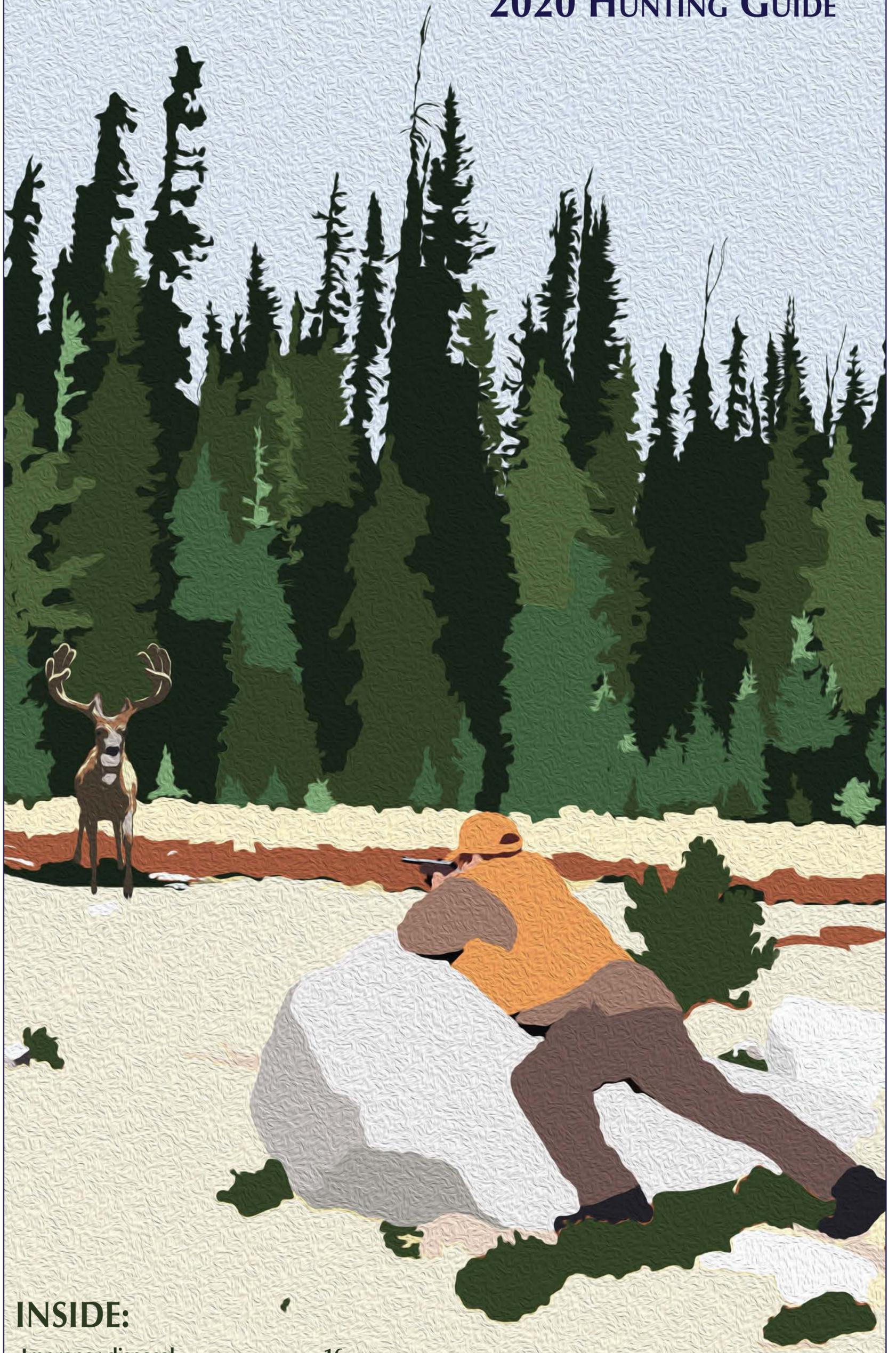


THE SARATOGA SUN

2020 HUNTING GUIDE



INSIDE:

Improper disposal	16
Three in a row	17
Hunting for important data	18
Bureau of Conservation	19
All about the experience	20
Where the elk and antelope play	21
Hunting for ethical harvest	22

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Improper disposal

When hunting, there's a right way to dispose of your kill

by Dana Davis

It is hunting season once again as evidenced by the new animal remains illegally dumped along country road 385, further blemishing the landscape and bringing a danger of chronic wasting disease (CWD) to the wildlife in the area.

CWD is a contagious neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose. It causes a degeneration of the brain leading to emaciation, abnormal behavior, loss of bodily functions and death. The head/brains, spinal cord and nervous tissues carry the diseased prions of infected animals. In illegally disposing of these parts of an animal, the law breakers are potentially spreading the infection to a healthy region.

In an interview, Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton pointed out that CWD is a wildlife disease and does not affect humans. However, Burton said, "most hunters are very concerned about CWD. They expect us to do everything in our power to prevent it spreading, reduce or control it somehow and are terrified of what it is going to do to their sport."

According to Burton, Wyoming Game and Fish has to take steps to try to manage this CWD and the public should start to expect more stringent enforcement of laws in effort to reduce the disease. The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission general hunting regulations, chapter 2, section 15, regulates the transportation and disposal of potentially CWD infected deer, elk and moose. In general, the skull and backbone should be left at the site of the kill.

Burton said that the Game and Fish Commission also have booklets and have posted videos regarding the proper disposal of carcasses.

In regards to the dump site on 385, Burton called it an "embarrassment to hunters". He also called it offensive to people, "not just to hunters, but to people who don't hunt, they don't understand why its out there on public land. Its their



Photo by Dana Davis

Processed animal parts are illegally dumped by county road 385 near Saratoga.

land too. There's nothing that says that's ok to throw bones out there ... This is not the behavior of good, honest hunters and sportsmen in Wyoming. They don't do that. Its the same people who throw their batteries or refrigerators out there, people who don't care what their community looks like."

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was also contacted regarding the illegal disposal of animals. In an e-mail response Nikki Maxwell, Public Affairs Specialist, said, "there are approximately 4-5 'bone piles'. These piles have been in use for about 10-15 years or more ... These piles may be an issue during hunting season due to historical use and no other option for hunters to dispose of animal remains." The e-mail went on to say that the BLM does coordinate with the Saratoga Game Warden

to patrol the areas and make law enforcement contacts as needed.

There is miscommunication or misunderstanding somewhere. Hunters do have options for disposal of animal remains. The Saratoga Sun reported on May 20, 2020, in an article titled "UPRSWDD develops plan for animal disposal" that, "there has also been verbal guidance from the DEQ that the UPRSWDD can accept the bones, hide and head of an animal in their CD pit." The article went on to report that offal could be accepted and composted.

In addition to the landfill, hunters can take their animals to a meat processor or taxidermist. These professionals will properly dispose of any unused remains.

For complete Wyoming hunting regulations, visit the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's website at wgfd.

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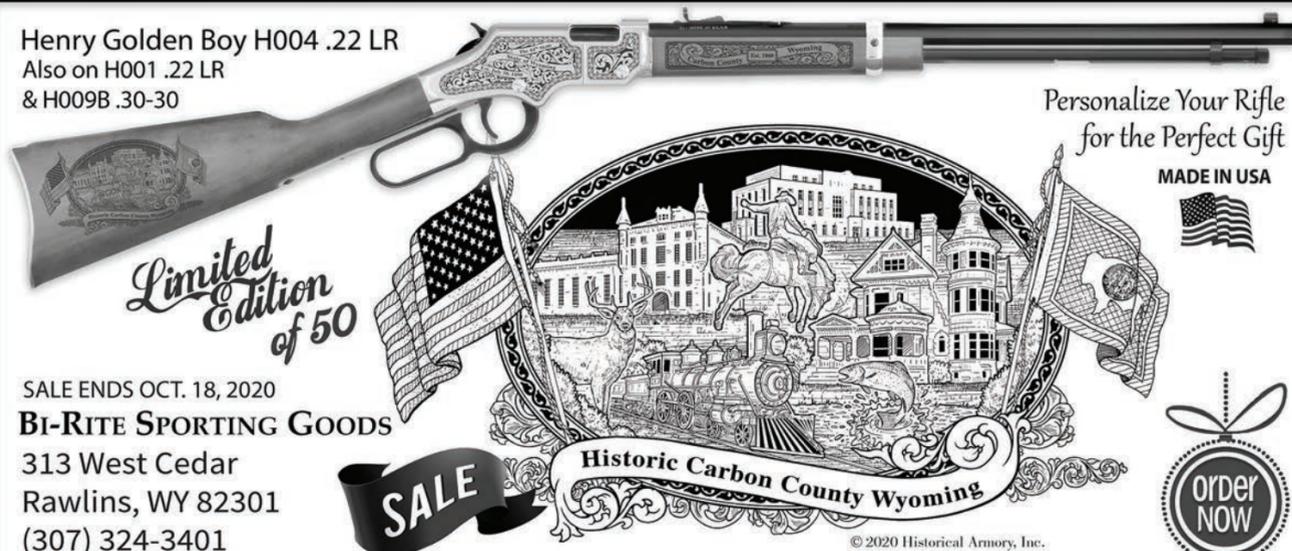
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2020 Hunting Guide

Three in a row

Young hunter, at 12 years old, fills antelope, deer and elk tags in first season

by Joshua Wood

Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the November 27, 2019 Saratoga Sun.

The beginning of every hunting season sees countless people head out into the wilderness with the hopes of filling their tags. Whether it is antelope, deer or elk season, a good harvest means meat in the freezer and food for the family. While many will end their season being able to punch at least one tag, it's rare for someone to fill all three. Even rarer is someone being able to do so in their first year.

Jerahleigh Johnson, a 12-year-old first time hunter was able to do just that as she harvested an antelope, deer and elk.

Johnson's hunting adventure begin with antelope, where she drew Type 1 in Area 50. Under Type 1, she was legally able to harvest either a buck or a doe, but would harvest a buck. When she first saw the antelope she would eventually harvest, she found herself getting a little excited.

"Then I remembered to stay calm," said Johnson.

The young hunter remembered the training she had went through in how to properly fire the rifle. She didn't pull the trigger, which many, but



Jerahleigh Johnson poses with her 'forkie' buck deer that she harvested on the final day of deer season.

calm down," said Johnson. While she was able to use one shot with her antelope and deer, it took Johnson three shots with her elk.

"The first one, I shot him right where you're supposed to shoot him. He still didn't drop, he just started walking. I shot him, I think in the spine or somewhere close to there and then he dropped his whole back half," Johnson said.

According to Trimble, Johnson was pretty close to the kill zone, but due to excitement had just barely missed the vital area. Still, with the harvest of the elk the young hunter filled all three tags. Not only that, but her bull elk was close in size to her father's, which scored a 355 on Boone and Crockett.

While she was lucky enough to get all three tags filled, Johnson said that those hunting for the first time shouldn't expect to have the same luck.

"It really depends, because I didn't think I was going to fill out three tags," said Johnson.

Having grown up in Wyoming, though, she understands the importance of hunting. Not only as a tool of conservation by helping keep population under control, but as a way of life.

"If you get an animal, say in the winter, if we have a really big storm and it's unsafe to go to the grocery store, you have food in the freezer or fridge," Johnson said. "You can eat that for dinner, lunch or breakfast."

The fortune of this season has motivated Johnson, who said that she looks forward to future hunts, even if she doesn't get as lucky as she did this year.



Jerahleigh Johnson poses with her antelope after harvesting it last year.

rather took a deep breath, relaxed and squeezed the trigger.

"It went down immediately," Johnson said. "It just dropped."

With no tracking needing to be done, the hard work of field dressing the antelope began. Johnson said she helped her father with that, but that she found the process "pretty cool."

Following her successful antelope hunt, Johnson went into deer season having drawn Type 1 in Area 78. She and her family spent most of the season looking for an antlered deer to fill her tag until they were finally on the last day of the season. When they found one, a little two-by-two buck, Johnson was nervous.

Again, she forced herself to relax and took her shot. The small buck ran about 40 yards, according to Johnson's mother, Julie Trimble, and dropped to the ground.

With both an antelope and a deer tag filled, the young hunter went into elk season having drawn one of the hardest areas; Area 16, also known as Shirley Basin.

"Very hard tag to draw," said Trimble. "It took us nearly 10 years to draw that tag."

Johnson, having drawn the tag her first season, was dedicated to the hunt. According to Trimble, Johnson enjoys playing volleyball and actually skipped volleyball to go on the elk hunt. As luck would have it, it was just a few days after one of the October snow storms that Johnson would fill her third tag.

With a week left in the season, the 12 year old spotted a six-by-six bull. Not only was she excited, but her heart was racing and she was finding it hard to breath due to the excitement.

"I was like 'Hold on, if I want it I have to



Jerahleigh's bull elk requires her to stretch her arms just to be able to hold it.

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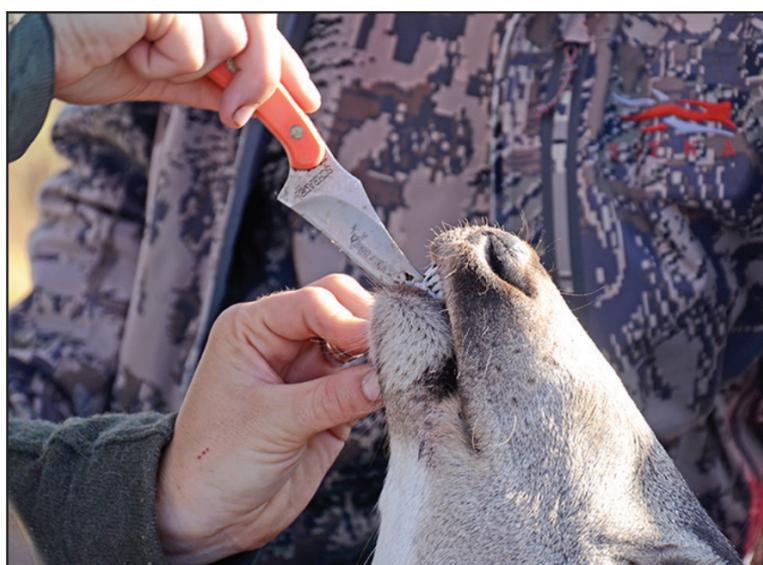
Hunting for important data



Photos by Joshua Wood

Teal Cufaude, left, looks for the retropharyngeal lymph nodes in a harvest buck. The lymph nodes are the lab preferred sample for CWD testing.

Removing a tooth from a trophy is one of the most accurate ways to test for the age of the animal.



Game check stations help Wyoming Game and Fish collect vital data on local herds

by Joshua Wood

It's a warm fall day on the first Saturday of October and Teal Cufaude, the Saratoga Wildlife Biologist for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), is very carefully attempting to extract something from the neck of a mule deer.

The mule deer, a four-point buck, doesn't provide much resistance. It was harvested earlier in the day and, as it cools down, ticks are evacuating their once living headquarters. In fact, the only part of the mule deer that it is around is the head. Teal, who is reaching into the exposed flesh of the neck with elongated tweezers, is looking for one of two retropharyngeal lymph nodes.

This interesting bit of post-mortem surgery is taking place in the parking lot of the Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District just south of Saratoga. The parking lot has historically served as the game check station for WGFD in Saratoga and Teal is performing just one of her duties as she mans the station with her husband, Mark Cufaude. Mark, like Teal, works for WGFD and is the Saratoga Habitat and Access Biologist.

"The importance of the game check stations is that we collect the bulk of our biological data regarding the status of our herds and hunter success during these check stations," said Teal. "The objective may change every year. We do have priority disease sampling, hunt areas and herd units that kind of rotate throughout the state each year. For example, the Saratoga check station here, what we're doing for the next two weeks as the deer season goes on—our Platte

Valley deer season is going on currently—we'll be collecting antler measurements.

For the next couple weeks of deer season, the main objective for Teal at the check station is to measure the antlers of the mule deer bucks that come through. The reasoning behind those measurements, at least for the Platte Valley deer herd, relates to secondary management objectives set by WGFD. Those objectives pertain to a certain percentage of harvest bucks being a certain antler measurement.

"So, we're collecting that information at these check stations here to see whether we met those management objectives," Teal said.

While most of Teal's time is taken up with antler measurements for the mule deer, the WGFD also offers testing for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The ideal sample to collect for CWD testing? The retropharyngeal lymph nodes.

"We're not necessarily a CWD priority area this year. We've got some adjacent herds, like the Sheep Mountain deer herd, which is a priority area this year. So, we're grabbing samples from as many of those critters as we can," said Teal. "Right now, at this check station, it's mostly folks who just want their animals sampled for CWD. So, Jim Schell here, his hunter does want his critter sampled for CWD."

Typically, when it comes to collecting the lymph nodes from the mule deer for sampling, a cut is made behind the jaw bone. The lymph nodes, which sit right alongside the windpipe of the animal, are easily found

and can be just as easily extracted.

"Those retropharyngeal lymph nodes just stick out at '10 and 2' along the windpipe and (are) super easy to grab," Teal said.

However, making that cut is not always something that can be done. If someone has harvested a buck mule deer that they want to have mounted, the cape needs to be kept intact. That's where the hunter, or the outfitter in the case of Schell, make the proper cuts to expose the flesh of the neck so that the WGFD can extract the lymph node.

"We take a lot of extra caution when folks are trying to taxidermy their wildlife, their harvest, because we don't want to cut capes," said Teal.

The retropharyngeal lymph node is probably remarkable in how unremarkable it looks. To the casual observer, it might even look like what was extracted was a collection of dried nasal mucus that was gray in color. This lymph node, however, is the lab preferred sample when testing for CWD in mule deer.

"If, for some reason, that's compromised we can take the obex, which is a part of the brain stem, and then we could also collect tonsil tissues," Teal said. "So, there's a couple other tissues we could grab if one of the tissues is destroyed or compromised."

Along with the required antler measurements and the optional CWD testing of the mule deer, the WGFD can also age test the harvested animal. All it takes in that case is a quick removal of a tooth and, luckily, no dental certification is required.

Mule deer, however, aren't

the only harvested animals that are being checked and sampled by Teal at the check station. Pronghorn season is also open and the WGFD are taking horn measurements of the left horn and doing an age analysis of the animals.

But, why the left horn?

"It's just to be consistent throughout the state so when we're looking at horn measurements across the state, across herd units and hunt areas, we know that we're consistently measuring the left horn for those analyses," Teal said. "It could have been the right one, but the left was chosen."

While Teal said that the horn length of a pronghorn and the age is something that could be linked, it's not something that is happening with the herds around Saratoga. The measuring of the horn is a way for WGFD to keep an eye on the development and genetics of the herds as well as what type of feed they had during the off-season.

"We've got a lot of potential for what we could look at, given that horn measurement," said Teal. "We're not doing anything specific with it here this year but at a statewide level we could certainly look at an age correspondence."

As Teal, and occasionally Mark, sit at the ranger district outside Saratoga to collect this information, WGFD Game Warden Biff Burton is doing the same exact thing out in the field.

"Biff Burton isn't here, our game warden, but he's running around taking the same information, putting it in our check station app, collecting the same type of samples or measurements that I am.

He's just doing it out in the field at these camp checks," Teal said. "We combine all this information at the end of the hunting season and it's a component of what we present to folks during our season setting meetings during late February, early March. We also take into consideration, of course, our harvest survey results."

Along with the biological data that is gathered by Teal and Burton, hunters are also encouraged to take a harvest survey. This gives the WGFD additional information, such as what hunters are seeing and how successful they were during the season. This, also, helps in setting the next hunting season.

"I think the big thing is, a lot of people think it's going to take a bunch of time out of their day to stop at these check stations but the goal is to be pretty quick about it and get them back out in the field," said Teal. "The other thing about these check stations is it's not just hunters giving us information. We also have a lot of information we can provide hunters. Like, today, we've had a lot of questions about the fire and what deer hunting's going to be like around the fire. What elk hunting is going to be like around the fire. So, we also hope to be able to provide hunters with information of what we've been seeing on the ground, too."

While it keeps her busy, Teal appears to enjoy setting up these check stations and collecting this vital data.

Said Teal, "It's the best time of year and we hope folks are successful and we like to see a lot of harvested critters coming through."



2020 Hunting Guide

Bureau of Conservation

Late starting hunter discusses how hunters help fund conservation for wildlife

Photo by Mike Armstrong

by Mike Armstrong
 Danny Burau, owner of Firewater Public House, is a fairly new hunter. He says there is a public relations problem with hunting.

“In videos that you see hunters doing silly things it can give viewers a bad impression,” Burau said. “There is a show called ‘Meat Eater’. I would tell anyone to watch it. Another called ‘Stars in the Sky’, the same thing, and then argue with me about hunting afterwards.”

He said it is unfortunate that most things people see and hear about hunting are sensationalized.

“The Minnesota dentist who shoots a beloved lion in Africa and did he hunt it for the right reasons” said Burau. “Probably not. But trophy hunting and what it can do for some economies is another whole conversation, but trophy hunting is not me. What I can say is that hunters contribute more to conservation effort than any other single group. The Pittman-Robertson Act was put in place decades ago as an excise tax that is on every bullet, rifle, bow, arrow that is related to hunting.”

Approximately one-quarter of the average state wildlife agency’s budget comes from federal funding, almost entirely provided by the Pittman-Robertson Act (Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937), which imposes an 11 percent excise tax on the sale of firearms and ammunition products according to conservationforce.org.

The group makes the case that conservation is not free. There is a price to pay for the management, protection and enjoyment of our natural world. Wildlife abundance is no accident and it isn’t free, either.

Burau said it seems the American public remains largely unaware or indifferent to the costs of conservation. He said Americans benefit

from the conservation services state agencies provide, but seldom is there public recognition for how the agency staff and programs are funded.

“Elk exists today because of hunters,” Burau said. “Hunters wanted this tax because they understood the necessity of funding conservation,” Burau said. “Pittman-Robertson understood this. So all these hiking trails and public’s free access to the public BLM (Bureau of Land Management) has nothing to do with hikers and environmentalists, although this is not to knock on environmentalists because we need to pay attention to the environment. But that money comes directly from the pockets of hunters and shooters. Recreational shooters, not hunters, put a ton of money into this. Hunters and fishermen fund public land and open space in a way that hiking boots or a backpack do not.”

He said that is why there has been rejuvenation of elk, deer, bear, wolf and fish populations.

“It is crazy how much money hunters, as a single unit, have put into wildlife and conservation,” Burau said. “Conservation is an environmentalist with a gun.”

Burau pointed out no other country in the world has such conservation funding mechanisms in place. Nor does the United States itself have an alternative mechanism to replace these funding sources, should they decline or disappear. This is not to say that Americans do not financially support conservation; they do. However Burau said hunters and fishermen make enormous contributions and have been doing so for a very long time.

Overall, according to conservationforce.org, hunting in the United States generates \$25 billion dollars in retail sales and more than \$17 billion dollars in salaries and wages each year, while creating sales



Danny Burau, owner of Firewater Public House, talks about hunting and how he enjoys putting meat on the table for his family.

tax and state and federal income tax revenues for government agencies.

American hunters spend \$5.3 billion dollars each year on hunting-related travel, \$6.4 billion on hunting equipment, and \$8.4 billion on other related items. The annual expenditure of a hunter is \$2,800. The Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation reports that sportsmen and women spend \$605 million a year on hunting dogs. The National Shooting Sports Foundation reports that if hunting were a company, the amount spent by American sportsmen and women to support their activities would make it number 73 on the Fortune 500 list. Hunting is big business and it pays for conservation.

Hunting related activities and services annually employ more than 600,000 Americans.

These jobs are often created in rural areas where employment opportunities may be limited. In some rural areas, dollars spent by sportsmen and women during hunting and fishing seasons can be enough to keep small businesses operational for another year. “I started having conversations with hunters and realized that I had a goal to feed my family the healthiest, most nutrient based version of any animal,” Burau said. “This is not knock on cattle ranches, but the most free range natural and organic version of large protein is bagged by hunters. This is important to me.”

Burau said because many

people associate most hunters as just wanting antlers, horns or heads and throwing the rest away, not enough understand the value of what hunters do for conservation and wildlife. He said that hunters that waste the animal is an incrementally small population.

“So many people I have found in this town feed their families with what they hunt,” Burau said. “If there was something that I could say to my friends in Boulder that do not hunt, I would tell them biologists from game and fish have studied these herds, the populations and turn around and say it is okay to kill this many animal out this group. It is scientific and a regulated process and it funds conservation.”



CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) can be transmitted from CWD positive carcasses of animals harvested by hunters that have not been properly disposed of. The majority of CWD positive animals that are harvested appear completely normal and healthy. To minimize the possibility of transmission, Wyoming’s regulations require deer, elk and moose hunters transport only the following items within Wyoming:



wgfd.wyo.gov

2020

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! HUNTERS ARE REMINDED NOTHING IN THESE REQUIREMENTS ALLOWS HUNTERS TO REMOVE EVIDENCE OF SEX, SPECIES OR HORN OR ANTLER DEVELOPMENT AS PER THE REGULATION. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON DISPOSAL VISIT WGFD.WYO.GOV/CWD

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CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE INFORMATION



Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal disease of the central nervous system in mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk and moose. Special regulations were adopted by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to decrease the spread of the disease. Details about CWD, where it exists in Wyoming and testing for the disease are provided on the Game and Fish website. For more information on CWD or to check your CWD sample results, please visit: wgfd.wyo.gov/cwd Hunters wanting to collect lymph nodes from their harvested deer, elk or moose for CWD testing can watch a video on how to do so at: Wyoming Game and Fish Department - Lymph node removal video.

Most animals infected with CWD show no clinical signs early on, but as the disease progresses (> 1 year), animals will begin to show weight loss, reluctance to move, excessive salivation, droopy ears, increased drinking and urinating, lethargy and eventually death. Not all animals will show the typical signs of CWD. The majority of all CWD positive animals harvested appear completely normal. The only way to know whether your harvested animal has CWD is to have it tested.

For information on the Wyoming CWD Management Plan visit wgfd.wyo.gov/cwd

wgfd.wyo.gov

2020 Hunting Guide

All about the experience

Douglas Campbell, and father Jason, recount their first father-son hunt

by Joshua Wood

American author and big game hunter Robert Ruark once wrote, "The old man used to say that the best part of hunting and fishing was the thinking about going and the talking about it after you got back." Those words seemingly ring true when it comes to Jason Campbell and his 14-year-old son, Douglass.

Like many youth growing up in the west, Douglass spent his youth going on hunts with his father and often helping with carrying the hunting packs or packing the harvested animals out. This year, however, the roles were reversed as Douglass drew his first elk tag. A bit of beginner's luck led to Douglass drawing Area 16.

"At first, I didn't really know much about the tag. I was just like 'Oh, cool. I drew something' and then all the people around town, whenever we told them, they were like 'You drew what tag?' and so I didn't realize how amazing of a tag it was at first," said Douglass. "Then I slowly began to realize how good of a tag it is to be able to draw."

Jason has attempted to draw Area 16 several times in the past, but was never successful. The area, which extends from the Shirley Mountains in the west to the Freezeout Mountains in the west and from Shirley Basin in the north to the Medicine Bow River in the south, is known for producing substantial bull elk.

While Jason had not been successful in drawing that area, the excitement that his son had drawn the area for his first hunt was evident even weeks later. According to Jason, a family friend—Shaun McBride—offered to guide them through the Shirley Mountains and had joked about Douglass' literal luck of the draw.

"Oh, it was awesome. The joke that he (Shaun McBride) continually made throughout the hunt was 'You're being spoiled, Douglass, because this isn't how elk hunting is normally'. So, I knew that he was going to have a really amazing experience," said Jason. "If you're going to go on a first time

hunt, that's a great way to do it because you're going to get a lot of the experience of the proximity to animals. They respond to calls and we see a lot of animals. If you're fortunate enough, you can choose."

The tag that Douglass drew for Area 16 allowed him to hunt through the month of September during bow season and continue his hunt into October with rifle season. Labor Day weekend was selected as the first—and ultimately only—hunt in the Shirley Mountains as it was when Jason and McBride's days off coincided.

The very first morning, Jason and Douglass saw elk. As they called, the elk responded. Some came fairly close while others kept their distance. At 200 yards, even with Douglass using a crossbow, they were clearly out of range of any shot. Throughout the three day and two night hunt, they saw a number of different elk at different

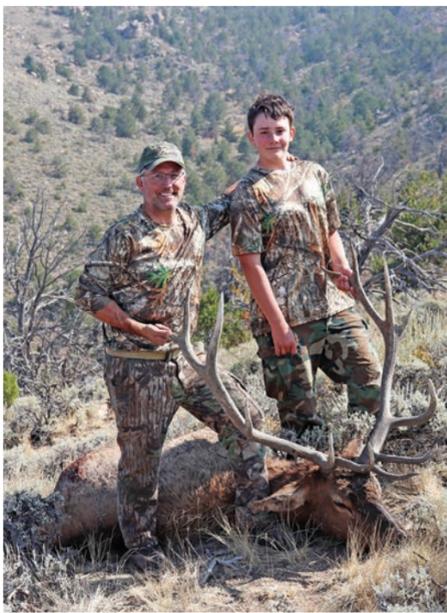
Douglass would ask Jason if he should take a shot on one bull or another. Jason, for his part, reiterated to his son that the decision was his and his alone.

"I want you to be the guy who makes the decision to take the shot because it's your hunt and if I tell you to shoot something and you shoot it and you're not happy with it, then it's on me and not on you," Jason said. "It was really great. He chose to shoot the animal that he did and he had had multiple opportunities before that."

The bull that Douglass would end up harvesting had a distinct rack. In addition to the six points the elk had on its antlers, the left antler had a seventh prong that stuck out on the side. The day before he took his shot, both Douglass and Jason saw the bull in a wallow. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for father and son.

"It was like if you put perfume or bug spray next to a dog's nose and they go crazy running their heads into the ground. It was like that but it was a 600 pound elk and it was amazing to see," said Douglass. "He was halfway through when he just stood up and looked around and bolted off and it looked like he smelled something. But we weren't downwind of him and there was no way he saw us because we were 100 yards away."

"I've never witnessed an elk in a wallow before. When Douglass shot him the next morning, he had been in a wallow that morning too because his antlers were just caked in mud and he was just soaking wet with mud," said Jason. "He went head first in that thing. He dove in and just obliterating (sic) the mud and there's just weeds and mud going everywhere. We just had smiles



Jason Campbell is obviously proud of his son, Douglass, in this photo.

times of the day. "We had the morning and the evening hunts where you can get them to come in and then they kind of bed down during the day or move around feeding a little bit," said Jason.

Throughout the weekend,



Photos courtesy Jason Campbell

From left, Jason Campbell, Douglass Campbell and Shaun McBride pose with Douglass' bull elk.

on our faces watching him do it."

When Douglass took the shot, he doesn't recall any defining moment that solidified his decision. In the fashion of the stereotypical boy, he downplayed the shot with an "Eh, I might as well."

"Did it feel right to you at the time? That, 'Yeah, this is the one I want to shoot'?" asked Jason.

"Yeah, kind of, but it was more just a spur of the moment just squeeze the trigger," Douglass replied.

After taking his shot, Douglass was able to experience another aspect of hunting; the ability to eat your kill.

"We had the hanging loins and grandpa's home fries and green beans and chocolate chip cookies," said Douglass.

"Judd and dad had come up sheep hunting with me in Alaska and we got a sheep and D'Ron was up there and she made chocolate chip cookies," said Jason. "So, that was our successful hunter's dinner. We kind of started our tradition, so it's always pan fried hanging tenderloins, canned green beans, potatoes and chocolate chip cookies."

While Douglass and Jason are certainly pleased with being able to harvest a bull elk from the Shirley Mountain area, neither deny that

the most memorable part of it was creating the experience. For Jason, this was something that he learned from his father, Doug Campbell. When Douglass related the story of his hunt to his grandfather, his grandfather called back later to ask what his son and grandson ate while out in the wild.

"For us it was always (about) the experience. We would plan our meals out. 'This night we're going to do this and that night we're going to do that and we'll eat this for breakfast.' My dad's always known for his amazing hunting sandwiches and he always had all the acoutremon; the olives and the peppers and all of that stuff," Jason said. "My dad rarely shot things. We would go for the experience."

When it comes to the experience, it goes beyond just the actual hunt for both Jason and Douglass. According to Jason, his son will still thank him for taking him on the hunt and give him a hug.

"It's really interesting to think about that because I went through the same cycle for my dad, too. Growing up, going out and going hunting with my dad and doing the same thing with my son. It's neat to be able to have that similar experience," said Jason. "Just makes me smile."

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2020 Hunting Guide

Where the elk and antelope play

Reporter rides along with Medicine Bow Game Warden Rob Shipe

by Mike Armstrong

Rob Shipe is the Wyoming Game and Fish Warden for the Medicine Bow region. His region encompasses the Shirley Mountains. This landscape includes Area 16 which has special management herds of elk.

"Area 16 for elk, it's special management because we are trying to grow big bulls," Shipe said. "We are going for that higher bull ratio and to hunt there, it is a pretty hard tag to draw just because a lot of people put in for it. This tag is in high demand. There are only so many tags. It is in the top five places to hunt elk in the state. It isn't number one, but it is up there."

Since the elk rifle season started on October 1, Shipe said he has seen hunters with large animals.

"It is stellar. I have been checking in fantastic bulls," Shipe said. "I have been checking in nice, mature six point, seven point elk the past five days. It makes me happy to see people so happy with what they are pulling in."

Shipe believes the ultimate goal of a hunter is to have fun. Getting meat is a bonus.

"You know at the end of the day, it is for fun. Hunting is supposed to be fun, whether or not you fill the tag. If you have fun, that is the name of the game," Shipe said. "Obviously it is better to have something to take home and throw in the freezer, but if you just have fun running around calling an elk—just scouting them out or putting the stalk on them—if you just have fun doing that, it was all well worth it."

He said people who get the tag should try hard for the days allowed because the tag is difficult to get.

As Shipe did his rounds on Monday, he said there were not as many hunters out as the past few days. He is especially surprised not to see many antelope hunters.

The early morning has the fast relative of the giraffe in abundance as he drives along, but there are no trucks pulled over anywhere. The couple of trucks on the road he does see,

he pulls over and talks to the occupants. If they are hunting, he checks the licenses and tells them of areas he knows are good with game.

One driver was Todd Heward, who allows hunting on his property. He told Shipe that it doesn't seem that there are as many hunters out. Shipe agrees that 2020 does seem a bit off.

Shipe said that when a private land owner gives permission to hunt on his land, the hunter will give a coupon that is attached to the permit to the land owner. The land owner then turns it in at the end of the season to the game warden. After the land owner does this, he is reimbursed around \$15 for each coupon.

"Basically we give the money because the owner gives access to their land," Shipe said. "And also because it is a way to say thanks for feeding these critters, especially these ranching operations. Essentially they are not only feeding their cattle, but they are feeding big game. So it is a little compensation."

One hunter he saw was out of his truck only about 20 feet away from the road, eyeing his prey through a scope. The hunter was not wearing any orange. Shipe watched the man, who did not see the game warden pull close, for about five minutes.

No shot was fired, but eventually the hunter looked up and Shipe went into action.

Shipe was friendly as he asked for the permits. The hunter and companion gave them to him. They had yet to sign them, so Shipe asked them to do so.

"You know we have two problems here, do you know what they are?" Shipe asked the hunter who had been crouched



Dustin Kramer, left, shows off his bull elk to Medicine Bow Game Warden Rob Shipe on Monday.

on the ground, way too near to the road.

The hunter responded immediately that he was too close to the road and that he was not wearing orange.

Because the hunter had not fired a shot, Shipe elected for a warning. For not wearing orange, the hunter was given a ticket.

When handed the ticket, the hunter had an orange vest on. The ticket was for \$100.

"The money from the ticket goes to the schools," Shipe said. "Many people think game and fish take it, but no, it goes to support schools."

Shipe said the year before he saw many more hunters and he had no explanation why.

He said that pronghorn hunting might have slacked off because pronghorn was the first game to be open for hunting, but now deer and elk are open about five days later.

"So with the elk and deer openers being so close, more people are getting ready for it," Shipe said. "Pronghorn is a very successful hunt, so I think hunters

go for the elk first."

After Shipe went over his pronghorn area, he went to the Shirley Basin area. He found the campsite in the mountain area almost deserted. He did meet a hunter at the campsite who had recent hip operation and opted out of going out with her husband and children.

She said that many people had left the area the day before.

Shipe said he was not surprised. As he was getting ready to leave, a truck of hunters he had talked to the day before had a bull elk in the flatbed.

The hunter who killed the elk was excited to show off the huge beast to Shipe. The father of the hunter told Shipe it had been the best hunt that he had ever been on.

Shipe smiled and was happy for the man.

After Shipe checked in the elk, he made his goodbyes.

"The smiles on their faces told me they had a lot of fun hunting these past few days," Shipe said. "And that is exactly how hunting should be."



Connie Sharp, left, from Gillette shows her permits to Rob Shipe in the Shirley Mountains.

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2020 Hunting Guide

Hunting for the ethical harvest

In the pursuit of ethically sourced protein, hunting game is the closest source

by Mike Armstrong

Danny Buraou takes the quality of food that he serves in his restaurant seriously. He tries to use the freshest quality product he can get his hands on.

So, it should be no surprise that Buraou wants to serve his young family the freshest meat possible. That is one reason he started hunting three years ago.

"In my other jobs, I spent so much time talking about ethical sourcing, the proper raising of animals, the good quality product was so important to me," Buraou said. "But all of that was so removed from me to what sourcing your own food was."

Buraou said pork or beef might be ethically raised, but that they are still raised on a farm, fed a certain diet.

"I have to credit Steve Rinella, the host of 'Meat eater', a show on Netflix, for saying that we want free range animals while deer and elk are being put in captive environments," Buraou said. "So we are saying we want cattle, which is not really a natural creation, to be more wild and wild animals to be more captive because the food system doesn't allow us to go and shoot an elk and then serve it at the restaurant. You need domesticated animals to be more wild and wild animals to be more domesticated. That is such a weird messed up system."

Buraou said as he talked to customers about food ethics, he felt he needed to understand the procedure of hunting and

processing animals for himself. "Effectively, the reason I started hunting is I truly believe one of the single greatest health issues that faces the citizens of this country is the removal of our food supply," Buraou said. "I mean that in a way that our food comes from all over. We have industrial systems that were put in place for very good reasons. In World War II, we needed our soldiers to have food they were comfortable with, so we found systematic ways to produce food that made them feel even a little bit that they were back home and that was a good and emotional thing to do. We had these industrial systems for food that allowed for production of food substance. It wasn't food in a classic sense."

Buraou said since the system was set up and the shelf life was stable, producers felt it would be good to sell to the American people.

"It was not done with malicious intent, it was convenience," Buraou said. "Cool Whip is a perfect example; it isn't cream. It is whipped oil in suspension but everybody used it because it was convenient. It was something to be a similar food, that was a little less taste, but it was convenient."

Buraou said he finds it a problem that he can't catch a trout in the Platte River and serve it in his restaurant, but that the trout he buys from a fish farm in Chile has safer fish.

"It is a real problem for me because of the pretend notion that we understand what is going on at a fish processing

facility in Chile, South America isn't realistic. Yet, to my knowledge, no one has ever gotten sick after eating a trout from a river that is a 100 yards off my deck. It reinforced my thought that I needed to understand sourcing, killing and processing an animal."

"Ben (Owen), my neighbor, was the type of hunter I wanted to be around," Buraou said. "I got a bow. That was the first lethal weapon I owned, for a lack of a better term."

He said bow hunting was difficult

"My first animal that I ever killed was an antelope with a bow and it was not a good shot and I hit it once. I heard that hit and I immediately lost all my breath, had an adrenaline rush, and I started crying," Buraou said. "I told Ben 'You are going to have to help me' and he calmly walked me through what needed to happen. He said, 'You hit him and you need to hit him because if you don't, he is going to suffer'."

Buraou hit the antelope again and the animal died in a moment.

"In a modern society, so many of us have been removed from the killing of an animal for meat," Buraou said. "I hear people say they 'harvested an animal', but I killed an animal so that I could feed my family."

As he heard the animal breathe its last bloody breaths and watch the life leave the antelope's eyes, Buraou said he has no way of describing the emotions running through his mind.

"A bow is intense. It is

different from anything else. I haven't killed anything else with a bow, but I love shooting it," Buraou said. "I was proud that I killed that antelope and was able to put the meat on the table for my family, but I couldn't eat it."

Buraou kept hunting that year and killed a mule deer and cow elk with a rifle.

He has killed two antelope since his first time three years ago with a rifle and had no problem eating the meat.

Buraou has been successful enough that he said, essentially, his family has been eating mostly game for their protein.

He said when you understand where the animal comes from and how it was killed, there is a type of reverence for the meat.

"You get a taste of the meat that is truly free range and you get a taste of the land," Buraou said. "From my perspective as a new hunter, the emotional impact of what it means to kill an animal and process it myself, there is an element of respect of the creature that it is feeding my family. It is something in a modern society so many of us are removed from."

As a new hunter, Buraou practiced shooting during the past years in controlled settings to improve his skills. His goal is to kill an animal for his family's table in the quickest manner possible that causes the creature the least suffering.

"I think wanting the animal for the right reasons is important, right out of the gate," Buraou said. "I wanted to hunt the

right way because it meant understanding the food supply chain for my family and even the restaurant. I think that means acknowledging we are still anatomically predators and acknowledging that it is a modern luxury not to have to hunt for our own food."

He said the confidence he has when hunting does not come from all the shooting practice to hone his skills but rather the notion that he is out trying to get food for his family and it is a worthy goal.

"When I killed my antelope last week, I had started the day walking away from the truck with what I guess I would refer to a prayer to the universe, 'If this my day to take an animal to feed my family, please present an obvious opportunity to me,'" Buraou said. "I need to be confident about what is about to happen and I need to know this is the right thing in the moment. Whether you believe in a higher power or not, it was a recognition to myself that when the moment came and that animal stood there, with the absolute desired shot, I reconciled this was meant to be."

He took the shot and the antelope is now meat for his family.

"Hunting is an experience that may not be able to be explained to those who haven't ever hunted, but it doesn't make it less powerful," Buraou concluded. "We need food to survive and hunting is a skill set that allows to do just that. I don't see how that can be overstated."

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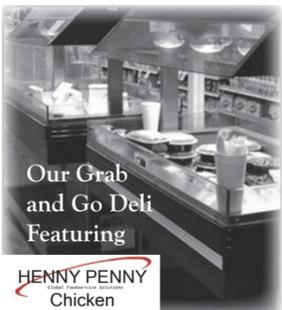
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