of New World camelids. Veterinary Clinics of North America Food Animal Practice*”. (Kapil S, Yearly T, Evermann JF)
6. 2011. Publication of “*Respiratory syncytial and parainfluenza type 3 viruses coexisting with P. multocida and M. hemolytica in acute pneumonias of neonatal alpacas*”. (Rosadio R, Cirilo E, Manchego A Rivera H).
7. 2012: Publication of “*Recommendations For Domestic Sheep and Goat Management in Wild Sheep Habitat*”. (WAFWA-WSWG).
8. 2013: Publication of *Reducing Disease Risk to Dall’s Sheep and Mountain Goats from Domestic Livestock*” (Jim Herriges, AK – Eastern Interior – BLM (AK-EI-BLM) and AK-Wildlife Society.
9. 2016: Publication of “*Thinhorn Sheep Conservation Challenges and Management Strategies for the 21st Century*”. (WAFWA-WSWG).
10. 2016: Publication “*BLM-1730 – Management of Domestic Sheep and Goats to Sustain Wild Sheep*”.
11. 2017: Publication “*Invited Paper: Pneumonia in Bighorn Sheep: Risk and Resilience*”. (E. Francis Cassirer).
12. 2017: Publication of “*Serological survey of Antibodies to M. Haemolytica and P.multocida in Camelids from Argentina*”. (Diaz et al)
13. 2018: Publication of “*Risk Assessment on the Use of South American Camelids for Back Country Trekking in British Columbia*”. (Centre for Coastal Health), CCH-RA-17.
14. 2018: Minimum Requirements Decision Guide Workbook (MRDG), “*Bighorn Sheep Monitoring in the Alta Toquima and Arc Dome Wilderness Areas*”. BLM, NPS, USFS, USFWS
15. 2018: Publication “*North American Conservation Vision 2020*”. Wild Sheep Foundation.
16. 2020: BLM-Central Yukon Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.
17. 2020: AK-BLM Western Interior/Bering Sea: The Draft RMP/EIS.



Sierra 4-H Llama Project



2025

Llama Project Leaders: Cali Roberson and Susan Rich

Llama Project Members: Audrey Roberson, Charlotte Roberson, Dominic Toste, and Kira Vessels

As always, our Sierra 4-H Llama project wants to say a sincere **Thank You** to the many supporters who encourage us and gift us with the resources to care for, show, and love on llamas. Thanks to Greg Harford for trusting us with his "foster boys." Thanks to the LANA Board for providing many opportunities, activities, and adventures. Thanks to our parents who drive us hither and yon!



LAMARAH

**Wilton, California
Kathy Nichols**



Minimum Standards of Care for Llamas and Alpacas

Minimum Standards of Care are mandatory to llama and alpaca survival and humane treatment. These are the most basic requirements that all llamas and alpacas must have for physical well-being and, as such, define minimum requirements for animal control officers and government officials investigating questionable llama and alpaca care situations.

1. **WATER:** Animals should have continuous access to potable drinking water.
2. **NUTRITIONAL:** Animals should have nourishment adequate to sustain life and health.
3. **SHELTER:** Animals should have natural or man-made shelter that enables them to find relief from extreme weather conditions. The sheltered area must allow for the ability to stand, lie down, rest and reasonably move about.
4. **MOBILITY:** Animals should have a living area through which they can move freely and exercise independently
5. **NEGLECT:** Animals should have a physical appearance free from signs of serious neglect. Signs of serious neglect may include such things as crippled ambulation due to severely curled toenails, ingrown halters, or living conditions not meeting the minimums listed above.
6. **SAFETY:** Animals should be reasonably safeguarded from injury or death within their defined living environment and/or when traveling.
7. **CRUELTY:** Animals should be reasonably safeguarded from cruel treatment and actions that endanger life or health or cause avoidable suffering.
8. **SOCIALIZING:** Llamas and alpacas are herd animals and should not live alone without a companion animal. A cria (a baby llama or alpaca under six months) should not be removed or apart from other llamas or alpacas.

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Standards of Care Committees, June 2005
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Llama Association of North America

Website: www.lanainfo.org Email: lanaquestions@gmail.com



2025 Membership and Donations

Membership: Jan. 1 – Dec. 31

Please send all completed applications
and checks (made out to LANA) to:

LANA, c/o Joy Pedroni
3966 Estate Drive Vacaville, CA 95688



LANA MISSION STATEMENT

ESTABLISHED in 1981, the Llama Association of North America (LANA), serves the camelid community by sponsoring medical research specific to llamas and alpacas; providing current and accurate information about camelid health and care; advocating for pro-camelid legislation and access to public lands; encouraging, educating and mentoring camelid enthusiasts of all ages in their interactions with camelids; supporting rescue for camelids in distress; and hosting a variety of activities including youth programs, hiking trips, shows, parades, fiber clinics, educational events and more.



Your Name:

Your Ranch Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone number(s):

Website:

MEMBERSHIP & Donation OPTIONS

See second page for Descriptions

Membership options:	Fees:	Your
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Friend of LANA	\$250	
LANA Member	\$40	
New LANA Member	\$25	
Youth (19 and under)	\$20	
Youth Club	\$35	
Donor: LANA Lama Lifeline		
Donor: Youth programs		
Donor: Gen. Fund		

TOTAL:



LANA Membership, Sponsorship, & Donation Opportunities 2025

Friend of LANA A year-long sponsorship \$250	Discounts for show entries + 1 free class/show; 50% fees for clinics & camping; free vendor space at LANA-sponsored events and shows; recognition and ads (website, all newsletters, show programs, banner at shows and events); US Mailings from LANA; 1 vote per membership for LANA elections; support of your association and its mission
LANA Member \$40	Discounts for show entries, clinics & camping; listing on LANA website; US mailings from LANA; business card-sized card ad in all five general 2025 newsletters to promote your camelid passion: a ranch, club, animal(s), or business, 1 vote per membership for LANA elections; support of your association and its mission
New LANA Member \$25	Discounted membership fees as a welcome to LANA for first-time members with all the benefits of membership as outlined above: discounts for show entries clinics & camping, US mailings from LANA, 1 vote per membership for LANA elections
Youth (19 and under) \$20	Discounted membership fees to youth, discounts for show entries, clinics & camping, US mailings from LANA specifically for youth events and opportunities, and support for your association and its mission
Youth Club \$35	Group membership for established youth clubs (4H, FFA, etc.) for which each club youth receives discounts for show entries, clinics and camping, US mailings from LANA, 1 vote for a designated adult, & support of the association and its mission
Donation to LANA Lama Lifeline	Lifeline saves camelids in housing crisis. Funds go toward feed, vet care, transportation, and other rescue costs. The LANA Lifeline Committee responds to emergencies and works with other agencies to remove animals when necessary and rehouse them safely.
Donation to Youth Programs	LANA Youth programs include youth only shows, youth classes at shows at discounted rates, specialized clinics for youth, and specific awards for youth.
Donor to General Fund	LANA funds are used to sanction and provide resources for shows; purchase awards; and support clinics, camping trips, parades, etc

Please note: California State Fair is excluded from any benefits as LANA serves as a host for the show only and is not a sponsor.