



Preserving and Promoting Traditional Bowhunting In Idaho



— 526 Robie Creek Road, Boise, ID 83716 —
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LADY LUCK AND THE MACK TRUCK

—By Jeff Fealko

I don't know if lady luck has ever even accidentally bumped into me, let alone sought me out, but one afternoon in the middle of June, she hit me with a Mack truck. I came home from work, sweating from the heat and cursing the broken air conditioner in my truck. My stack of mail seemed larger than normal in my hand as I filtered through bill after bill, until I came across a letter from the Idaho Fish and Game Department.

Thinking that it might just be my, "sorry to inform you, but you did

not draw your tag" letter I opened it doubtfully, until I started seeing the words, "congratulations you were successful..." I won't make you read the whole letter, but the short of it I had actually drawn my bull moose tag. Doubt quickly turned to jubilation and the phone started dialing numbers to rub my good fortune in the face of friends and hunting partners. After only three years I drew my coveted bull moose tag in southeastern Idaho. I know, three long years, seemed like forever.

Summer quickly turned to fall, maps had been scoured over, arrows sharpened, bows shot, and moose vocal lessons taken. Though they weren't needed as Larry Fischer agreed to accompany me on this hunt and act as my artificial cow in estrus, rutting bull in hot pursuit, and meat packer if we were successful. The end of September couldn't get here soon enough.

A cool, misty Saturday morning found Larry and I heading east down the interstate with a truck packed full to the brim with our gear. I don't think we could have fit much more in there and I was sure that if we got a moose that I was going to have to leave Larry up on the mountain so I could get

my moose home, but I wasn't about ready to tell him that.

By mid afternoon camp was set, and with a short stop in the rain we decided to head out and try our first afternoon's luck. Now Larry had hunted this unit for his moose back around 2004 and was somewhat familiar with some of the draws that hold these behemoth black mammals, so he recommended we go into a little spot that slips my mind at this moment, but he talked it up like it was a haven for bull moose.

Our first calling set up yielded no responses so we called and worked our way down an old abandoned



cut to see what the evening skies were going to bring. Around a hundred yards from our calling set up we hear some brush break down the slope in front of us, but it definitely wasn't an animal in flight.

Out of the corner of my eye I see Larry bailing off the cut and moving behind a small group of trees. I look up to see a dark shape cresting the edge of the cut around 70 yards away. I quickly step aside and kneel down on a mound of dirt off of the cut. The bull sways back and forth as he works his way up the cut, grunting softly every other step. As he gets closer he heads uphill into some trees as he continues on his way toward our calling.

Now this where my story diverges into two different tales, Larry thinks he knows what he saw me do, and I know exactly what I did. So to be fair I will tell both sides of the story and let you make up your own mind on what actually occurred on that hillside.

When I saw that bull climb onto the old cut I thought to myself, "Huh, he looks a little small. I guess I'll wait to see when he gets closer, but I think I am going to let this little guy walk away." Needless to say Larry played his role of pissed off bull moose perfectly and called this bull into three perfect shot scenarios for me, one at 15, one at 20, and one at 25 yards, all broadside.

However, I had kind of made up my mind that the bull was a little small and it was the first night of hunting and I didn't really want it to end the first night. Besides it was just cool to see the moose react to Larry's calling and raking.



If you ask Larry what happened I apparently turned into an ice statue amazed at the size and grace of such a large animal. I apparently stayed frozen until this bull winded us and trotted off a hundred yards or so. When I came over to Larry, he claims I was still somewhat frozen. He was still playing his role of a pissed off male when he asked me, "Why the hell didn't you shoot that bull?" I gave him my simple reply of thinking the bull was a little small and thought Larry could call me in a better one. He proceeded to lecture me on the fine differences between hunting and wildlife viewing and how that bull was probably just less than 40 inches wide, just a little bigger than I had thought (9 inches or so).

Regardless of what happened on that cut, it was one of the coolest things I have seen as an outdoor enthusiast. Just this average-sized

bull moose taking on every piece of brush and 12 inch tree in his way to try and intimidate a quivering canoe paddle that raked and grunted back step for step. Something I will definitely never forget, and will most likely dream about until my next moose hunt.

The week began to pass on with few moose seen and I was beginning to think I might regret not shooting that bull our first night out, but I kept telling myself no regrets and if it is meant to be than it will happen.

Wednesday afternoon we developed a new plan. We were going to wait for the thermals to switch, drop down to a creek bottom below a series of beaver ponds and slowly call and work our way up toward the top of the drainage. As the evening set in we dropped down to the bottom and set up in

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the timber, Larry 30 or 40 yards uphill and behind me calling.

As I listened and watched for any sign of life I thought I had heard a faint grunt off in the distance, but I just wasn't positive. Larry eventually made his way down to me and I asked him about the grunt. He hadn't heard anything and I began to think my mind was playing tricks on me as it so often does, but it just seemed too real.

As we moved another thirty yards up the trail I heard it again. This time I stopped and Larry did as well, just then another grunt. Larry confirmed that my imagination was not toying with me, and that it was a real bull coming.

As we moved a little closer we could all of a sudden see this large black mass moving down the creek

brush with a tree off to my right. In my mind I pictured this bull coming to the top of the creek bank and stopping to survey his surroundings, giving me a perfect 15 yard shot.

I waited, and waited, and finally started hearing his grunts over the trickling of water behind me. Then a flash of brown antler verified his presence, but he wasn't headed where I had pictured him in my mind. He circled around a large tree and started raking some small aspens. I stood as he crossed behind the tree thinking I have one clear opening I might be able to shoot through.

He tired of his raking and was still looking for that amorous cow he turned to his right and started walking right at me. When he was about nine yards away from me I

toward our location. A plan was coming together. As I started to mover out in front to get in position I hear Larry say, "He's a good bull," as if to get rid of any thought in my mind that I might not shoot this moose if given the opportunity.

I moved down and crossed a small tributary coming into the main creek and knelt down beside some snowberry

started to get worried because his eyes kind of bugged out and he saw a mysterious form in front of him.

This is the only time on this hunting trip where I turned to ice and tried to melt out of his sight. It is inevitable at this point that he is going to charge me so I say my goodbyes to the world keeping a watchful eye on the beast frozen spitting distance away.

Like clockwork Larry came to the rescue with a small grunt and a flash of his canoe paddle. The bull saw this confirmation of an intruder in his domain and turned to face his rival 30 yards away. As he turned and started walking toward Larry, I eased my bow up with the string on its way to anchor. Before he took two steps that front leg moved forward and my arrow took flight. Chaotic crashing of hooves across the creek and up the hill followed. It sounded like a truck plowing through a forest.

Larry gave a few grunts and waved me forward. My arrow had looked a little low with poor penetration, and I thought the bull might be coming back to Larry's calling so I crossed the creek and eased up five yards to where I could see the bull standing, stiff legged. He started to stumble and quickly fell to the ground thirty or forty yards from where I had shot. Handshakes, deep breaths, and story telling pursued as we relayed our different view points of what had just happened. After the shot the bull had barreled a mere five yards past Larry's hiding position.

Darkness was starting to settle in so we took a few pictures and started field dressing the monster. Now I have dressed out elk and



I was glad to have a seasoned veteran like Larry there to show me the way. . . I couldn't have asked for a better ending.

deer, but a moose is a whole new animal altogether. I was glad to have a seasoned veteran like Larry there to show me the way. The autopsy revealed that my arrow had gone clear through his heart and had poked out the other side. Upon his running it had re-entered his off shoulder and proceeded to cut a baseball sized hole as it sliced back and forth. I couldn't have asked for a better ending. We started cleaning him at 7pm and we were back at camp at 2:30 a.m. Totally exhausted, I fell on my cot already asleep looking forward to the pain and torture of packing him out the next day.

Now my freezer is full, my back has healed, and the taxidermist is busy at work. I constantly relive my days in the field this year in my head, knowing that I want to go back, need to go back, have to go back, and will go back.

Passion...yeah it's here.

ITB Wild Game Feed January 24, 2009

- Idaho Fish and Game HQ
- Trophy Room
- 600 S. Walnut, Boise
- 6 p.m.
- Park in the back

The Trophy Room is located on the north east corner of the building. It is best to park out back and enter the building from the back.

This is a wild game potluck for all club members and their families. If you were forced to eat tag soup this year or have already eaten all your wild game meat reserves, then bring a side dish or a salad of your choice.

This year we will be holding our annual elections for ITB club officers at this event, so don't miss out.

**ITB ITB Cabin Fever Shoot
Feb. 28, 2009**

This shoot will again be held in New Plymouth on that small piece of Idaho Fish and Game WMA land. After a long winter, it feels great to get outside with your bow in hand and shoot 3-D targets with friends and family. Every year we seem to have more and more people come out and join the fun. Keep an eye out for the upcoming flyer.

**Adopt- a Highway Litter
Pick-up and Barbeque
April 4, 2009**

This is a great way to give back and have a lot of fun at the same time. We pick up litter along a two-mile stretch of highway 55 and then caravan to another location near the Horseshoe Bend Summit, where we enjoy a barbeque and shoot flu-flu arrows at flying bow-bird targets.

**Western States
Traditional Rendezvous
May 22, 23, 24, and 25, 2009**

The shoot will be held at the Magic Mountain Ski Resort, outside of Twin Falls, Idaho. Keep an eye out for the upcoming flyer.

This is our chance to get together with many of our trad-bow shooting comrades from our surrounding states. It's going to take a lot of work, so participation from all club members is encouraged. We are in need of donations for raffle prizes. On our ITB website we've added an ITB Donations Form, which can be printed out for donation purposes.



Troy Seward shot this Idaho elk on the first day of September with a 65-pound Black Widow PSA III, Gold Tip 7595 arrow, and a 145-grain Eclipse broadhead. The shot was 24 yards, with a short 50-yard recovery.

Donations can be for anything from archery equipment to free car washes and everything in between. Also if anyone knows of any vendors they'd like to see at the shoot, contact one of the club officers with the vendor's address information, so we can send them a vendor packet for the shoot.

**Carp Shoot
June ?, 2009. Actual date to be determined**

Our Carp shoot will again be held at the CJ Strike Reservoir, and is a lot of fun for all. Some people camp over night and some show up in the morning.

We try to time the shoot to the Carp's annual spawning activity. Hopefully carp are everywhere and you should go home with a sore arm from shooting so many arrows.

Some people shoot from the shore, some wade, and some use boats. Prizes are given for the biggest and the most carp shot. Keep and eye out for the upcoming flyer.

Summer/Fall Tune-Up Shoot

August ?, 2009

(Actual date to be determined)

Our Summer/Fall Tune-Up Shoot will again be held in Garden Valley. It's a two-day shoot and a great way to get tuned up for the upcoming hunting season. Keep and eye out for the upcoming flyer.

Elections

Annual nominations for ITB officers will take place this year at the January 14, 2009 monthly meeting in the Cabela's meeting room in the south-west corner of the store. Final elections will take place at the Wild Game Potluck.



Newsletter Editor Rik Hinton shot this 4x4 during the Unit 39 late season using a Howard Hill longbow, Douglas Fir arrow, and a 160-grain Snuffer.

(Editor's Note: Send us your hunting/camping/shooting photos for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter.)

ITB Membership Renewal

A reminder to everyone, ITB memberships are per calendar year. All memberships expired on December 31, 2008.

Please send in your membership dues as soon as possible to the address listed below, or bring your dues to our monthly meetings on

the second Wednesday of every month at the Cabela's meeting room in the south-west corner of the store.

Mail your dues to:

Idaho Traditional Bowhunters
Attn: Dave Ankenbauer
 526 Robie Creek Rd.
 Boise ID, 83716



ITB MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Please Print)

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: (_____) _____ E-Mail: _____

I have enclosed: () \$10 for a one-year membership () \$20 for a two-year membership