

WYOGA HUNTING STORY CONTEST WINNER

CHASE YOUR DREAMS

BY JOY CLINE

IN SEPTEMBER OF 2013, my husband Steve & I ventured to 7J Outfitters on our 1st archery elk hunt. We had been blessed to hunt with Jeff & Deb before but we always rifle hunted. The challenge of having a rutting bull elk come into a call in bow range and trying to stay composed enough to shoot it with a bow compelled us to try. We did not come away with an elk that year, but I was able to draw on a beautiful 6x6 after watching him come the whole way off the side of the hill, bugling all the way, I was unable to hold my bow long enough for him to step out from behind the saplings. That was enough for me, I WAS HOOKED!! I had never experienced anything like that in my short hunting career and I wanted more of it. We would travel back to 7J on several more hunts over the next several years. In 2015 we did our 1st pack in hunt for elk and I was blessed with a beautiful 6x6. I never had such an emotional hunt in my life and that is for another writing. Now I needed Steve to experience the same unexplainable feeling of harvesting an elk with a bow & arrow.

On December 28, 2016 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. As we sat in the Dr.'s office, Steve by my side, we were trying to let this all sink in. I looked at my Dr and told him that we had an archery elk hunt booked for September of the upcoming 2017 season and could he have me ready for that? He sat back in his chair and asked if I was serious, with a bow & arrow? Together the 3 of us starting calculating and laying out the plan to have us in the mountains of Wyoming again chasing elk with stick & string. I am here today to tell you that knowing I had that opportunity (along with the grace of God above), is what got me through chemo, surgery, and radiation over the next 6 months. That fall we made our trek to 7J and although I had an



opportunity and could not connect, Steve arrowed his 1st elk and I could not have been any happier. Now he understood the feelings I had been trying to explain for the last several years!

Fast forward to Sept. 2018 and we are chasing elk again with our friends at 7J.

beautiful country. That afternoon we went to the same spot we started in the morning and Kenny thought he had heard a faint answer to his call. We watched some mule deer on the mountainside and then he placed us where he thought the bull may come and he proceeded to set up behind us 100 yards or so and worked his magic. The bull came in silent and I drew my bow back as he went through a small dip in front of me only to have him stop right in front of me at 25 yards and stare right through me. I was able to hold my draw this time until he turned to his right and gave me a broadside shot.

And the emotions were the same this time as they were the 1st! I hit him a little further back than I thought and with daylight fading Kenny felt we should come back in the morning for him.

When I shot this bull I was unaware that he was a non-typical. Steve has always

told me, once you decide to shoot don't look at the rack! Our blessings did not stop there, Kenny called in a beautiful 6x6 on the last morning that my Steve harvested! I can't say enough about Kenny, Clint, Jeff and Deb along with the rest of the folks that have helped to make our dreams come true in the mountains of Wyoming. They all work incredibly hard to make sure each person has the opportunity to harvest an animal. If you would have asked me 20 years ago if I thought I would ever be chasing elk with a stick & string let alone been blessed to harvest some of the most magnificent animals on this earth, I would have said "no way". I thank God he has given my husband and



On our 1st morning out our guide Kenny Morga had mentioned things were pretty quiet as far as the elk talking. The morning was rather uneventful as far as the hunting goes but we got to trek through some

I the passion that we share that is called hunting and I hope each of you reading this will be brave enough to "chase your dreams"! 🏹