

DACOTAH TRACKER

Spring 2003

Upcoming Event



Elections will be held at our Spring Sporting clay shoot/golf outing held **May 17, 2003** at Vallerys High Plains Game Ranch. **All members are invited and encouraged to participate!**

The officers will hold office until June 1, 2005.

The nominating committee has proposed the following slate of officers:

- President: Carl Stonecipher
- Vice President: Tom Krafka
- Treasurer: Tom Kirchoff
- Secretary: Chris Browner

Members-At-Large:

- Jeff Olson
- Darin Pryor
- Mark Lemke
- Mark Abrams

Floor nominations will be accepted at the clay shoot and golf outing.



Dacotah Chapter donates more than 1,000 pounds of meat

On the Sportsman Against Hunger front, Jeff Coome of Sioux Falls, sent along a thank you letter from Darrel Walters, the manager of the Food Pantry of South Dakota.



Walters wrote to thank the club for our support of the Food Pantry's mission and for making a dynamic impact on people's lives.

He wrote, "We sincerely appreciated your help on the efforts to keep our hunger-relief doors open in order to keep food and personal products flowing to families in need. Your donation of 1,000 pounds of hamburger will help us to assist these families."

Walters explained in his letter that in 2001, 72% of all clients served at the Food Pantry only needed assistance one time. He wrote, "They cycled in and out of need rather rapidly. Nev-

ertheless, as our local community grows and ages, and our economy goes through its own revolving door of ups and downs, your hunger relief efforts are needed more than ever. Again, thank you for providing hope for those in need by giving resources to keep the Pantry shelves stocked."

Thanks to all who participated in this very important donation effort! Your work is appreciated!

Fourth annual banquet a success!

Thank you to all of our members who attended the fourth annual fundraising banquet this February! The banquet was a huge success, with lots of great items at the auction and several great seminars as well. We'll see you all again next year!



Diethelm Metzger of Namibia gave a seminar on hunting in Namibia.



Deanna Dawn, a Ph.D. candidate at USD gave a seminar on mountain lions.



HUNTING REPORT

The not-so-dumb Shiras Moose

By Jeff Olson

Thanks to years of advice from the Carter Family, I drew a hard-to-draw Montana moose tag. I was told many times that drawing the tag was the hard part, and that once I had the tag in hand, harvesting a moose would be easy - this was not the case.

We read a lot about the game management politics in the given western states. I cannot stress the importance of sportsmen being involved with these issues. It was partly due to these game management politics that my hunt was made so difficult. I'm not whining, but the future of hunting in this area is in jeopardy. The forest is too thick due to lack of clear cutting. This not only made it hard to see the game, but it also meant that they are lacking food. There are also way too many predators! Reintroduction and protection of predators is causing a decline in the big game populations throughout the west.

That said, I had a tremendous time with my outfitter, Steve Hawkins. I hunted the rut for the first week and passed a small bull the first day with my bow. We rode hard on horseback for the next six days and saw black bear, bobcats, elk, and many cougar tracks. After a close encounter with a grizzly bear, I chose to return home and come back for another week later in hopes that the bears would be denned up and there would be more snow by then. We cut some very big fresh tracks but could not get the big guy to show himself. The myth about the Shiras moose being dumb was not true; these big Shiras moose were smart!

Steve had found a big bull moose while guiding for deer and elk when I was back home. We got on that big guy the first day back. Guess what? He schooled us. I am sure he was in the timber not 40 yards away. This was timber that a man could not walk through, and it seemed to be straight up and down to me. We had no chance. We spotted a couple of bulls bedded later that day and tried a stalk. I had heard you could walk right up on these animals as long as the wind is in your favor. This was not true. The snow was loud and crunchy. I came to believe that these "mountain" moose deserve a lot more credit than they received.

The next day we spotted two other bulls from a long distance. The stalk was on and everything was in our favor, including soft snow. I got very turned around in these rugged mountains and was sure that Steve was taking me into the wrong clear cut. After about a mile-long hike, we got to the cut and there were no moose. I was just about to tell him, "I told you so," when out of a little dip in the open, two bulls emerge. I shot the bigger of the two, and the work began - but I cannot think of a better chore.

I have never had a guide who worked harder than Steve Hawkins. He wanted me to get this moose more than I did. Had he not threatened that he would come to South Dakota and bring me back by gunpoint, I most likely would not have found the time to come back for the second trip. I am really glad I did and he did not charge me for the second hunt.

Steve came highly recommended to me, and I hope to be hunting cats with him next winter.



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