

WYOGA HUNTING STORY CONTEST WINNER #3

Elk Hunting Story 2009

By Mike Snider

It was September, 2009, and I was back in Wyoming for a 7 day combination Elk/Mule Deer hunt with Josh Roth and Hoback Peak Outfitters. My first hunt with Hoback Peak Outfitters was in 2008. I was fortunate enough to take a nice 6x6 Elk with my rifle on the last day of a 7 day hunt. This year, I was hunting Mule Deer with my rifle and Elk with my Bow.

The first day of the hunt was opening day of Mule Deer season so we decided to focus on Mule Deer. We had a nice 4x5 Mule Deer down by 10:00 am. After the pack back to camp, lunch, and a short nap we were back on the trail later that afternoon to focus on Elk. The first evening we set up near an Elk wallow where there was a lot of sign. Josh called in a Bull that was just outside of Bow range. The next day

we were back on the trail before daylight. As we approached the area we wanted to hunt we heard a few bugles. Josh was able to call two 5x5 Elk to within 20 yards standing broadside. I decided to pass on both Bulls. After the Elk walked off, Josh came over to me with a puzzled look on his face and asked: was there a tree in the way? I jokingly replied "no, we are hunting for a 7x7 this year". Josh just shook his head and was speechless. That evening he called in a nice 6x6 Elk that was outside of bow range.

On days 3 and 4 we heard a few Elk bugling and couldn't get close to any of them. It seemed they would run the opposite direction from Josh's bugle call. That night, while sitting around the campfire, Josh decided he would switch to cow calls instead of bugles and I decided that I was now hunting any legal Bull.

The next morning we left camp 2 hours before daylight to give us plenty of time to get to the area we wanted to hunt. After about an hour on the trail we heard a bugle and decided to stop there and wait until daylight. We sat for an hour and heard a few more bugle's from the same area. Once it turned light we moved into position closer to where we had heard the bugles. We were in an area of mature Aspen trees and some small Pine trees. I set up behind a Pine tree and Josh set up 30 yards behind me. Josh cow called twice. Moments later I could hear twigs snapping and leaves cracking. The sound kept getting closer and closer as I raised my bow to get ready. A mature Cow Elk appeared first, trotted past me and stopped. I could still hear something trailing behind her. Moments

later a Bull Elk appeared on the same trail. As he slowed from a trot to a fast walk, I drew my bow back. Josh cow called again and the Bull stopped right behind a Pine tree. I held my bow for what seemed like an hour but was probably more like 30 seconds. All I could see were antlers as the Bull turned his head back and forth. He finally took 3 steps forward, stopped, and looked right at me. I released my arrow and hit him in the front shoulder. I knocked another arrow as the Bull turned and ran back in the direction he came from. Luckily, the Bull stopped, turned and looked back in my direction. I drew my bow back again and released another arrow. This one hit the mark right behind his front shoulder. The Bull turned and ran to the top of the ridge and disappeared into the dark timber. We walked to where the Elk was standing for both shots. The first shot was at 28 yards and the second at 42 yards. There was a good blood trail but we decided to wait an hour prior to tracking him. After following the blood trail for approximately 600 yards we found the Elk. Ironically, he was a 7x7! I remember Josh saying "this Elk has a chance to win a WYOGA award. After taking 100 pictures we packed the Elk back to camp and spent the next 2 days relaxing and telling stories around the campfire. Thanks to Josh Roth and Hoback Peak Outfitters for a great hunt. I am looking forward to coming back in 2010. ■

