

WY WSF Banquet Ron Ball Award-Ryan Amundson

I cannot think of someone that deserves this award more than this man right here. Ryan Amundson is the hardest working man that I have ever met-and I cannot thank him enough for raising my brother Drake and I with the same intensity. This last week I nonchalantly asked him for a resume to ensure that I delivered this speech about his accomplishments properly, and learned a ton about him, the most prominent thing being that he's done the work of 4 men for his whole life... starting as a "farm laborer" in his home state of Iowa in 1982, his work ethic and desire to be the best in the business pushed him through a job as a conservation technician, greenbelt crew supervisor, biologist technician (in Alaska!), a habitat biologist internship, 11 years of hunting guide work, 17 years as a habitat extension biologist, and most recently, 6 years as the Wyoming Statewide Habitat Biologist. His 23 years with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department have allowed him to network like crazy, explore the most beautiful places on earth, and

build relationships with coworkers, landowners, contractors, and countless other folks, many of which are sitting in this room.

Ryan is one tough old guy- a year older today, actually! Happy Birthday! I didn't get you a present because I was writing this speech, so I'm sorry... Anyway, he's a tough old guy that really loves wild sheep and the Wild Sheep Foundation. He is Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation life member 384 and has donated a pair of spur straps and chinks that he honestly slaved over for this year's live auction... number 35, keep an eye out for those). He has dedicated countless hours toward sheep-centered projects, grant proposal reviews, served as the Co-Chairman of the WGFD Bighorn Sheep Working Group, has traveled to Reno to the national WSF convention for years, and I'm sure there's lots of other stuff he omitted from his resume.... You know, Ryan loves the sheep so much that he paid \$200 to drink a shot of whiskey with a frostbitten miner's toe in it, and it only counts if the toenail touches your lips. That was to join the "Outer Circle Club" in Reno at the WSF convention this year, where the money from this self-induced hazing goes right back to

the conservation of wild sheep. And, in 2016, Ryan won the lottery. Not the Powerball, but something SO MUCH better than that. He drew a Montana Bighorn Sheep license and was to hunt the Missouri River Breaks area, where some of the worlds largest bighorns have come from. After a 16 day self-guided hunt with many friends and his beautiful wife, Cindy, he harvested a beautiful ram that scored a gross 188 7/8,” landing him in the Boone and Crockett book and a spectacular full-body mount for the trophy room, formerly known as the basement....

Wildlife and habitat conservation is my dad’s primary passion. Of course he loves hunting, hiking, horse riding and training, leatherwork, farming, and watching family feud with me (huh, daddy?).... But putting in the initial work so that his hunting itch can be scratched is really what gets him up in the morning. Ryan grew up hunting and views it as a conservation tool. This perception of hunting and wildlife management strategy has helped my brother and I to stand up for and promote hunting as the world’s greatest (and most fun) management strategy, something that all of us in this room can probably agree on. Any opportunity Ryan

gets to head for the hills, he takes. That means that “family bonding time” and “date night” and “hanging out” all are highly likely to occur in the mountains. So if you’re looking for a weekend to be on your phone and encounter other human beings, signing up for quality time with Ryan is probably not the way to go.

Finally, my daddy is a man of just enough words. At home, his words most frequently come in sets of 3. “Ride that horse, call your grandma, How’d you shoot?, coming home soon? Let’s go hunting. Love you, Tiger. What’s for dinner?” And, my personal favorite, “Proud of you.” Today is a day where I get to use that last one, share this accomplishment, and present the greatest employee, pizza-maker, cowboy, friend, husband, and father with all of you as I congratulate my daddy, Ryan, this year’s recipient of the Wild Sheep Foundation Ron Ball Award! Proud of you, Daddy!