

Las Vegas Woods and Waters
Since 1991
GAMEBAG
"all we want to do is hunt and fish and talk about it"



November 2019, Issue 335

November 13th Lunch Program: Doug Nielson NDOW Ducks & Donuts

LVWW November Lunch to honor Veterans, **ALL VETERANS EAT FREE**, Thank you for your service.



Turkey Silhouette Shoot at CCSC Sat. Nov. 16th

Honcho Don Turner will host our November Turkey shoot at the Clark County Shooting Complex Education Center 100 yard range on Saturday Nov 16th. **UNDER THE LIGHTS Set up at 5pm, shoot starts at 5:30 pm. \$20.00 entry fee.**

Each shooter will shoot 5 steel turkeys at 50 yards. Once all turkeys are knocked down (unlimited shots), shooter will shoot 10 rounds into their paper turkey target. Hits on the turkey target will be used to determine scores. Shooters will have 2 minutes to shoot. Shooters may reshoot for \$5.00 but last score will be the one counted. .22 LR rifles, standing position, no slings, no backpacks, no leaning on tables, no sight restrictions. Ties will be decided by a shoot off at Turkeys at 100 yards.

Safety rules will be strictly enforced (case and uncase rifles on firing line during cease fire period only, muzzles up unless on the firing

line, no handling guns behind the firing line and during cease fire/safe periods). Lewis class prizes. **Safety is an attitude--attitude is everything.**

December 14th Three Gun Shoot LAST MARKSMAN OF THE YEAR EVENT!

Once a year we get to shoot a MACHINE GUN and this event is it. The format is shooting a semi-auto pistol, a semi-auto rifle and a **fully-auto machine gun, no bump stock, the real deal**. Those of you new to the club are in for a treat, regardless of the Marksman of the Year standings it is always fun to shoot something you don't get to do everyday. Often the machine gun has been the deciding factor in the final standings.....can you hold it on target to empty a full magazine? Honcho Mike Reese with help from Ivan from New Frontier Armory will be supplying the guns and ammo.



Tentative Details for the shoot will include 10 rounds with the Glock 19 9mm pistol, 10 rounds with the AR-15 semi-auto and 20 rounds with the MP5 full-auto. Dec 14th CCSC 100 yd range at the Training Center sign ups start at 8am shooting to start soon after. Cost will be \$35 including Lewis Class payout money The Club will provide coffee, donuts etc.



Next meeting Wednesday December 11th, noon at Charlie's Lakeside located at 8603 W. Sahara (Sahara/Durango) price \$20

Presidents Message...Brian Patterson



The board is wrapping up the final details and edits for the new **Club website**. The address for the site will be the same www.lasvegaswoodsandwaters.org but we are hoping to also use www.lvwww.org for a shorter option. We also hope to include dues payment and banquet payments on the site.

Membership Dues:

Reminder membership Dues for 2020 are being accepted now, only \$25 if paid before the end of the year \$50 if paid after Dec 31st. The new website still does not accept payment but should in the near future. Mail in checks to the PO Box listed on the last page of the GB or pay at lunch for now.

Veterans: November is Veterans awareness at LVWW. If you are a veteran the club thanks you for your service. The club will buy your lunch for November. Thank you for your service and sacrifice.

CAB: Last week the Clark County Board of Commissioners appointed Therese Campbell to a three year term on the Wildlife Advisory Board. Only two people applied yours truly & Ms Campbell.



Dave Famiglietti Guzzler Dedication: LVWW with the Fraternity of Desert Bighorn are re-naming a sheep water project (guzzler) for Dave and his family. The project dedication will be Saturday Nov 16 at 9am, all are welcome to attend. Meet at **Love's Truck Stop 8:30-8:45am** located at I-15 & Hwy 93 to caravan the last 13 miles to the site. A map and detailed directions will follow at a later date. A bronze plaque will be placed at the site Saturday morning. This project is the existing Old Arrows 2 site, approximately 33 miles north of Las Vegas. Directions: Go north on I-15 to exit 64, take hwy 93 towards Alamo 11.9 miles north of the Love's Truck stop entrance. Turn right onto a dirt road (there will be LVWW banners on the fence) follow the road approximately 1 mile to the project site. FDBH will be upgrading the water capacity with a new tank along with the dedication. Dave's wife and children will be on hand for the event.

GameBag Material: If you have been out to the field this fall please send in photos and a short story to share with the group. Most of us like to see how your hunting/fishing trip turned out, successful or not there is generally a story to share. The one that got away, the weather challenges, getting stuck, or just some fun shared in camp. Please share your adventures.

Nomination Committee Chairman Ken Johnson is looking for officers and five (5) new Board of Directors. Please step up and volunteer for these positions as this small group makes most of the decisions for the club. Elections will take place at the December lunch with new Officers and Directors taking office in January. We are desperately looking to backfill our officer positions. We need someone for the role of president, 1st VP and 2nd VP....if you have not been contacted yet and want to serve please reach out to Ken Johnson 702 858-8551

Ken has also stepped up to Chair the **Sportsman of the Year Committee**. This is the highest honor given by the club, send your nominations to Ken with the announcement to be made at our Banquet February 8, 2020.

If you have any suggestions, ideas, gripes or complaints don't hesitate to contact me at 702 715-2020
Brian Patterson President 2019, 2010, 2002



Get “her” Done

Josh White drew a desert bighorn ewe tag in the Muddy Mountains this year. Cody Boor and Brian Patterson met up to help with the hunt. Josh and Brian had helped Dave Famiglietti out last year (one of his last big game hunts before passing). I asked Josh if he wanted to hunt the same areas we did last year with Dave as sort of a memorial or would he like to see other parts of the unit? Let’s see some new county, he said. Off we went before first light to hunt the south end of the unit.

First glassing location didn’t produce any sheep. Neither did the second location. Some more driving more looking at areas that held sheep in the past, no sheep in the third or fourth location either. More driving and more looking still no sheep spotted. Time for lunch at this point, it was turning into a longer day than anticipated. Finally Cody spots a small ram far away on the skyline. After lunch the small ram topped back over the ridge with a ewe but they were much too high and far away to make a stalk. We decided to go north and hopefully find an easier target.

One our way north headed back toward the Valley of Fire we spotted a few ewes right at Blue Point Spring and pool. We pulled into the parking lot next to the picnic tables, there were 3-4 other cars and families around some swimming in the pool. Should we set up on the picnic table or shoot from the hood of the truck in the parking lot? Yes it was legal and Cody quickly asked everyone around if they would mind if we shot a ewe just 147 yards away on the hill. All said “OK”. But Josh just didn’t feel right about the situation. (neither did I). We decided to walk straight toward them and if they went over the hill out of sight we would follow and shoot one out of view of all the picnickers. It didn’t work out, we never saw them again.

We decided to head to the north part of the unit and hunt the areas we looked at last year where we saw lots of sheep. We saw three ewes in the Valley of Fire next to the road but they were off limits. It was getting later in the day and we only had 2-3 hours of light left, we began to speed glass, look at spots down low with easy access and then relocate. We did this a few times and then decided to get into the same canyon we hunted last year with Dave. Just as we were pulling into the mouth of the draw, SHEEP! Was the call from the front seat. I didn’t see anything but the excitement was high as Josh sped up about 50-60 yards and bailed out of the truck. Cody and I were right behind him. Soon I spotted a lone ewe starting to go up the hill on our left. Josh was preparing for the shot and I was frantically trying to get my phone attached to my spotting scope to film. I confirmed a couple times it was an ewe and called out a guesstimate on distance 100 yds but moving uphill. Before I could get my camera set Cody gave a more accurate distance and “bang” sheep down! Official time of death 4:38pm. Great, we had plenty of time to get things done before we ran out of daylight.

We lightened our packs and headed up to the prize. Cody got there first and called back “she has a collar” No way we couldn’t believe him. I had looked at her 3-4 times while trying to get the camera going and Josh said he didn’t see anything in the scope. But sure enough when we got to her she was wearing some “jewelery”. The collar was tan just like her coat and we didn’t even see it in our hurry to make things happen. Josh will get some neat data on when she was collared and what her movements have been since. I even wondered if I might have been in on the NDOW capture a few years ago when we put collars on some sheep less than 1 mile from that spot.

While taking pictures it was cool to see the spot Dave got his ewe last year just a few hundred yards east of us. We made sure that Dave’s spot was included in the photo just over Josh’s right shoulder. We all thought it was pretty cool to have Dave with us. We had been all over the unit most of the day and had only seen a few sheep so it was special that when we got to Dave’s Draw as we called it, he helped guide us on a successful hunt. After taking care of the meat and getting ready to hike back to the truck Josh looked down at the boots he was wearing...”You know these are Dave’s boots, the boots he wore last year on his ewe hunt.” Another reminder that Dave helped “walk” us to this successful hunt.

Backcountry Ethics



by George Bettas

Hunters experience many different kinds of behavior while afield. Often, these experiences become part treasured memories with hunting partners or other hunters we encounter along the trail. On other occasions, these encounters may cause us to pause and wonder what motives were behind what we have encountered. Hunting customs, traditions, and ethics are all intricately woven into the behaviors we've learned over time and which we exhibit ourselves or encounter while afield.

Over the years, I've had my share of wonderfully positive experiences and some that have caused me to ponder, wondering what I might learn from what just happened. In this article, I'll share some of the less than positive encounters and attempt to find a teachable lesson embedded in each experience.

You're On My Rock

A few years ago, I met a rancher at a Mule Deer Foundation convention. He eventually invited me to hunt elk with him and his friends on his eastern Oregon ranch. There were a lot of elk and some outstanding mule deer on his ranch, as well as on the neighboring public lands, so I eagerly accepted his invitation.

I arrived at the ranch the afternoon before opening day. There I met the ranch hands and two of the rancher's guests who were going to be hunting with us.

My hunting partner and I take a celebratory photo a few years later at "some other guy's rock", somewhere in eastern Oregon.

Since I was a new guest and had never hunted the area, I chose to listen and "go with the flow", at least for the first day or so. The plan was to get up at 3 a.m. for breakfast and leave ranch headquarters by 4 a.m. in order to be on top of the mountain before daylight. We'd be hunting public land on the mountain above the ranch.

The ride to the top was an adventure. The road turned into a narrow, sketchy two-track that snaked up the hillside through the fir trees. One of the ranch hands was driving the 1970 vintage Chevy 4x4 with four of us crowded in the front seat.

As the road became more "western" and the snow got deeper, I was glad that the rig wasn't mine and that I wasn't driving. We bounced the rear quarter panels off a few trees as we ground our way up the mountain, going as far as possible without chains. When we finally spun out, buried in the snow, we all piled out to put on chains. We then ground our way to the top in low range, with the rancher, hired hand, and another hunter behind us in a carbon copy of our rig.

Once on top, four of us went single-file off the mountain in the dark. The rancher and hired hand took the rigs back down, planning to pick us up somewhere down on the ranch later in the afternoon.

We all followed the ranch hand down through the timber for some distance and then split up, with me going with the ranch hand and the other guests who had hunted the area previously going off another direction.

The strategy was to take up positions at vantage points that would give us shooting command of strategic locations where elk would cross once they were "bumped" by other hunters. It was still dark when the ranch hand stopped and whispered, you sit here until 10 a.m. and then begin still-hunting down through the timber toward the ranch.

As I stood there, I noticed the glow of a cigarette 50 yards up the ridge. With all the time and effort it had taken us to get to this spot, I was surprised to see another hunter.

I whispered to him that there was a hunter sitting just above us. He replied, "Yeah, those guys backpack up here every year. You'll be able to see the elk and shoot before he does. Just stay here; he'll leave before long." With that he disappeared into the dark.



I had hunted in Washington State, where the common elk hunting strategy was to get out on a ridge where you could shoot down into or across a drainage and wait for elk to be bumped by other hunters. Sitting on a rock waiting for elk to come to me wasn't in my playbook, as it often led to confrontations over who shot what elk. So, I pondered the situation awhile and decided that it wasn't fair to the other hunter – who had literally slept in a bivy sack on the mountain all night – for me to encroach on “his rock.”

By then, it was getting daylight and I climbed up to where the hunter was sitting and simply said, “You were here first, so I'll find another place to hunt.” He seemed pleased and I slipped down into the timber.

There was a lot of shooting that morning and elk were running everywhere. Had I stayed on “the rock”, I'd likely have had a bull

soon after daylight. Instead, I had a wonderful day still-hunting through the timber. Late in the day, I got my reward when I jumped a great bull out of a juniper thicket and made a good shot with my .340 Weatherby.

The following year, I was invited back to the ranch to hunt, but this time I was the only hunter present for opening morning. The plan was basically the same. After a hearty breakfast, I picked up my backpack and rifle case, but something didn't seem right. I pulled my .340 Weatherby out of the case, and to my amazement, the bolt was missing.

The night before I left for Oregon, I was interrupted by an urgent phone call as I was wiping down my Weatherby. After an hour of follow-up calls, I finally put my rifle into the soft case...without the bolt.

After leaving the top of the mountain and still-hunting the timber and juniper thickets, the author got his reward when this great bull burst out of a patch of juniper just below timberline.

My heart sank and I got a sick feeling in my stomach. Without *my* rifle, the day seemed doomed, because for me, there is nothing more important than *my* rifle sighted in where I want it, so it shoots where I want it to shoot.

I knew the rancher had several Weatherby rifles, so I told him my situation and asked if I could use one of his. He gave me “that look” and replied, “I sold them all this past summer. All I have is a custom 7mm x .300 Weatherby, but the stock will be a couple inches short for you.”

At that point, I'd have accepted anything that he had that would kill elk. Then he added, “The good news is that it's zeroed at 300 yards, which I know you like, and shoots under .5 MOA. The bad news is I only have three cartridges loaded for it.”

The ride up the mountain seemed long and I hardly said a word, still upset with myself. I left the truck and slipped off into the darkness, deciding it would be a day to make “lemonade out of lemons.”

As I hiked down through the timber, I reflected upon what the other hunters were doing the year prior. I thought about a plan and remembered a rock outcropping on a finger ridge that would provide a shooting command over a drainage that was largely sagebrush with Douglas-fir trees scattered throughout the basin. The longest shot would be 400 yards and the basin was crisscrossed by heavily used elk trails. It was a perfect setup.

It was just breaking daylight when I found the rock and quickly climbed up on it. “*What a great spot,*” I thought as I prepared for potential shot opportunities.

I settled into the spot and was feeling pretty pleased with myself when I heard some rocks rolling behind me. I turned around and three hunters appeared. As they climbed up on the rock behind me, the lead hunter said, “You're on our rock. You need to leave.”

Three against one didn't seem like good odds for a fight, so I said something like, “I've been here for nearly an hour...”

With that, the second hunter said in a very aggressive voice, “This is our rock. We hunt here every year.”

It was an exceptional perch, but I hadn't driven 500 miles to fight three dudes on a rock. So I said something like, “Fine with me. I'll hunt somewhere else.”

This seemed like “strike two” on this hunt. I had a borrowed rifle with three rounds and had just been run off a great spot for opening morning. I wondered about when the third strike might come.

For whatever reason, there weren't many elk on that ridge that morning, so I got into hunting mode and moved quickly across the mountain. It was 10 a.m. when I found a vantage point. I sat down and began picking apart the juniper thickets and sage below.

See page 11 after “Jokes” for continuation.....page 11

BUY – SELL - TRADE

Buyers & Sellers agree to obey all firearms laws and local regulations in all transactions and hold LVWW harmless. Hunting, Fishing, Camping gear. **For Sale:** Seldom used field or target piece, Spanish made Excellent Condition 12 GA. AYA-AGUIRRE & ARANZABAL O/U, 28" Barrel, Engraving, 5 Chokes Asking \$700 / O.F.O. Call/Text Craig Wright 702-417-1132

New Members: Welcome new members Charles Navarro, Johan Stoop to the club, make sure to get your free hat at lunch for joining.

Scouting Troop 130 and the LVWW Club

Want to be a scout? LVWW Boy Scout and Venturing Crew – Boys and Girls ages 11-21 welcome. Meet Thursdays from 6:30-8pm call Bill Rochel'eau at 209 480-7835 charter representative or scout master Jason Wilcock 702 884-1393. Troop 130 is the club's very own charter, scouting embodies all the things the club is about; hunting, fishing, outdoor skills, friendships and getting youth involved in these pursuits. This is a great opportunity to pass on to youth the things we all enjoy get your kids, grandkids or neighbor kids involved.

Photos from last month's unsuccessful Cherry Creek Coyote hunt



ANNOUNCEMENTS

LVWW Marksman Angler Events

- Nov **16th** Turkey Shoot 22 pistol at CCSC **NIGHT 5-9pm**
 Honcho Don Turner 602 799-6466
16th Dave Famiglietti Guzzler Dedication
 Arrow Range, Unit 244 just off Hwy 93
- Dec **14th** Three Gun Shoot at CCSC 8-noon
 Honcho Mike Reese 400-6501 and Ivan
- Jan **25th** Ice Fishing at Cave Lake 1st Angler of the Year Event for 2020
 Honcho Neil Dille 234-7215
- Feb **8th** LVWW Banquet at Gold Coast Hotel & Casino
 ??? Archery Shoot
 22nd FDBH Banquet at South Point



Stories or photos, contact GameBag
 Editor Brian Patterson 715-2020

In the News/Coming Events

Clark County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife (CAB)

Next Meeting Tuesday, January 28th 5:30pm-9:00 pm at Government Center, Pueblo room, 500 S Grand Central Pkwy.
 Your involvement is needed please show up to support NV wildlife issues, setting Big Game seasons on tap for this meeting.

TUNDRA



2019 Marksman & Angler of the Year

Marksman of the Year
 2019 standings after 7/9 events

Jeff Bryant	31 pts
Mike Reese	27.5 pts
Clayton Phillip	26 pts
Ralph Willits	21.5 pts
Taylor /Turner/McCracken	19 pts

Angler of the Year
 2019 standings after 6/6 events

Brian Patterson	36.25 pts
Ralph Willits	33.25 pts
John Threadgill	24.25 pts
Larry Cusimano	17.75 pts
Ken Johnson	17.25 pts

All Around
 2019 Standings after 13/15 events

Ralph Willits	54.75 pts
Brian Patterson	49.25 pts
John Threadgill	39.75 pts
Jeff Bryant	31 pts
Mike Reese	27.5 pts

"It's choice – not chance – that determines your destiny."
 Jean Didetch

The GameBag

Las Vegas Woods and Waters Club
P. O. Box 29081
Las Vegas, Nevada 89126-3081
www. LVWoodsandWaters.org

Email: admin@lvwoodsandwaters.org
Editor: Brian Patterson 702 715-2020

2019 Officers

President	Brian Patterson/D Famiglietti
1st VP	Josh White
2nd VP	Cody Boor
Treasurer	Mike Reese
Secretary	Ralph Willits
Warden	Jim Baxter
GameBag	Brian Patterson
Social Media	Chris Calleri

2019 Directors

3-Year Term

Steve Peirce
Randy Peters
Mike Stokes
Duane LaDuke
Steve Reiter

2-Year Term

Rich Beasley
Ken Johnson
Josh White
Bill Rocheleau
Dave Talaga

1-Year Term

Kyle Otto
Mark Transue
Neil Dille
Al Schoelen
Chris Calleri

Past President Dave Famiglietti

REMINDER Everyon's membership expires on December 31, 2019. Annual membership cost is only \$25. Beat the rush and pay your dues early, those not current as of January 1, 2020 will incur a late penalty of an additional \$25 for a total of \$50 to renew after Jan 1. 2020 If the website is unable to take payment send fees into the PO Box listed below or pay at lunch.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION—LAS VEGAS WOODS & WATERS CLUB

PO Box 29081 Las Vegas, Nevada 89126-9081
admin@lvwoodsandwaters.org

Amount Due with application \$25

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Payment: Check: _____ Cash _____ Visa _____ MC _____

Acct. No. _____ Expires: _____ CIP: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Email: _____

"all we want to do is hunt, and fish and talk about it"

Jokes

Wanda's dishwasher quit working so she called a repairman. Since she had to go to work the next day, she told the repairman, "I'll leave the key under the mat. Fix the dishwasher, leave the bill on the counter, and I'll mail you a check."

"Oh, by the way don't worry about my bulldog Spike. He won't bother you. But, whatever you do, do NOT, under ANY circumstances, talk to my parrot!" "I REPEAT, DO NOT TALK TO MY PARROT!!!"

When the repairman arrived at Wanda's apartment the following day, he discovered the biggest, meanest looking bulldog he has ever seen. But, just as she had said, the dog just lay there on the carpet watching the repairman go about his work.

The parrot, however, drove him nuts the whole time with his incessant yelling, cursing and name calling. Finally the repairman couldn't contain himself any longer and yelled, "Shut up, you stupid, ugly bird!"

To which the parrot replied, "Get him, Spike!"

Two friends meet in the street. The one man looked rather forlorn and down in the mouth. The other man asked, "Hey, how come you look like the whole world caved in?"

The sad fellow said, "Let me tell you. Three weeks ago, an uncle died and left me ten thousand dollars."

"I'm sorry to hear about the death, but a bit of good luck for you, eh?"

"Hold on, I'm just getting started. Two weeks ago, a cousin I never knew kicked the bucket and left me twenty thousand, free and clear."

"Well, you can't be disappointed with that!"

"Yep. But, last week my grandfather passed away. I inherited almost one hundred thousand dollars."

"Incredible... so how come you look so glum?"

"Well, this week...nothing!"

Cold Coffee: Before the cup of coffee even touched the table, my brother told the waitress,

"Take it back. It's cold."

The waitress poured him another cup and returned a minute later, only to be told once again,

"Take it back. It's cold."

The third cup, however, he accepted, which prompted the waitress to ask, "How did you know the first two cups were cold without sipping them?"

My brother said, "Because with the first two, your thumb was in the coffee."

The Morgue - Three dead bodies turn up at the mortuary, all with very big smiles on their faces. The coroner calls the police to tell them what has happened.

"First body: Frenchman, 60, died of heart failure while making love to his very young mistress. Hence the enormous smile, Inspector," says the Coroner.

"Second body: Scotsman, 25, won a ten thousand pounds on the lottery, spent it all on whisky. Died of alcohol poisoning, hence the smile."

The Police Inspector asked, "What of the third body?"

"Ah," says the coroner, "this is the most unusual one. Billy-Bob the Three Toothed Redneck from Alabama, 30, struck by lightning."

"Why is he smiling then?" inquires the Police Inspector.

"Thought he was having his picture taken"

John, who lived in the north of England, decided to go golfing in Scotland with his buddy Sean, so they loaded up John's minivan and headed north. After driving for a few hours,

they got caught in a terrible downpour, so they pulled into a nearby farm and asked the attractive lady who answered the door if they could spend the night.

“I realize it’s terrible weather out there and I have this huge house all to myself, but I’m recently widowed,” she explained, “and I’m afraid the neighbors will talk if I let you stay in my house.”

“Don’t worry.” John said. “We’ll be happy to sleep in the barn and if the weather breaks, we’ll be gone at first light.”

The lady agreed and the two men found their way to the barn and settled in for the night.

Come morning, the weather had cleared so they got on their way and enjoyed a great weekend of golf.

But about nine months later, John got an unexpected letter from an attorney. It took him a few minutes to figure it out, but he finally determined that it was from the attorney of that attractive widow he had met on the golf weekend.

He dropped in on his friend Sean and asked, “Sean, do you remember that good looking widow on the farm we stayed at on our golf holiday in Scotland about 9 months ago?”

“Yes, I do,” said Sean.

“Did you, er, happen to get up in the middle of the night, go up to the house, and pay her a visit?”

“Well, um, yes,” Sean said, a little embarrassed about being found out. “I have to admit that I did.”

“And did you happen to give her my name and address instead of telling her your name?”

Sean’s face turned beet red and he said, “Yeah, look, I’m sorry, buddy. I’m afraid I did. Why do you ask?”

“She just died and left me everything



Angelo Tiberti 2nd trip to BC was successful on his ram, dad Jelindo Tiberti with his NV 2019 deer

See below for Ethics (con’t) from page 5



I spotted a bull with heavy antlers walking among the junipers, 800 feet in elevation below. I figured I could get a good shot by dropping down if I could see the bull in the thick junipers once I got to his elevation.

Once at the same elevation as the bull, I found an opening and began searching the junipers. I finally spotted him, slowly moving through the junipers. The range looked to be around 400 yards. In those days, I used my duplex reticle to judge distance, but the borrowed rifle did not have a duplex crosshair.

I quickly set up for the shot over my day pack – something I had done many times before. As I waited to see the bull again, I ran the ballistics of the 7mm/.300 Weatherby through my mind.

When the bull appeared, I was ready. I touched off the shot and from across the canyon I could hear the distinctive “whump” of the impact. He took two steps and disappeared into the junipers.

I knew it might be difficult to find the bull in the junipers on the dry south-facing hillside, so I focused upon a dead snag above the bull as a landmark before I left my shooting position. I also hung a piece of surveyor’s tape by my shooting position for additional reference.

I found the bull just 20 yards downhill from where he had been standing. He was the biggest 5x5 bull I’d ever killed and I was delighted to have hit a home run on my final strike of the day!

Skinning and quartering the bull was “interesting”. He was so big, heavy, and awkward that I dressed, skinned, and quartered him as he lay wedged in the juniper. It was a challenge, but a joyous afternoon.

Teachable Moments

Hunters are all a bit competitive and guarded with our secret spots – a trait that can lead to conflict in the field. As one grows and develops as a hunter, we learn from our mentors, our peers, and experiences. As a result, each of us has a set of manners and ethics we’ve developed over time.

My parents and others who served as my hunting mentors were initially responsible for how I acted and reacted to the behavior of others. As I matured, I added “value” to my own code of ethics from continued experiences and information on fair chase and other examples.

My response to the two situations I’ve described was rooted in my personal code of ethics. In the first case, where the ranch hand positioned me in a spot where another hunter was already present, has to do with the basic principles of “first come, first served” or “he who gets there first has priority.” When the ranch hand told me to stay put and the other hunter would leave, my reaction was that it was not fair for me to encroach on the other hunter’s space.

The second situation was just the reverse of the first. I was the one being encroached upon; I was there first. Many hunters would’ve stood up to the latecomers...and maybe even fought over the rock.

Arguing over whether or not historic use trumps “first-come, first-served” came to mind. When I was younger, I may have engaged in that argument. But for me, the fight wasn’t worth it. I’m not much of a “rock sitter” and I know enough about hunting elk to not need to bank on killing an elk that is pushed to me by other hunters. So, I left the rock, focusing on habitat, terrain, elk sign and all else that goes into elk hunting. In the end, it didn’t make any difference, but the issue of being pushed out of my spot by some aggressive hunters left a gnawing feeling in my stomach.

At the end of the day, I remind myself that one of the greatest rewards of hunting the backcountry is going back up on the mountain with my horses and mules to pack elk quarters, regardless of the seemingly negative encounters one may have had with inconsiderate hunters or ranch hands.

At the end of the day, there is no greater reward than leading your string of horses back into the wilderness to retrieve a hard-earned bull, regardless of the challenges you may encounter along the way.