



Outstanding Bighorn Teacher Award 2019



The Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation and the National Bighorn Sheep Center have chosen to honor two outstanding Wyoming educators in the field of Wild Sheep Conservation. This year's recipients are Brady Samuelson from Riverton Middle School and Jordan Seitz from Encampment K-12. They will be recognized at the annual convention of the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation in Casper on June 1, 2019 at the Ramkota Inn.

Both organizations have a long record of passionately conserving a truly iconic species, bighorn sheep. Bighorns, while appearing rugged and resilient, are actually quite frail. Disease and habitat fragmentation/alteration has reduced historic numbers from tens of thousands, to only 6,500 bighorns in Wyoming. West-wide, bighorns historically numbered 1.5- 2 million, but only 85,000 remain today. Their future generations unquestionably depend on educating and engaging our future generations.

Brady and Jordan, along with the "herds" of students they lead, are a vital part of a team of scientists, managers and conservationists that strives to insure the future of bighorns, which exemplify Wyoming's most wild and rugged landscapes. Through this bighorn team, the students are given the opportunity to develop an understanding and conservation ethic regarding bighorns and other wildlife species. Moreover, **we learn** from Brady, Jordan and their students about how to better connect with our youth and gain their interest in conserving Wyoming's amazing wildlife.

In addition, the teachers have been asked to each award an outstanding student. The two outstanding students will receive a \$500 scholarship from the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation to attend "Camp Bighorn" for 5 days. Staff and volunteers from the National Bighorn Sheep Center will be educating youth about bighorn sheep ecology at this remote conservation camp in Torrey Valley, outside Dubois.

Jordan and Brady have consistently worked with their students, and our organizations, to inspire and educate youth about wild sheep and the importance of conserving wildlife and wildlands. The experiences they offer our youth provide the fundamental fabric from which we Wyomingites are made – wildlands and wildlife. With the continued support of educators like these, our organizations can continue "putting and keeping KIDS and WILD SHEEP on the mountain".