

Making a Difference for Wildlife

Hundreds of local conservation projects are undertaken annually by SCI Chapters. They are reinforced by many notable conservation initiatives funded by the SCI Foundation.



Montana Mountain Goat Restoration
Red Mountain, Montana, USA
Total Funds: \$2,000

UNTIL 1980, mountain goats (*Oreamnos americanus*) were documented in the Sourdough Creek-Red Mountain region of Montana, at which time they disappeared for unknown reasons.

In February 2002, Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks (MFWP) transferred 10 goats from Big Timber Canyon to Red Mountain in an effort to re-establish the species in this part of its native range. During the relocation process, the goats were ear tagged and collared for identification. Female goats also were fitted with radio transmitters to allow telemetry tracking. A winter release was scheduled to minimize the possibility that the goats would not remain in the chosen area. Previously, when goats were relocated in summer, a percentage had emigrated.

Thanks in part to \$2,000 in funds provided by SCI's *Five Valleys Chapter*, the MFWP and the University of Montana returned several months after the February goat reintroduction. They evaluated the initiative by documenting the presence, movement, reproductive success, dispersal and condition of the mountain goats, using ground and aerial surveys.

Between April and October 2002, the surveys observed all but one of the original 10 goats, as well as one goat that was not transplanted. Four of the seven observed females were with kids. All but one of the observed animals was found in the core study area.

The survey results were most heartening. Nearly all of the transplanted goats stayed in the area, kid production and survival rates were quite high, and all of the observed goats appeared active and in good condition.

The reintroduction project has been so successful that SCI *Five Valleys* has committed even more funds for another goat survey in the summer of 2004.

To help fund this and other meaningful wildlife conservation initiatives, contribute to the SCI Foundation. Call 800-377-5399, or visit www.sci-foundation.org.

