



ON-TARGET NEWS

The Newsletter of the Fort Collins Archery Association

Volume 31, Issue 4

www.ftcollinsarchery.com

August, 2007

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Family Archery Day

by Matt Dworak

We had a great 2nd Annual Archery Day. I would like to thank everyone who took the time to come and help out. I'm guessing we had about 200 people come out this year, most were kids but we had a few folks from every generation. This is the one event I really look forward to; I feel it's the one chance I have to really give something back. I know we had one volunteer (Kyle Rehme) who worked with a kid all morning trying to get to him to pop the balloon he was shooting at. Finally with his last arrow (mom was ready to go) he popped the balloon. I'm not sure who was happier the kid or Kyle. Again, thanks to all, I'm proud to be part of such a great club.

Randy Carey
Jim Litchfield
Toby Trujillo
Troy Tafoya
Kyle Rehme
Bobbi Magers
Tom Christian
Paul VanVaerenewyck
Clark Paterson
Matt Dworak

Richard Ochoa
Joyce Litchfield
Christina Trujillo
Paul Navarre
Michel Magers
Tom Kelley
Phil Buxton
Randy Sievers
Bonnie Cummins
Wendy Dworak

Wednesday Night Leagues

Wednesday Night Leagues are finishing up. You can check out the latest scores on the FCAA web site. The fourth and last session is under way. Starting time for all sessions is 6:30 pm.

Leagues are for members only and cost \$5 a night. The best 3 out of 4 scores will be counted and cash prizes awarded to the top shooters each session. Classifications include youth, limited, unlimited, open and women's unlimited. It's a great way to keep in practice for fall hunting.

Elk Hunting the Hard Way (Part 2)

by Matt Dworak

Tuesday Sept 19, 2006

Sitting at the computer typing this all out... My toes are still tingling, which probably isn't too good but they seem to wiggle like they should so I'm not too worried. I promised I'd try to learn a few lessons from this experience, so here they are while they're still fresh on my mind.

- Probably the cardinal rule for any outdoorsman (which we were all in violation): Let somebody know where you're going and when you expect to be back.
- Buy a portable radio and/or check the local weather before embarking on any wilderness adventure. Although, the hunters who gave us a ride out said they had forecasted only several inches of snow, it still would have been good to know.
- Keep an emergency supply box in the truck: extra food, propane burners, stove, shovel and water. I'm sure if I do a few Internet searches I can find an extensive list.
- Have tire chains and make sure they fit.
- Invest in a new sleeping bag. Goose down loses its insulation when wet and it was tough trying to keep it dry out there. Maybe something with a Gore-tex shell?
- We would have normally had two ATV's and that may have made the difference.
- Be in better physical shape. I hadn't anticipated doing any hunting this year because of my son's birth and used that as an excuse not to keep up with some conditioning. I'm sure if I were at the top of my game it wouldn't have been half as bad.
- Don't pack any aluminum cans or Camelback type containers in your pack. Anything that can leak and soak your spare dry clothes is a bad thing.
- I think we would have been better off starting a fire the second night and drying out, even though everyone was beat. If we could have went to bed a little dryer it would have made for a better nights sleep and we wouldn't have soaked our sleeping bags in the event that they were needed another night.

Along with what we could have done better, here are the things we did right.

- I think we were all dressed appropriately, with rain gear and good hunting clothes. An extra pair of gloves is something that can come in real handy, especially when your first pair becomes soaked. I was also thankful that I hunt in wool garments including a wool hat. They say that it still keeps you warm even once it gets wet and after this I'd have to agree.
- Fire starting, I know both Drew and I had multiple sources for igniting a fire and we were able to get one roaring with more than a foot of snow on the ground.
- Food, although I had to give Drew a tough time for not bringing seasoning it was great that we had that source of protein. We also had breakfast type bars, beef jerky and dehydrated meals. So plenty of food wasn't a problem.
- Water, we all had water and a filter. Make sure you can keep your water thawed.
- Map and GPS, we always knew where we were and where we were going. It allowed us to make informed decisions.

About a week later after most the snow had melted, Drew my dad and Jeff Blakley went back to retrieve our stuff off the mountain. Here is what the camp looked like...



Real Preparation Breeds Real Success

by Trevon Stoltzfus

My Granddad always told me, "plan your work and work your plan." Although immediately after the season is over is the time to layout a strategy to get ready for next year's hunt, it is never too late. Here are some things to look at, both for this year and next.

Equipment

Reflect back on last year's hunting season and evaluate your equipment and its performance or lack thereof. If you were smart enough to have kept a detailed journal of last year's hunts you can review that to refresh your memory. If you didn't, wouldn't it be a good idea to do so this year?

Make a list of equipment that NEEDS to be replaced, a list of equipment that SHOULD be replaced, and a list of equipment that you just WANT to replace. By prioritizing your equipment replacement and upgrade list, you can get a feel for what your equipment hunting budget will need to be. Remember, the more comfortable you are out in the field, the more time and energy you will have to focus on harvesting your trophy.

This does not mean that you have to take out a second mortgage on the house and purchase everything on your list at once. However, knowing what equipment you will be purchasing or replacing gives you the opportunity to get these necessities at cheaper, off-season, prices and pick them up in the order of importance (example: hiking boots take longer to break in than binoculars).

Testing Your Equipment

As you start to replace and gather new hunting gear, before the season is the time to put it to the test. There is nothing more frustrating than paying a premium price for good gear and then finding out that "when the rubber hits the road," your new equipment isn't all that you thought it was.

The method by which you test your equipment will be determined by the type of equipment you will be using. However, here are some ideas that will put you in situations that will allow you to get the kind of feedback on your gear to be able to know quickly whether it is a hit or a bust.

Camping provides a chance for you to get out into your hunting area and become more familiar with the topography. Simple day hikes can begin to test gear that you will depend on during your hunts. Camping can be a great opportunity to share the outdoor experience with friends and family, where you can exercise and evaluate hunting gear at the same time.

Backpacking is one of the best hardcore ways to test your hunting gear. If you are a backcountry bowhunter, that packs your camp on your shoulders, this is a great way to work on lightening your load. While backpacking, you can find the right combination of gear to weight ratio that will work much better for you in the field once hunting season opens. Remember, there could be some temperature differences depending on what time of year you will be backpacking compared to when your season starts, so make the necessary changes in clothing in order to be prepared for your hunting conditions.

Scouting allows you to make the final tweaks and changes to your hunting gear prior to your hunt. This usually takes place anywhere from two months to two weeks before season. This trip becomes more serious as you start to focus on formulating a plan for your actual hunt, whereas your shed hunting, camping, and backpacking trips were concentrated on testing gear and getting to know the country you will be hunting.



Practice

The cliché, “practice makes perfect,” is familiar to every hunter, but the truth of that phrase can mean the difference between making or missing the shot of a lifetime on a trophy animal. One difference between good and great hunters is the amount of time they spend on the practice range. Sometimes a split-second is all you have to make the shot.

Bowhunters can spend the warm weather months working on their consistency. Competing in local 3-D tournaments is a great way to do this, as you have many different shooting opportunities, positions, and conditions to try making quality shots on life-like targets. They also give you the opportunity to brush up on your range estimation skills.

Research

Off season can give you a great head start on researching your hunting area, especially if you have never hunted it before. By making a few phone calls, you can start to highlight a few key areas where you will need to concentrate your hunting efforts.

You can start by calling the local Division of Wildlife office. Talk to the officers who patrol your area and find out if there are any trends or “hot spots”. The Regional Wildlife Biologist is also a valuable asset, as he or she will have access to herd information, migration habits, and areas of animal concentration. The answers you receive from these resources can help you to form an overview of your hunting unit, which will in turn give you specific areas of the unit to scrutinize and scout more closely.

The next step is to purchase the maps of the area you will be hunting. This is very important when researching a new hunting unit. I prefer the BLM 1:100,000 Topographic maps because it shows me public and private land status. These can be ordered or purchased from the local BLM office very affordably. If you are familiar with computers, a mapping program might be for you. Also with the aid of satellite imagery and black and white photography you can start to see timber stands, open parks, bluffs, and drainages that on a flat paper map would be impossible to distinguish. The BLM

maps identify the public access and private land boundaries, and Topo gives us quality road information.

Once you have formed a plan for your hunting area the last phase of your research begins, which is in field scouting. Now that you have three to five different “hot spots” you have identified, you can load up the truck and head out into these areas to get a closer look. This ties in with what I shared before about testing your equipment. Use this time to familiarize yourself with the terrain and look for possible bedding areas, water, saddles, well-traveled trails, and escape routes. Knowing the “lay of the land” will go a long way in second guessing the movements of trophy animals when the hunting season opens, and human pressure increases.

Getting into Shape

Cool summer mornings and evenings present the perfect time to start getting your body into the kind of shape that can withstand the drastic elevation changes of the rugged country that trophy animals call home. Each hunter must approach this differently basing his or her workouts on their beginning physical condition and the elevation they are accustomed to living in. Great exercises for getting your cardiovascular conditioning increased for hunting are walking, jogging, biking, and climbing stairs. Lifting weights are a great help but should be balanced with a cardiovascular workout. Shed hunting, day hikes, backpacking, and scouting, are by far the most useful exercise for getting into top hunting shape. Be sure to simulate actual hunting conditions as close as possible for the best results. This includes the weight of your pack, as well as the gear that you utilize. Needless to say, the better shape you can get yourself into before arriving to hunting camp, the more enjoyable the hunt will be.

To me, hunting embodies much more than the actual killing of a trophy buck or bull. It encompasses a yearlong process. From filling out your license application all the way to cleaning up and putting away your gear at the end of the season, there is plenty to do all year long that will greatly increase the productivity of those golden moments out in the field during hunting season. Remember they say that 10% of the hunters kill 90% of the game, are you a “10 percenter?”

Upcoming Events

FCAA 3D Leagues (ends Aug. 22)	Every Wed.
Archery Deer & Elk	Aug. 25
Elk Fest (Arrow Dynamics)	Oct. 6-7

2006 FCAA Board of Directors

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The Fort Collins Archery Association

- We are a group of people united by an interest in archery.
- Our membership includes both active bowhunters and target archers who have never hunted.
- We maintain *for the public* the Fort Collins outdoor archery range on land owned by the City of Fort Collins Parks and Recreation Department.
- We work with local organizations and businesses to provide support for youth archery programs, sponsor benefit shoots and host competitions.

www.ftcollinsarchery.com

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