



THE UNITED Spring 2015 BOWHUNTER





Calendar of Events

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It is the purpose of The United Bowhunters of Missouri to support and upgrade the sport of bowhunting and foster a spirit of sportsmanship.

The United Bowhunter is published quarterly by The United Bowhunters of Missouri for the membership. This publication is a public forum available to the members to voice their ideas, concerns and to share their experiences.

Written materials, photos and artwork for publication are welcome. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the materials you would like returned. The editors can assume no responsibility for any submitted materials.

The editors reserve the right to edit or reject any material and the right to crop any submitted photographs.

Send articles and photos for submissions consideration, question and comments to:

The United Bowhunter
 Attn: Elise Haverstick
 10276 N FR 183
 Fair Grove, MO 65648

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— On the Cover —
 Mike Yancey shows us the best way to end winter

March

20th-22nd – Conservation Federation of Missouri Convention at the Capitol Plaza Hotel, Jefferson City, MO
 21st – Texas south zone turkey season opens
 25th – Nebraska archery turkey season opens

April

4th – Texas north zone turkey season opens
 6th-14th Kansas archery turkey season
 15th – Kansas regular turkey season opens
 18th – Nebraska regular turkey season opens
 20th – Missouri turkey season opens

May

3rd – Texas south zone turkey season closes
 10th – Missouri turkey season closes
 17th – Texas north zone turkey season closes
 23rd – Missouri squirrel season opens
 31st – Kansas turkey season closes
 31st – Nebraska turkey season closes

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Check out - www.unitedbowhunters.com

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⅔ page (back cover)	\$125.00	¼ page	\$50.00
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deadlines for submitting copy and pictures to The United Bowhunter
Feb. 15th, May 3rd, Sept. 15th, Dec. 10th



I'M SITTING HERE IN THE LIVING ROOM WATCHING MY BLOODHOUND, JAKE, as he watches the birds and squirrels chowing down at the snow covered feeders just off the front porch. We got about six inches of the white stuff yesterday but I'm not letting this latest reminder that winter is still here get me down. Yesterday, as I trudged up to the dog pen through the powder, I heard an old tom gobbling his head off. At first, I thought I had imagined the event until he gobbled three or four more times. That sure gave my spirits a lift! And this morning, when I went out, there were two birds singing their springtime serenade. What a way to start the day! I don't know if it's a coincidence or not but just a few days before I had received three of those high-dollar realistic turkey decoys in the mail. I had read a lot of stories about how well they brought the toms in but who knew that they could perform just by laying in my closet! Obviously, they were worth every penny.

Another Festival is in the record books and I hope that all who attended enjoyed their time there. I want to thank everyone who helped pull it off and I hope the UBM can count on your service in the future.

There were a few bumps in the road but, overall, I feel the event was a success. It certainly was lucrative for the club and I truly want to thank all of you who supported the endeavor financially. The club is now on much more sound financial footing and will be able to print all four issues of this newsletter as well as start back donating money to various philanthropies.

A lot of club news took place in a very short amount of time; most of it bad but we were able to turn lemons into lemonade. The UBM utility trailer that we purchased in early 2013 was stolen from my front yard; three days before the Festival. It contained all our archery equipment, merchandise and club administrative items. We have very little hope of anything being recovered but the word got out through social media and folks have been quite generous, monetarily, with helping us replace what was lost. Also that week, we learned that the Marshall Bowhunters Club had decided not to host our Rendezvous anymore. This was sad news because we really liked that place but that's the way things go sometimes. Fortunately, one of our members, Don Orrell, has a fine shooting facility of his own and graciously agreed to host this year's event. It will be the weekend of June 26th-28th at the Panther Creek Traditional Bow Range near Fordland, MO. More details will be passed along as they become available.

The last bit of bad news had to do with the Festival itself and the slip-shod service the hotel provided us while we were there. I took this issue rather personally since I had discussed certain problems with the

management after the first Festival we had there and was assured that they would be addressed. However, the same exact problems occurred at this year's Festival so it was like we had never even had a conversation. This, plus some other communication problems, leads me to believe that the Country Club Hotel and Spa really doesn't care if it has our business or not. So it looks like the Festival will have a new home for 2016. I will have more about this in here somewhere.

By the time your read this, some of you will have already started bowhunting again. I know of a few hog and javelina hunts planned and at least one or two turkey hunts in states with early seasons. Good luck to all of you and keep me posted on your success. More importantly, invite me over for supper to enjoy some of it. I ain't never met a turkey breast I didn't like!

Shoot straight and often,

Darren



TO SAY THAT WE BARELY SURVIVED THE 2015 FESTIVAL IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT.

Other than the beautiful spring-like weather, Fate threw about everything it could at us (UBM trailer and all our stuff being stolen, having to find a new rendezvous venue, etc.) and yet we prevailed. In true bowhunter fashion, we not only prevailed, but excelled. We had some continuing issues with the hotel at the restaurant and service end so Darren and I are searching out other venues for 2016 and beyond. If you have ideas or constructive input (not just complaining, but solutions) we'd love to hear from you while we


are exploring our options. We shall see...

Since the Festival, Mother Nature has thrown the book at us in typical Missouri fashion. A good time to do indoor things, like write stuff for the newsletter, taxes, plan the next hunt(s), oh yeah, and maybe a little actual work. Hopefully, warmer weather is around the corner; mushrooms begin to sprout and the turkeys start to gobble.

Get out there and keep 'em sharp!

»» **Secretary Scribbles**

Mike Calahan →



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I HOPE EVERYONE HAS HAD A CHANCE TO RECOVER FROM THE FESTIVAL WEEKEND.

In spite of some problems (trailer theft, hotel service etc.) it was sill great to spend time visiting with bowhunting friends.

We have many issues facing us this year. UBM issues are of course replacing the trailer, a new Festival location and a new Rendezvous location. Please feel free to come forward with your ideas as we all need to pull together and keep this club moving in a positive direction.

Other issues facing us are the Proposed Deer Hunting Regulations including the crossbow and MDC funding. The MDC will be having meetings on the deer regulations at various locations around the state starting soon. You can find out where and when at the MDC website: mdc.mo.gov. They value your input.

I hope many of you got to meet Brandon Butler from the CFM. His talk at the banquet brought forward many of the problems being caused by our elected officials. We can't afford to sit back and hope these issues pass by. Please take time to let your area representatives know how you feel. A lot of people in our past have put forth great efforts to get us what we have today. Let's work to ensure that future generations get to enjoy the outdoors as we have.

I hope everyone makes it through the rest of this winter without any difficulties and enjoy a beautiful Missouri springtime.

We do have a number of members with serious health issues. Please keep them in your prayers.

God Bless
Mike C



Mike Yancey
Bowyer

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I KNOW THIS IS BECOMING A REOCCURRING THEME but the Festival will be held at a new location come February 2016. Why, you ask? Well, if you attended either of the past two Festivals then you might have a clue as to why we are moving again. Otherwise, let me fill you in.

The Country Club Hotel and Spa, our home for the past two years, is a great facility as far as setting up our event is concerned. The vendor's area is easily accessible for the vendors, there is plenty of space and the seminar room is great. However, anything that had to do with food service left a whole lot to be desired. At both Festivals, they were woefully understaffed and this year the kitchen even ran out of certain food items. My personal disappointment with this poor service was exacerbated by the fact that I was given all sorts of reassurances that Festival II would not be a repeat of Festival I. It was and then some.



Sitting area where the free hot breakfast is served

Immediately following this year's event, I talked with the hotel sales director, Deb Myers, and expressed our displeasure with how things went down. She, of course, apologized and asked me to ask you all to send her your comments on the things you experienced while at the hotel. She told me that only by getting specific examples of how things went wrong would they be able to get things right in

the future. So I sent out an email to all the members who I have an email address for to deliver her request. Surprisingly, about half of you said that your time spent at the Country Club was trouble free and that we should give them another chance to host the Festival next year. Being one who tries to listen to you all, I contacted Ms Myers and asked her to prepare a proposal for hosting the 2016 Festival. That was on 2/17/15, I believe. As of this writing, I have not heard back from her even though I have emailed her asking what the deal was.

Meanwhile, I started looking at other venues around the state. Initially, I focused on the Columbia and Jefferson City area and I quickly learned that the \$59/night room rate that we had enjoyed for so long was not within the realm of possibility. Many places were twice that amount! So I started looking at other areas in hopes of finding a bargain.

Whenever I embark on one of the club crusades, I always keep my good buddy, Brian Peterson, in the loop to get his take on things. Over the years, I have found his



Left: Nice TV and decor
Right: The new seminar room





Not only is the food good but it was served quickly!

advice to be worth way more than what I pay for it and this time was no exception. Brian told me that he still gets calls from the Ramada Plaza Hotel in Springfield, MO looking for our business and that maybe it was time to check them out. Seeing that we had nothing to lose, I contacted their sales manager, Rachel Isaac, and she sent me a proposal.

I shared the proposal with Brian and we both agreed that it was tempting enough for a closer look. So we set up a meeting with Rachel for 2/27/15 to get the grand tour and sales pitch. To make a long visit short, we were impressed!

The Ramada Plaza Hotel and Oasis Convention Center (www.ramadaoasis.com) is on Glenstone Avenue right off of I-44. It was completely remodeled in 2009 and all the facilities looked really nice. The common area where the indoor pool is located keeps with the oasis theme by having palm trees all over the place. Just outside the Fire & Ice Restaurant is a sitting area where the complimentary hot breakfast buffet is served. The guest rooms that we visited were clean and

updated and the rate of \$77/night was a good deal compared to a lot of places that I had heard from. Add the \$12 breakfast buffet to the room rate at the Country Club and the total is about the same.

However, I was concerned that Springfield would not be a good choice for a host city since it is not centrally located. So, once again, I sent out a mass email to members asking for their feedback. Again I was surprised that, out of the 20+ replies I received, not a single person had a problem with

the Festival being located in the southwest corner of the state. Many people commented that there was a lot to do in Springfield and that the location was easy to get to.

Bob Burns brought up a good point that we could probably arrange some sort of VIP tour through the Archery Hall of Fame and the Fred Bear Museum sometime during the day. Another thing that I find attractive about the venue is that they are hosting a clown convention the same weekend as our Festival. I think the interaction between our group and that one would be interesting to say the least!

So there you have it; another new home for the Festival and it may not be the last one. It has been suggested by more than one person that we try to move the Festival and Rendezvous around the state every couple of years just to keep things fresh. It also would spread the burden of travel out more evenly. I sure can't wait until one of these events comes to Shannon County!

An indoor pool for Riley Hesterly





Pictured from left to right; Mel Johnson, Tony Mihalevich, Mike Dunaway, Brenda Hudson, Jon Raney, Karla Raney, Larry Hudson, Chris Biester.

WE MADE OUR SECOND ANNUAL TRIP TO THE WARMER CLIMES OF TEXAS

for the purpose of chasing feral hogs while most UBMr's were shoveling snow and cutting firewood. Unfortunately, it ended with only one hunter bringing home some bacon. Not that the rest of us didn't have chances—Mike Dunaway was the only real bowhunter in our group, or at least the only one who could shoot when opportunity arose! Alas, during the excitement, we forgot to get a hero photo of him and his hog!! Our daughter Karla ran into a sow with a lone youngster. The sow charged her three times and Karla ended up trying a self-defense frontal shot—at least the hit was enough to convince the sow to leave—Dad was glad his little girl didn't get hurt! A great time was had by all--- good food--- good friends--- I would say it was a successful hunt!!

From the Designer

Elise Haverstick



Hello again everyone! I hope you all are enjoying this recent break from the atmospheric havoc Old Man

Winter has bestowed on us all. I don't know about you but I'm over all this snow and ice stuff, and am anxiously awaiting the arrival of spring weather, or any weather that doesn't require me to de-ice my car and risk running into poles on my way into work.

Ok, weather rant over. In other news, I will finally be graduating in May and I can't wait to finally be done with college! The whole graduation process seems to be going well. I officially ordered my MSU maroon cap and gown, and there have been no transcripts mishaps so far, so all seems to be good on that front, for now...

In terms of the job hunt, that is in the process and I am finalizing

my resume, business cards, and other things so that I can land the perfect job, or really any job remotely related to my field. At this state, I'm not overly particular. I have found some leads that I will be contacting (read humbly begging) for employment over spring break so that's good.

Speaking of spring break, mine just started and I am enjoying a few days of relaxation before I have to go back to work, academia, and job searching. Honestly, my break isn't really a break so much as time to catch up on homework and graduation stuff I haven't gotten to yet. But I don't have to go to class for a week so I'm not gonna complain.

On the social life front not much has changed, I still have a cool roommate and neighbors that I hang out with when I'm not swamped with school stuff or passed out on the couch. To be fair my roommate is at their apartment

24/7 so her presence makes up for my lack of it. I'm pretty sure the only reason she comes to our apartment is to sleep and eat when the neighbors aren't feeding her.

All in all my life is about the same as it was when the last news letter came out, but I'm generally more stressed and freaked out about the venture into adulthood that awaits me after graduation. The thing I've learned about all of it is that I need to take things one day at a time and do what I can each day, and I what needs to get done will get done.

I wish I had more to tell you all, but I really don't lead an exceedingly interesting life. It was lovely to meet you all at the Festival, and it was nice to put faces to the names I hear about all the time. I will for sure be there for the next one, as it's 20 minutes from my house, even if the clowns freak me out.

Happy Hunting!
Elise

AS ANOTHER SEASON GOES IN THE BOOKS OF HISTORY, the next chapter begins. Bow season has closed, and hunters all over this great state remember and reflect the events that took place during hot pursuit of the amazing whitetail deer. Although some sadness sets in, I still can't help but to feel some excitement about eight months ahead when the season is to open back up. No matter what took place last season, fortune or misfortune, at this point the slate has been wiped clean. Now it's back to the drawing board in preparation for next deer season. Last season is a memory, and now it's time to correct anything that went wrong, time to re-analyze stand sites, and time to locate that next big bruiser that's on the hit list for next season. Let the scouting begin!

After the season let out, I laced up my hiking boots and hit the property. It's time for some detective work. The eyes must see everything and the mind must think like the game in which you pursue. I'm fortunate to have had access to the same property for



many years so I do have the luxury of having some insight. Homework is still essential, though, in terms of success, and nothing comes easy. The area I'm scouting is a huge creek bottom and first thing I notice is smaller scrapes everywhere. It appears that the creek is a highway for deer travel. Naturally, most of the scrapes are accompanied by broken twigs about deer nose high. The biggest majority of the scrapes are along the creek but I want to know their route from the timber to the creek.



There are big wooded lots on the north and south sides of the bottom with open land between. Since we do not run cows on that property anymore it's fairly easy to see some of the game trails crossing the open valley. I need to hone in on major runways, though. I find one that has scat all over it and completely littered with tracks....I like what I see and instinctively start picking out trees for possible set ups. Still not completely satisfied though, I continue the search for the hot spot. I cross over to the woods on the north side and start walking the barbed wire fence looking for



Top Left:
A typical broken branch above a scrape

Top Right:
And the scrape to go with the broken branch

Bottom Left:
A big rub usually means a big buck

Bottom Right:
Yes, a deer does poop in the woods.

possible crossings. My eyes lay upon what looks like a bow string silencer stuck in the barbed wire. My eyes begin to scan the woods and, about 20 yards from the fence, I see a ridiculous rub. Looks like a community rub that every buck in the country side has hit. I'd guess the diameter of the evergreen to be about ten inches and it is rubbed raw 360 degrees around the trunk. My fancy has been tickled enough and I've seen what I need to see. Next step is to set up a couple stands for different wind directions and get some visual scouting in late next summer.

I feel confident that I will see lots of deer activity in this area, but using only traditional methods I need to make sure I'm right in the hot spot. With a little luck and a lot of perseverance, hopefully I will encounter a mature buck next season. Until then, it'll be lots of practice with my new long bow. When the opportunity presents itself, I will be ready.

Mind Over All
Ernie Kon

Conservation Day at the Capitol



Where: Missouri State Capitol
When: April 2, 2015, 6 AM - 5 PM

MARK YOUR CALENDAR TO ATTEND the inaugural Conservation Day at the Capitol on April 2, 2015.

This event has been designed to bring conservationists from all across Missouri together at the Capitol for a day of promoting and supporting our natural resources and outdoor heritage.

We have reserved the entire 3rd floor Rotunda and have table spaces available for up to 25 affiliate organizations. There is no fee and the spaces will go on a first come first serve basis to CFM Affiliates, so call our office today to make sure your organization secures one of the available spaces.

"Ducks Unlimited looks forward to participating in Conservation Day at the Capitol. This is a great opportunity for citizens to meet with and speak to their legislators. It is also a great opportunity for conservation organizations to educate the public about their specific missions," said Mark Flaspohler, Manager of Conservation Programs for Ducks Unlimited.

The Morning Shag with Shags and Trevor (KCMQ 96.7) will be broadcasting their popular morning show live from the

Capitol from 6 AM until 10 AM We anticipate additional radio shows and a strong media presence.

This event is for educational and informative purposes. We hope citizens and legislators alike will tour the affiliate booths to learn about the diverse outdoor passions of Missourians. Citizens will have a chance to meet with their legislators and thank them for protecting conservation in Missouri.

A number of college students are working hard to build a communication network to promote this event to the universities and colleges of Missouri. They are organizing buses, which will transport hundreds of students to the Capitol from numerous schools across the state.

CFM will release more information as it becomes available on our website, www.confedmo.org/capitol-conservation-day/.

Contact:
Emma Kessinger, 573-634-2322,
ekessinger@confedmo.org

Legislative Action Center



IT IS NOW EASIER THAN EVER to influence legislative bills affecting conservation in Missouri. With CFM's new Legislative Action Center, you can now vote, send pre-written emails or call your representative and have your voice heard like never before.

The Conservation Federation of Missouri will continue to lead the advocacy effort on your behalf, keeping you apprised of legislative efforts that effect all of us and make our membership's concerns known.

However, there will be times that we will need you to engage in the advocacy effort to help us achieve our shared goals. Never in Missouri's history has the ability to engage quickly been so important. Your involvement, when we need it, will be critical to our efforts and will only take a minute or two of your time. This tool accelerates our ability to achieve our shared legislative vision.

Join fellow conservationists and start making an impact through CFM's Legislative Action Center.

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Magazine

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2014 UBM Festival Pictures



Kevin Eulinger was our Conservation Agent of the Year.



Tim Donnelly was this year's Fred Bear Award recipient.



Our favorite award went to Dax Morgan Jr. – Youth Bowhunter of the Year



Brad Harriman gets Bowhunter of the Year



Mike Clark accepting his Jerry Pierce Award for outstanding club support.



2015 UBM Awards Winners

Bowhunter of the Year – Brad Harriman

Youth Bowhunter of the Year – Dax Morgan Jr.

Conservation Agent of the Year – Kevin Eulinger

Jerry Pierce Award – Mike Clark of M.R. Clark Auction and Appraisal Ltd.

Fred Bear Award – Tim Donnelly

Top Left:
Mike and Julie doing what they do best!

Top Right:
MDC deer biologist, Jason Sumners, shows off his reward for putting up with us.

Bottom Left:
Brian Peterson accepting one of his two photo contest awards.

Bottom Right:
Jake Morgan was the winner of this year's Black Widow bow.





A packed house!



Bob Burns and Marv Cochran representing Compton Traditional Bowhunters



Beauty and the beasts – Yana Robertson showing off her new UBM jacket.

A busy day in the vendor's area



Bear Tale

WE WERE SCHEDULED TO HUNT black bear at Amyot Lake Outfitters May 9th 2014, but since they had over two feet of snow still on the ground, we pushed our trip back until the owner, Brad Desjarlais, called us and said the time was right. Finally we arrived nine days later and we hit it just perfect... the big bears were on their feet and hungry. We told Brad we were there to kill two B&C bears and he assured us we would because of the pics he was getting on the trail cameras. We spent the first day getting settled in, checking our gear and shooting our bows.

The next morning we spent going over pics and formulating a game plan on where we would hunt that afternoon. We decided on a bait that was several miles off the beaten path and quite hard to get to; even on a four wheeler. The bait was getting hit on a regular basis by a borderline B&C bear named "Ricky Bobby" who earned his name because he never stood still and had given a previous hunter fits. Our guide, Scott, had built a very nice ground blind about eight yards off the bait out of natural vegetation.

After getting settled in with all our equipment, clearing a few spots for the camera and soaking ourselves with Dead Down Wind, we were ready. Scott said to be ready as soon as he drove away because they were hitting the baits almost immediately after the four wheeler was out of sight. He was right and within an hour we had a parade of bears coming in. The first one in was our target bear but he was acting very nervous and wouldn't come any closer than fifty yards, which we took as a good sign of a bigger bear

in the area. Every hour we would have a bear or two sneak in, grab some bait, and head back in the woods but nothing over 250 pounds; just not what we were looking for.

Around 6 pm, my hunting partner, Travis, whispers "BIG BEAR, SHOOTER BEAR, DON'T MOVE." I move my eyes slowly to the left and no more than twelve feet from the blind stood an absolutely enormous black ball of fur. He had walked in the same trail we had and had followed us to the blind.....I literally could have stuck an arrow out the window and touched him! Travis got the camera rolling and I slowly picked up my bow as he walked on to the bait for an evening meal of rotten beaver and oats covered in syrup. I was going to take the first best shot I had so I came to full draw with him broadside at ten yards. As it usually happens, he steps behind the metal beaver cage, sits down on his rump and stares directly at me. There was

no doubt he knew we were there, but he was not very concerned about it since he outweighed both of us put together.

Seventy seconds later I'm still at full draw, but I never considered letting down. I think I could have held it all day with that rush of adrenaline. He finally offers me an eight yard broadside shot and I let the Dead Ringer go to work. He spins and runs into the woods, making all kinds of noise, but then there is silence and no death moan. The placement was perfect but the angle was towards the back, into the liver and intestines. We were certain it was a kill shot but with a trophy of this size we decided to wait till dark, slip out and come find him in the morning. After a sleepless night we arrived the next morning and found him about 100 yards in the timber... we definitely did the right thing by waiting. After a long and difficult

2014 continued on page 15



recovery (two hours) because of where he expired, we had him back at the blind. After tagging him and taking some measurements (450lbs, 22"+ skull, almost 8' squared) we skinned him, removed as much fat as we could for the local tribe to use and got him in the freezer. I had my B&C, now to get Travis on one.

Bow: Mathews Monster Chill R...72lbs, 28" draw
Arrows: Victory VForce 350
Broadheads: Dead Ringer Rampage 100g 3 blade
Optics: Vortex Diamondbacks 10X42
Camo: Realtree
Boots: Lacrosse Aeroheads
Packs: Badlands Super Day
Release: Tru Fire 4 finger
Scent elimination: Dead Down Wind
Arrow rest: Vapor Trail
Stabilizer: Dead Center Archery
Sight: Spot Hogg Hunter

Deer Tale

I HAD BEEN RUNNING

COVERT TRAIL CAMERAS

on our central Missouri lease all year and, frankly, was getting discouraged that nothing with 150" headgear or better was showing up. I had put in the time scouting, planting food plots, hanging stands, glassing fields, etc., but just couldn't find the quality of deer I was looking for (160" or better). I had hung a double set in mid-July that I knew would be a killer spot for early season being surrounded by white oaks and in a creek bottom, close to a bedding area. Sometimes it's tough to find a camera man for the early season because of the temps but I've always been a firm believer that patterning big bucks in September and early October can pay big dividends. I talked Travis into going with me



the weekend of October 4th because of a big cold front that had pushed through dropping temps by 30 degrees. My Coverts had started to light up the last couple days with nice bucks and I knew it was time to hit it hard. We climbed into our stands about 3 pm and got settled in for the night. The acorns around our tree were so thick you couldn't help but crunch when you walked. Around 6 pm, Travis whispered what every bowhunter loves to hear...."Shooter comin". I slowly got my bow off the hanger, hooked up the release and got ready. The buck came from a thicket to the north-west of us, crossed the creek and slowly fed on acorns as he closed to within 22 yards. I recognized him as the Broken G2 Buck; one of the biggest I had had on camera at this lease all year so if he offered a shot, he was in trouble. He finally cleared a large oak tree and I asked Travis if he was on him....."Kill him" he said. I let it fly and the arrow blew through his left shoulder and buried into his right. The deer was dead on his feet and barely made it 60 yards. We

celebrated a little, collected our gear and climbed down to admire my trophy. It's sometimes hard to put into words all the work and months of preparation that goes into bow-hunting.....for it to all be over in a matter of seconds. This was a very satisfying kill because I felt we had harvested the biggest buck our lease had to offer and I couldn't have been prouder of him. After a short drag, pictures and field dressing, we had our first bow-kill deer of the year down with good footage to boot. The year was off to a great start! (4.5y/o, 9pt, 140")

Bow: Mathews Monster Chill R, 72lbs, 28" draw
Arrow rest: Vapor Trail
Stabilizer: Dead Center Archery
Sight: Spot Hogg Hunter
Arrows: Victory VForce 350
Broadhead: Dead Ringer Rampage
Release: Tru Fire 4 finger
Camo: Realtree
Optics: Vortex Diamondbacks 10X42
Boots: Lacrosse Aeroheads
Scent Elimination: Dead Down Wind
Packs: Badlands Super Day

NORMALLY WHEN YOU THINK OF SPRING TURKEY HUNTING, heavy wool clothing doesn't come to mind. But that was just the case for me in my favorite state of Wyoming on an April hunt a few years ago. Spring snows can happen at any time in the mountains of the west and this hunt proved to be one of the best if not the best turkey hunt that I have ever been on snow storms and all.

Hunting in the mountains for the Merriam's subspecies of wild turkey has always been a dream of mine. I had hunted them before in Nebraska years ago but the mountains of Wyoming hold a special place in my heart. With a little work a year in advance making contacts with game wardens and wildlife biologists, as well as my good friend and hunting buddy, Jerry Bowen, I formed a plan for the spring season of 2012. Along with me on this trip was Roger Fulton, of Black Widow Bows. We would be using the new PCH models on this hunt. We picked out an area and decided that we would camp instead of making a several hour drive each morning back to town. What could be better

than camping in the mountains of Wyoming and spring turkey hunting?

We arrived the first evening in camp well before dark, seeing elk, mule deer and antelope, making for a great drive into camp. Once at our chosen area, we quickly set up camp; a 21-foot travel trailer with all the comforts of home. With camp all set up and the sun just setting, I gave out a long lonesome call of an owl that was quickly answered by three gobblers not more than two hundred yards behind camp. "Looks like we are going to have some fun in the morning!"; I told Roger as we sat in front of an open fire with two big rib eye steaks cooking over a bed of coals and baked potatoes cooking in a Dutch oven.

The next morning dawned clear and calm with mild temperatures and the birds were gobbling on the roost behind camp. We had no idea which way they would go when they flew down so we just hung close and tried to work them from around camp. As the day wore on, the birds moved off and we were able to get a better idea of the roost area and the way they

traveled that day. Later on in the afternoon of the first day we tried to get a better idea of where the birds were roosting and looked for an area to set up a blind for the next morning. We were surprised at an afternoon gobbler less than fifty yards from us. We were in some open ponderosa pine trees and the bird was just behind a large ridge of rocks. Since the cover was so thin, we made our stand in the pines as best we could with what we had to work with. I began calling to the bird and he went nuts, gobbling nonstop and working his way to us. Once around the mountain of rock, the bird went into a full strut. He had an almost halo-like appearance with his snow white tipped tail feathers in the midday sun. It was a sight that I will never forget; one that a turkey hunter dreams of, a mature Merriam's gobbler in full strut in the pines. The bird was no dummy though, he knew that he should be able to see the hen that was calling to him from behind the rocks and none was present. He gobbled nonstop for thirty minutes, marching back and forth along an imaginary line he had drawn in the pine needles. After a while he grew suspicious of our set up and began to walk off. Roger motioned for me to try and move on the bird while he was behind the rocks again. I moved as quickly as I could and had time to nock an arrow before calling. At my first call the turkey nearly blew my hat off and came charging to my position. I thought, "Well this is it, I'm going to tag out the first day" but the turkey had other plans. He came in but never stopped or offered me a good chance at a shot. We would have this same thing happen again

Roger didn't get a tom this trip but it wasn't for the lack of trying.



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several times the rest of the week; this bird simply would not stop. He would come in like a champ but when he got into bow range it's like he would kick it into gear and run by, even with a decoy out. That's when we decided we needed to go back to camp and get a blind and have it set up and ready for the morning. The rest of the day was spent calling birds and learning the lay of the land. Tomorrow would be a good day. We had a better idea of what was going on and where to be set up.

The next day we awoke to a fresh new snow about three inches deep. The birds gobbled at my calls from the blind we had set up the previous day but wouldn't come in. I didn't get too concerned because I felt that this was a spot that would be better in the afternoon and evening.

Right on cue the birds began gobbling below us as they made their way to my calling later that day. I was on the side of the blind that the birds were approaching from so it would be Roger that would be set up best to take the shot. The decoy was set up about ten yards from the blind and the bird was coming fast in that direction. I had one shooting window that I could peek out of to warn Roger what was going on because he wouldn't have much notice before the bird walked into his shooting window. As I peeked out the window I could see the bird running up the hill as he spotted our decoy in front of the blind. I told Roger to get ready because he's running and it's going to happen fast. The sound of that gobbler going from a full-out run and stopping, dropping his wings in the snow and skidding to a complete stop is something that I will never forget! His wings dragging in the snow was like dropping a disc behind a tractor in freshly cut

ground. The problem was the bird didn't stay like that; he went from a full strut in front of the blind at the decoy into an all-out run again. I told Roger the longbeard saw something he didn't like and that he had better shoot now. The bird had gone past Roger's window and he now had no shot but the tom had went to the left which gave me the shot. At the last possible chance for a shot, I brought my Black Widow PCH to full draw and released a Woodsman tipped Traditional Only shaft into the bird as he made his getaway. The shot felt good and the bird couldn't fly so I felt that we would have a quick recovery. We sat for about fifteen minutes trying to call any other turkey in the area into our setup but the excitement of the moment was more than I could stand, I had to take up the trail.

The blood trail was easy to follow and in a minute we made it to where the bird had first piled up in the snow. It was there that we found my blood covered shaft. The bird might have stayed there if I had waited just a little longer

but the trail was easy to follow in the snow. We took up the trail and followed it with ease until dark which was the time we decided to go back to camp and get lights. Back at camp we discussed the options of looking more tonight or leaving the bird until the morning since we had jumped him once already. We talked about coyotes and Roger mentioned that it might snow again. That's when I said, "If you don't mind helping me, I would like to try and find him tonight." There was a full moon and we seldom even needed the flashlights. The tracks and blood trail was easy to follow. The trail was in a straight line for several hundred yards when I said, "Oh no, more turkey tracks!" The ground was covered in tracks all going in a circle and then no tracks. I was trying to find the tracks with the blood when I looked and saw where he had jumped a few yards and looked over and saw him piled up on a mound of rocks. That was the most exciting end to a blood trail I have ever had in my life! Finding

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that tom in the snow at night was a special thing for sure and one that I will never forget. The bird was a trophy in anybody's book; a mature Merriam's turkey with snow white tail feather tips, long beard and spurs. The shot was a good one with the broadhead going in just below the back at the wings, breaking both wings. I can't believe the recovery was as long as it was and it would have been very tough if not impossible without the snow to help in the tracking.

The next day we awoke to another six inches of snow making what Roger had said hit home even more, "You know it might snow again tonight." We took some pictures and retold the story a hundred times as we hunted the rest of the week trying to get Roger his bird. We had several birds come in but just couldn't get the breaks needed to make it happen. I hated it but I guess we will just have to drive all the way back out to Wyoming next year for some more of that beautiful springtime weather that the mountains are so famous for.

Note About the author, Mike Yancey has hunted turkeys for years with a bow but nothing comes dearer to his heart than bowhunting in Wyoming. Equipment used on the hunt, Black Widow PCHII, Three Rivers Traditional Only Arrows and Woodsman broadheads. Wool clothing was a must on this spring hunt.



I WAS BACK IN THE SADDLE following a less than stellar encounter with a doe the previous evening (she's fine, my ego and confidence bruised more than anything), sitting in one of my favorite "funnel" stands. This particular pinch point has produced many deer over the years and I was lost in thought recounting some of my favorite hunts as well as trying to reinforce lessons learned the night before. As happens all too often, the deer materialized in front of me seemingly from nowhere. As it worked its way into range, I mistakenly determined it was a

solo doe (my management target) and readied for the shot. Broadside at 12 yards and the arrow found the dirt on the opposite side of my mark; this time soaked in blood. The deer ran off at full speed, and 20 minutes later it was too dark to see. I snuck down to check my arrow. Finding the chartreuse feathers completely changed to red, I decided to start down the trail. Oddly, the spoor petered out within 40 yards, and as I was panning my

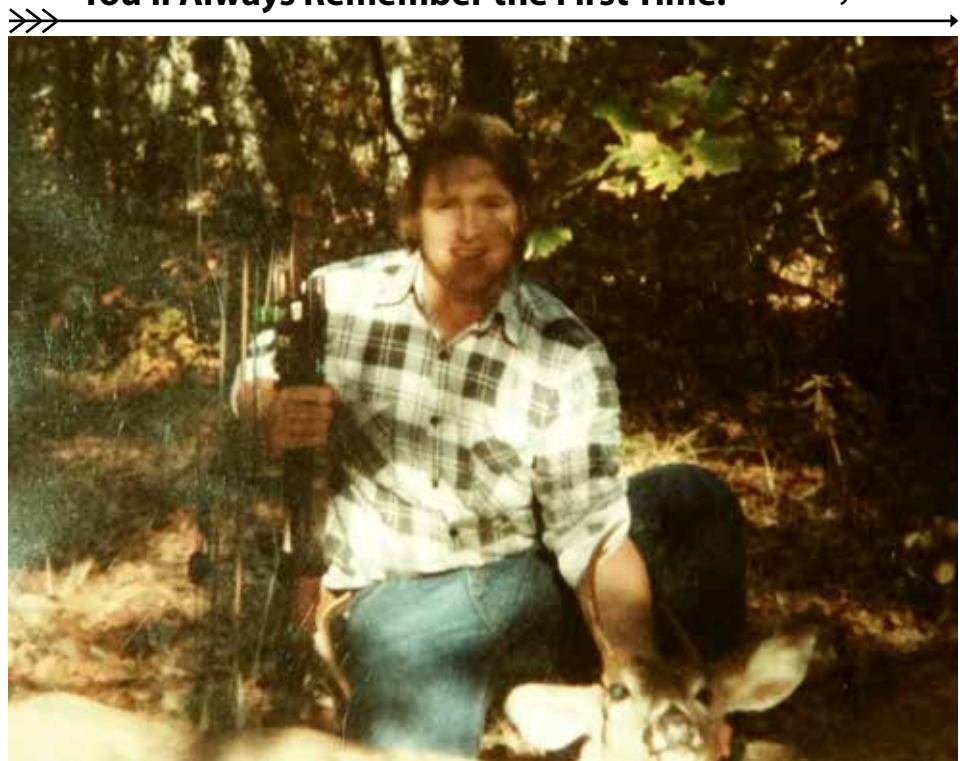
Top:
Nothing gives you peace of mind like recovering your animal.

Bottom:
My favorite kind of arrow sealant – blood

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flashlight I heard the telltale snort of a deer from the darkness. The knot in my stomach tightened and at that point I decided to back out to resume the search in the daylight. Since the blood trail was nonexistent I mentally reviewed the shot and the sign. I was certain I had a dead deer on my hands, it was just up to me to find it. After 5 hours of searching, circles and grids in the deep woods, I had all but given up hope in finding my deer. As I was dejectedly shuffling up the hill out of the steep draw, I happened to catch the unmistakable gleam of a deer laying in a thicket. The flood of relief was soon followed by questions. Why had this button buck gone so far with this wound (undoubtedly pushed by me the night before), and why had he stayed his course in the woods, as if he followed a single topographic elevation line on the map from shot to recovery rather than diving into the relative safety of the deep, brushy draws below my stand as one would expect? As I field dressed his light frame, the necropsy showed the Woodsman broadhead had passed through both lungs, but only at the very rear portion of each lobe. I suspect the main hemorrhage was due to slicing a hepatic vein (rather than artery) just inside the chest cavity next to the diaphragm. Regardless, I had found my deer, and had added another data set into my recovery knowledge base. Yes, persistence occasionally pays off and as always, I'd rather be lucky than good!



My first "first" deer with a recurve.

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL FALL MORNING back in October of 1980. It was October 10th at 8:20am to be exact. I was a 22 year old beginning bowhunter with my state-of-the-art Bear Whitetail Hunter compound bow, Easton Gamegetter arrows, tipped with Bear Razorheads sitting in a homemade wooden treestand in Morgan County when that spike buck suddenly appeared right under me. I don't remember drawing or aiming at that buck but I do remember watching him run away with my arrow in him and thinking "Oh no, he's running awfully fast and doesn't look too hurt to me". Then I heard him crash. It took a bit for me to climb down and make my way over to my first ever deer kill. I couldn't believe I had actually done it and neither did my dad or brother until I showed them. They had been turkey hunting without any success that morning but my harvest made for a great day of celebration.

For some reason I didn't realize how special that morning was. By the next season I was married, working long hours while saving to build a house and before I knew it I had a new family and all of the obligations that go with that. I don't remember getting to archery hunt again until the 1992. That's when I purchase a Martin Hunter recurve, 62" long with a draw weight of 55 pounds. I bought that bow at KC Archery from Gene Towne. I didn't know Gene at the time but would get to know him and actually shoot a few tournaments with him in the early 2000's. Gene was a great traditional target archer winning several championships over the years and I learned a lot from him. Sadly Gene passed away a few years ago. Anyway I did hunt with my recurve unsuccessfully for a couple years and then got away from the recurve and started using a compound bow again. I killed my

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second deer in 2001; a full 22 years after my first success. I have killed many whitetails, a few turkeys, and even an elk with my compounds over the years and enjoyed each and every hunt with the wheeled wonders. But always on my mind was the goal of harvesting a deer with that Martin recurve.

That brings us to my second FIRST TIME. I finally made the commitment this past December to hunt with the recurve again. After years of failure, along with some success, my skills at getting close to game had been refined to the point where I actually felt some confidence in making a shot with traditional equipment. The deer would need to be at 20 yards or closer; any farther away than that and my accuracy was not that great. I had a couple of close calls in December but the deer either spotted me when I drew or didn't present a good angle for the shot. But on January 8, 2015 it all came together! It was a cold, clear evening hunt along the Missouri River in Jackson County. There was a little snow on the ground and it was the first day that week when temperatures climbed above

20 degrees. I was in the right spot that evening and I'd only been in the treestand for 15 minutes when I started seeing bucks. As often happens that time of year, the deer are grouped up in small herds and a herd of bucks was traveling through the woods about 70 yards away from me. I saw eight different bucks that evening. I spent the next 40 minutes watching and blowing my grunt call at every buck I saw trying to entice one to come my way. I guess one of those bucks finally got curious because he started heading my direction. I was ready when he came down the trail and stopped broadside at 15 yards. This time I do remember drawing slowly and picking a spot right behind his left shoulder. At the release I watched my Easton XX75-2117 arrow tipped with a Magnus Stinger broadhead bury into the exact spot I was focusing on! The arrow stopped in the buck's offside shoulder breaking his right front leg. The deer spun around and went back down the trail but I knew the shot was good and the buck wouldn't go far. It has been a long time since I've had that feeling you get when you accomplish a lifetime goal and I will always remember January 8, 2015 at 4:40pm as my second first time archery deer harvest!

My second "first" deer with a recurve.



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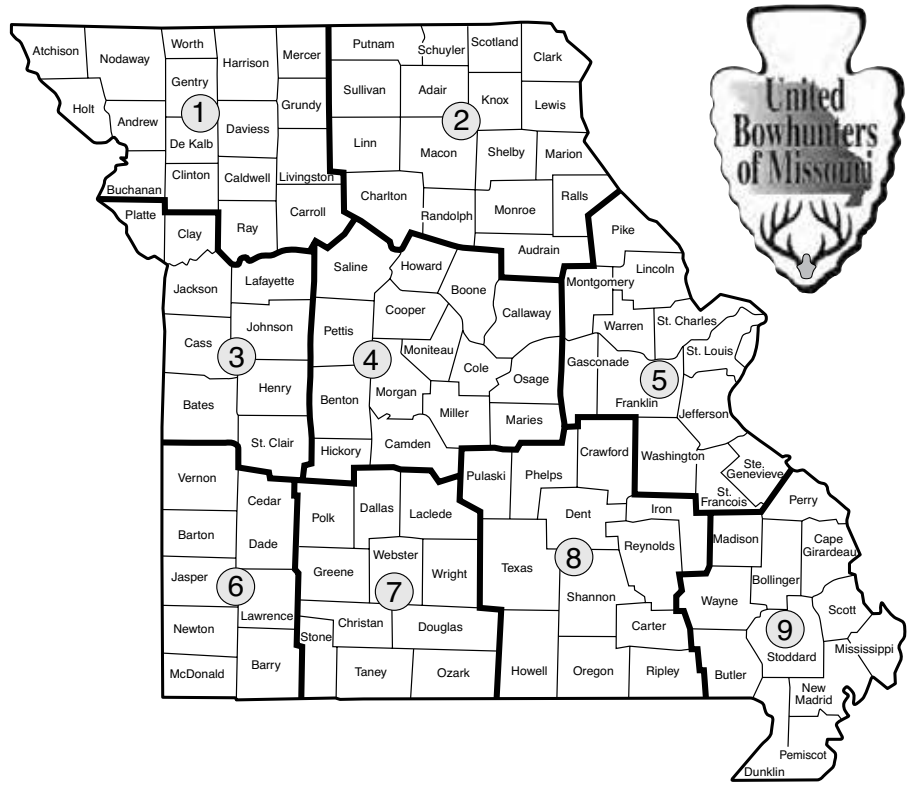
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