I love to hunt sheep. It's the intense preparation, the extreme hunt, and the recollection of unique country and events that makes sheep hunting different from other big game hunting. Successful sheep hunters train like crazy, make a science of selecting their gear, and experience some of the most fabulous country on earth.

In my opinion, the ultimate sheep hunt is a backpack hunt. And if you’re after a world class ram you have to hunt in country that produces them and with an outfitter that understands your desires.

So when the phone rang last year and my good friend and outfitter, Scott Carter, said he had an extra Rocky Mountain Bighorn tag in an area that had a chance at a book ram, I jumped at his offer.

After 2 weeks of hard hunting and seeing one legal ram (about a 160 B&C ram) and a 2 year old ram, I was beginning to get the drift of Scott's “chance.” But the sheep hunt is not over until the fat ewe sings.

Then it happened, in an uneventful moment, not a classic spot and stalk, or chase them until you drop, or longer than ever before shot, Scott and I walked around a bend in a sheepy drainage and there stood a fantastic, huge ram at 75 yards.

The next scene was Scott and I jumping up and down, hooting and hollering over being the luckiest sheep hunters on the planet with one dead 192 7⁄8 B&C Rocky Mountain Bighorn ram. We probably looked ridiculous.

I have a passion for sheep hunting, I figure sheep hunting will extend my life because of all the physical preparation it requires and I enjoy all the gear preparation. It is an invigorating challenge to find better gear that weighs less.

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This fall, my good friend and outfitter, Greg Williams, and I have arranged an insane Stone sheep hunt. Greg takes three Stone sheep hunters each year. This year I am scheduled to be the third and last hunter. None of that is insane, the insane part is Greg and I have agreed to set aside 30 days for this hunt, it may take that long to find a giant ram, and that’s if we are lucky. Actually Greg is not that insane, because it’s Blake, his son, that will be guiding me. So that makes Blake and I insane. Greg will be in charge of resupplying us every 7 or 8 days. Not only will we get more food, this will be an ideal time for fresh base layers, undergarments, and socks.

I have carefully put my gear and supplies together and will forward the bulk of it to Greg in British Columbia prior to the hunt. I am a nut case when it comes to gear and supplies. Although Greg typically supplies all the food and a tent, I am bringing my own. I like selecting all of my food and each item of gear I take. I want the best gear and the best food, ounce for ounce. I want stuff that will not only help me be successful, but I want to be comfortable whether it’s 70 degrees or zero degrees, whether it’s sunny or rains and snows 9 out of 10 days. To accomplish this you need to think out every scenario and be prepared. With all that in mind, now you know why I bring all my own stuff.

There will be no weight gain on this hunt. Blake is ready to Rock N’ Roll. I have lost my winter fat and am in shape. This should be the sheep hunt of a lifetime.

I have included my gear list at the end of this article for you. There are a few items that are relatively new and are a must in my book. If you’re planning an extended backpack hunt, consider adding these items to your gear.

MontBell is a mountaineering gear company that makes tons of great gear.
including a lightweight Super Stretch, sleeping bag called the U.L. Spiral Down Hugger #1 (my long, 20 degree Fahrenheit bag weighs in at a mere 1 lb 15 oz). This light bag may be the most comfortable mummy type bag ever made. To make sleeping even better I will add the new Thermarest NeoAir sleeping pad. This pad inflates to a thickness of 2 1/2” and my 72” NeoAir pad only weighs 14 oz, making it one of this year’s best finds. Combine the bag and pad with Hilleberg’s Akto one man tent and you have an unbeatable combination. This combination will allow me to sleep undisturbed in comfort, a must for sheep hunters.

For warmth I will be wearing MontBell’s Merino Wool Base Layer, top and bottom, for a total of 16 oz. For the coldest scenario, I will pack their Thermawrap Parka (14 1/2 oz) and Thermawrap Pants (12 oz). The Thermawrap Parka and Pants are ideal to slip on under your regular outer layer when you stop to glass on that cold, windy ridge or you spend all night out without the comfort of camp.

For raingear, I have also chosen MontBell, their Thunderhead Jacket and Pants are high quality, built for the long haul and only weigh a total of 1 lb 6 oz. All of my gear and food for 7 days, plus my pack, including rifle and ammo, weigh 58 pounds. When you consider this 58 pound pack includes my rifle and ammo, plus all the gear and food I project I will need for each 7 days, it’s light. Plus I have been training with a 70 pound pack, so this 58 pound pack will feel like nothing!

As for the nutrition value of the food I am taking, the average daily calorie intake will be 3,049 calories with 519g of carbs and 123g of protein. That’s not enough to maintain my weight but it is a lot of nutrition for a backpack hunt and will certainly provide enough energy to hunt like this was my last sheep hunt.

If you have not done a backpack sheep hunt you may want to plan one, all in all, it will probably be the most rewarding hunt of your life.

If there’s a problem with my clothing, it is the lack of camo, none of this stuff comes in camo and that’s okay for sheep hunting. Thus much of this clothing will be used then stored and used on my next sheep hunt. If you need the camo, then check out Sitka Mountain Gear and Under Armour’s gear, they both make great clothing, multi layering systems, and it all comes in camo.
Garth's Extreme Sheep Hunt Backpack Gear List

**Travel**
- Airline tickets
- Hunting contract & receipts
- Leave travel plans with family
- Paperback book for travel
- Passport
- Tip & travel money
- Travel clothes
- Travel day pack
- Travel toiletry

**Weapon**
- Ammo pouch (Blacks Creek Gear)
- Box of bullets in original box
- Firearms declaration not signed
- Hard gun case
- Borden Rifle
- Scope cover

**Optics**
- Binoculars (Leica w/ Rangefinder)
- Lens cloth

**Sleeping Gear**
- Hilleberg Akto 1 man tent (3 lb 8 oz)
- MontBell Super Stretch sleeping bag (1 lb 15 oz)
- Pillow case (fleece) 1 oz
- Thermarest NeoAir sleeping pad (14 oz)

**Clothing**
- Base layer (MontBell, Merino Wool 16 oz)
- Baseball cap, Huntin' Fool
- Gloves, Ironclad-synthetic 2.3 oz & Neoprene 4 oz
- Head sweatband 1⁄2 oz
- Jacket w/ hood, Primaloft w/ Nylon shell (1 lb 15 oz)
- Kenetrek Mountain Boots
- Pants, Arcteryx, Gamma Lt (11 1⁄2 oz)
- Pant Thermawrap, MontBell (12 oz)
- Parka Thermawrap, MontBell (14 1⁄2 oz)
- Pullover (Marmot 11 oz)
- Rain gear, MontBell (1 lb 6 oz)
- Shoes, water/camp (Crocs, 1 lb 4 oz)
- Socks (Bridgedale Trekkar, 3 pair, 3.4 oz each)
- Sock liners (3 pair Bridgedale Coolmax 2.3 oz ea.)
- Stocking hat (wool 4 oz)
- T-shirt, RealTree Performance (5 1⁄2 oz)
- Underwear

**Personal/Misc**
- Band-Aids (blister & regular)
- Body powder (Gold Bond travel size)
- Bug dope (98% deet)
- Deodorant (travel size)
- Electrician tape 5'
- Garbage bags, 2 large, extra heavy duty
- Glasses (reading)
- Lip therapy (travel size)
- Measuring tape (travel size)
- Medicine & Vitamins
- Moleskin
- Polysporin
- Rip stop tape (small roll)
- Sewing kit (travel pack)
- Shampoo (travel size)
- Soap (travel size)
- Stitches (needle & thread)
- Strapping tape- 5'
- Toilet paper
- Toothbrush (travel size)
- Toothpaste (travel size)
- Towel-backpack type
- Water bottles, 2, Bota Filtration & regular
- Wet Ones, 1 pack

**Tools/Gear**
- Backpack with rain cover
- Camera, Canon SD 950-IS (12 megapixel)
- Extra battery for camera
- Flashlight, Petzel e+lite, case & batteries 1 1⁄2 oz
- GPS, Bushnell Backtrack 5.6 oz
- Knife, Havalon with replacement blades
- Leki walking stick
- Lighter, 2
- Rope, 20' parachute cord
- SD cards for camera
- Sat. phone, Explorer Satellite
- Zip locks for gear

**Food**
- Candy bar, Snickers (1 per day)
- Drink mix, Crystal Light
- Energy bars, Power Bar (2 per day)
- Hard candy (6 pieces daily)
- Hydrate & Recover Energy Drink (WA, 4/day)
- Instant mashed potatoes (1 pkg per day)
- Instant breakfasts, Carnation Vanilla (1 per day)
- Instant oatmeal (2 per day)
- Jerky (2 oz daily)
- Mountain House Dinner (1 per day)
- Plate, GSI Lexan
- Platypus water containers, 2 (2 liter)
- Power bar gel (2 per day)
- Salt & pepper (travel size)
- Tabasco sauce, 2 (sample size)
- Trail mix (2 oz daily)
- Tuna & Salmon, Starkist (1 packet per day)
- Utensils (MontBell), Titanium