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## Bighorn sheep transplanted into future Cottonwood Canyon State Park

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By Terry Richard, The Oregonian



*Bighorn ewes waste no time sprinting for freedom after their release above the John Day River Canyon.*  
*Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.*

Oregon's future state park along the John Day River has some new residents.

A transfer program release 20 bighorn sheep into what will be **Cottonwood Canyon State Park**, when the park opens in 2013.

Jeremy Thompson, district wildlife biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's The Dalles office, said the release included 17 ewes and three rams. They were captured in the **Lower Deschutes River** Wildlife Area, so they weren't moved far and the habitat is much the same.

The bighorn sheep will be tracked from the air for a few weeks to see where they move. Thompson expects them to multiply to perhaps 40 to 50 by the time the park opens in three years.

The transfer was a cooperative effort with the **Western Rivers Conservancy**, steward of the land along the John Day River, and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. State parks is in the process of purchasing the land from Western Rivers and writing a plan to guide the establishment of the park.

Click [here](#) to read my previous story on the future **Cottonwood Canyon State Park**.

-- Terry Richard

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