

WYOGA HUNTING STORY CONTEST WINNER #3

“2010 Moose Hunt”

By George Van Buren, Powell, WY

The food. I could write about the food!

This as I am wondering what I could write about my 2010 Moose hunt with Thomson outfitters. It's not that the hunt was a dud, on the contrary a 341 SCI Moose resulted from this excursion. Everything clicked. There were no problems, there wasn't even a dark and stormy night. Dang it!

Like every other hunting nut, nothing good is said about Wyoming Fish and Game until after looking at the draw results on the Fish and Game website. If there is a “Successful” after the coveted species, then hugs and kisses for the wonderful, beautiful people in Cheyenne. If there is “Unsuccessful” after that same coveted species, then obviously those same aforementioned people are way too dumb to be on the payroll. What in Hell is wrong with those people? This time hugs and kisses!

Maybe they'd rather have pizza.

I got my Moose tag! It says I did right here on my computer screen. But wait, did I put in for Area 5? Hold on a minute. I thought I put in for Area 1. An immediate check of the copies I made of my computer applications reveals that Area 1 is down for the first choice. For the first time in applying for a moose tag in 14 years, I put a second choice down and drew the second choice, Area 5. Never been in that part of Wyoming.

Now to find an Outfitter. A few quick calls and Thomson Outfitters was my choice. I have to tell Outfitters that I managed to get a serious back injury in 2000 and have good days and few bad ones walking. I got a sheep tag in 2007 and went with Crandall Creek Outfitters in Area 1. I told them the damage report when getting that hunt set up and like Thomson outfitters, they didn't even blink.

There are a few people in Wyoming who don't think I should be hunting because of that injury. (My Wife made me take the rest of the stuff out of this writing that I had to say about it. She thinks there might be some sensitive readers out there. It had to do with a remote portion of my anatomy.)

I put in for every critter there is to hunt.

I wanted to hunt the first part of the season, Todd Stevie with Thomson Outfitters said October 19. I said NO! I want to go the first day. Compromise. October 10. Wife says are you the moose hunting



expert? Uh, well, looking at it in that light. OK. Call Todd back. October 19 is wonderful!

Get to the camp in some of the pretty country Wyoming is famous for. Spent the first day there visiting with the mules and taking pictures of a chipmunk. Got acquainted with the elk hunting crew that was there, Mike Stevie, my moose hunting guide and Marty, all around camp hand. This was October 18.

Up early, 3:30 am, yikes! When at that altitude and that early in the morning is there going to be air that time of day? Get breakfast and head out

moose hunting with Mike and Marty. Mike has four places to check. First place, nothing. Second place, nothing. Third place, Bingo! Four bulls and a cow moose! One of the bulls is gorgeous! It is still way to dark to shoot and way before legal shooting time. Mike says we wait and hope the moose stay in the willow flat until legal shooting time.

Legal shooting time comes and goes, Mike wants a little more light on the subject and finally, “Get a good rest and

shoot the biggest one.”

OK fine! Prone position it is in the meadow, 270 yards to the moose. Everything is good, rock solid rest on the ground but my heart is pounding so bad I can't hold the horizontal cross hair on the heart/lungs. Every heart beat sends the horizontal cross hair flying way over the moose's back and the scope is set at 14 power. Holy Cow! Mike can't stand it anymore, “What are you doing? Why don't you shoot?” “I can't hold the damn scope on the moose. My heart beat is making the gun bounce way over his back.”

Silence. Then laughter from Mike and Marty. “Just take a minute and relax.” A minute goes by.

“Are you going to shoot? He's in a perfect position, broadside and all.” BOOM! Gun goes off and the moose disappeared. When the gun went off it blew frost crystals up and I couldn't see where the moose went. “Hey, Mike, where'd he go?”

“He's down and that's the fastest I've seen one drop.”

We hike out to get the meat and Mike finds the bullet hole clear up on the spine. He wants to know where I was aiming and I told him the heart. Mike says, “Good shot.” It was October 19, 2010.

Did I tell you about the food? It was really good! ■