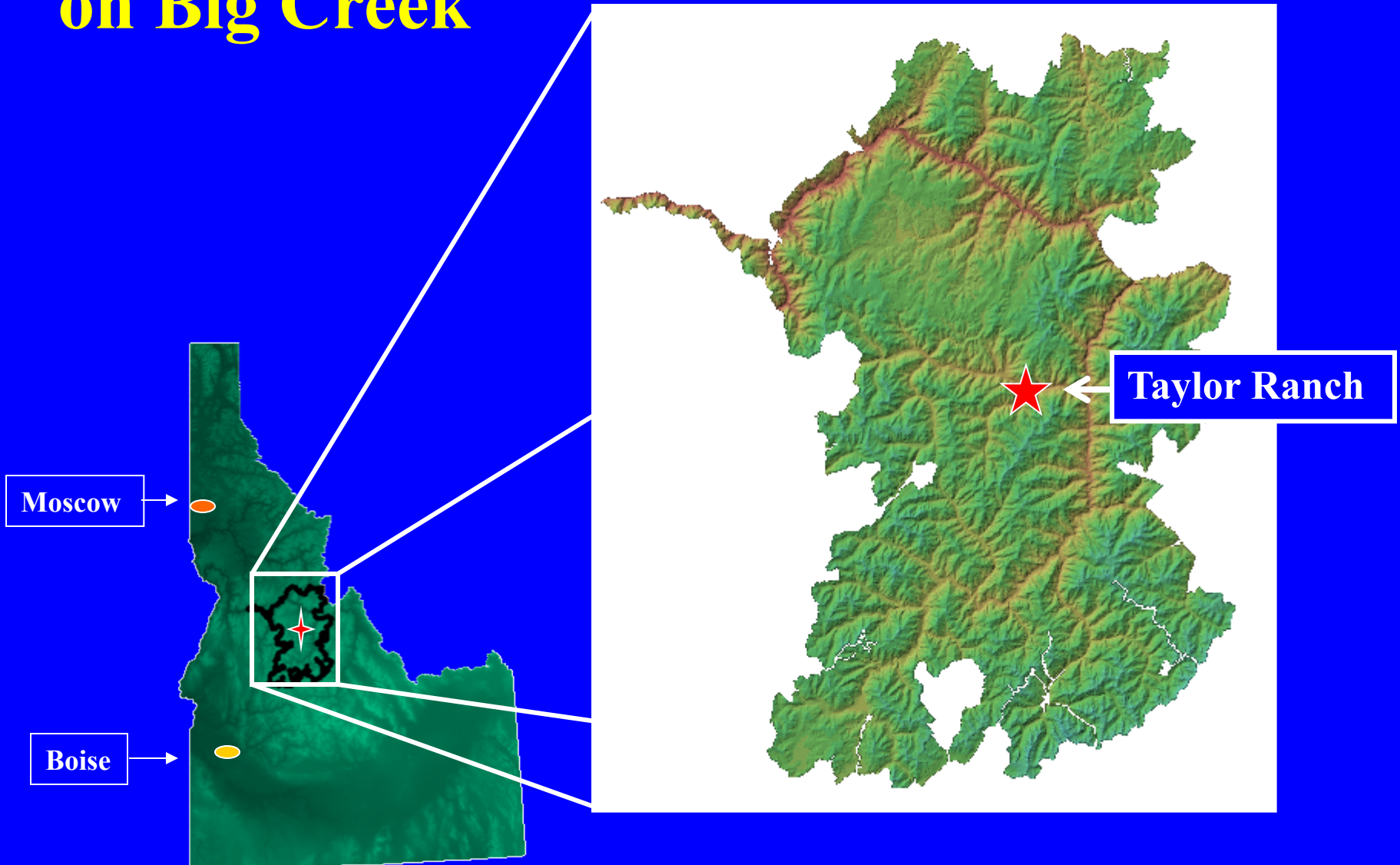


# Big Creek Bighorns, 2005 Status Report



# Taylor Ranch Field Station on Big Creek



# Big Creek Bighorns After the Diamond Point Fire of 2000



# Why Conduct Ground Counts During the Bighorn Rut?

- Annual data set
- Timing: minimal sex bias during rut counts
- Low cost
- Collaboration among U of I, FNAWS, IDF&G
- Early warning for population problems
- Assess changes over winter by comparing to helicopter count



# FNAWS Bighorn Sheep Counts

**2001 crew:** T. Heinrickson, D. Nachbar, J&H Akenson

**2002 crew:** C. Middleton, E. VanGrouw, Neil Paynter, J&H Akenson

**2003 crew:** T. Schommer, B. Burrows, D. Toweill, C. McDaniel, J&H Akenson

**2004 crew:** J&H Akenson

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Ewes</b>	<b>Lambs</b>	<b>L:E Ratio</b>	<b>I Ram</b>	<b>II Ram</b>	<b>III Ram</b>	<b>IV Ram</b>	<b>Total Rams</b>	<b>R:E Ratio</b>
<b>2001</b>	110	58	34	<b>58:100</b>	7	5	5	1	18	<b>31:100</b>
<b>2002</b>	98	41	23	<b>56:100</b>	9	15	9	1	34	<b>83:100</b>
<b>2003</b>	94	47	17	<b>36:100</b>	3	9	16	2	30	<b>64:100</b>
<b>2004</b>	104	58	15	<b>26:100</b>	9	6	15	1	31	<b>53:100</b>

# Lamb ratio was low in 2004 count (26:100)





**Mature Ram  
#’s are good  
for 2004,  
ratio 53:100**

Let's Continue Counts in 2005!







# Comparison of Ground and Air Bighorn Ram Composition Counts

	December Ground Counts			March Helicopter Counts		
Winter	Total Rams	I-II	III-IV	Total Rams	I-II	III-IV
2001-2002	31 rams:100 ewes 18	12	6	30 rams:100 ewes 15	9	6
2003-2004	64 rams:100 ewes 30	12	18	44 rams:100 ewes 27	18	9

# Comparison of December Ground Counts and March Helicopter Counts

- Similar numbers of bighorns were observed
- Composition ratios differed; lamb ratios were lower in spring
- December and March counts must be separate data sets, as they are not interchangeable



# New Bighorn Mortality Factors ?



Sheep?...might be a nice change  
from deer and elk.



# **Akensons plan to continue predation study with wolf focus and GPS collars**

