

## 2022 Montana Youth Camp — May 28 – June 2, 2022

by Joe Sheehey

Photos by Luke Coccoli

### *This year the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep*

Society sent nine (9) young adults to the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch in Dupuyer, Montana. The 6,500-acre working cattle ranch owned by the Boone and Crockett Club. Sitting at the base of the Rocky Mountain Front, it's like going to Glacier Park without all the people. The ranch is managed cooperatively for the benefit of wildlife and cattle.

Luke Coccoli is the Conservation Programs Manager for the ranch and does a fantastic job hosting our campers every year. Luke grew up close to the ranch and his knowledge of the area and its flora and fauna is invaluable in teaching the campers about the region and its history. His intern, Maddy, was a tremendous help and great with the campers.

Activities during the 6-day camp included hiking, shooting, fly fishing, identifying fishes, human history of the region, and learning some of the plant species in the area. The campers were also split into teams and Maddy walked them through developing a specific conservation project and reporting their findings to the whole group. The project consisted of different bighorn sheep herds in Montana and their status. Teams needed to produce a hypothesis for the reasons for population



decline or increase in the different herds and suggest possible remedies to stabilize their herd.

At the shooting range, campers got to experience shooting .22 rifles and handguns. All nine of the participants shot very well and culminated in a team contest which ended very closely. They also shot bows at life size targets and shot shotguns at clay targets. Luke set up three electronic trap throwers and the campers shot clay birds at different angles. They were all offered the option of 12-gauge or 20-gauge shotguns but most opted for the 12-gauge.

The nine young adults were great participants, and all got along well. Gil Mills and I had a fun time and enjoyed being with them.

A special thanks goes out to Arizona Sportsman for Wildlife Conservation for giving the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society a grant that helped fund sending these nine young adults to camp. Our cost in airline fares almost doubled this year compared to years' past so the AZSFW grant was incredibly important to the success of this camp.

