

HUNTERS

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF SCI CHAPTERS IN WISCONSIN AND ILLINOIS
MARCH/APRIL 2026

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HUNTERS is a bimonthly publication for members of SCI chapters in Illinois and Wisconsin, plus bonus electronic circulation, which includes some of the world's most avid and affluent conservationists who enjoy hunting here and around the world. They have earned a reputation of leadership on natural resources issues and giving to protect and support the future of hunting and conservation here and abroad. To share your message with them, send ads and editorial submissions to Mark LaBarbera at mlabarbera57@icloud.com.

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Issue	Deadline
January/February	November 20
March/April	January 20
May/June	March 20
July/August	May 20
September/October	July 20
November/December	September 20

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HUNTERS

Official Magazine of SCI Chapters in Wisconsin and Illinois
March/April 2026

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SCI Region 16 Report

by Charmaine Wargolet,
Regional Representative

On January 17th, we had our annual Region 16 meeting. And as usual it was a well-attended and very productive day. The picture below shows everyone in attendance and just in case you missed it, Jordan Wisecup, our Chapter Service Specialist, placed a picture and short blurb in Safari Times. Our region is a role model on how regions should work together! Following is the list of attendees, so you know your chapter was well represented: From the

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New members and your families are always welcome at SCI. Visit these websites and join a chapter to start your adventure. Members enjoy great fun, meet new friends, make a difference in their community and help the future of hunting, plus you will discover new deals and opportunities that improve your hunting skill and enjoyment. We invite you to join online today.

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SCI Region 16 Representative

Charmaine Wargolet
charmainew@ameritech.net

Badgerland Chapter, Randy Mayes, Steve Cripps, and Joe Koback. From the Illinois/Chicago Chapter, Brett Hensley, Annette Jones, Bill Jones and Mike Karcz. From NE WI Chapter, Mark Snyder and Mark Jablonic. From the SE WI Bowhunters, and our State Lobbyist, Dan Trawicki, and from the WI Chapter, Dean LePoidevin and Tim Novak. Also attending were Jen Bachmann, WI Chapter's Executive Assistant, Mark LaBarbera, HUNTERS magazine editor, and Jordan Wisecup, our SCI National Chapter Services Representative. The finest group of leaders in the world. (Sorry, I think Donald is rubbing off on me.) ☺

First up was Mark LaBarbera who thanked Mark Snyder for entering our magazine in SCI's worldwide competition, which we won! He talked about the



importance of everyone helping to find potential advertisers and then thanking them and sending business their way. All of the chapters talked about how they could recruit advertisers and even you as a member can consider doing the same. Ad revenue goes 100% to offset printing and mailing costs, saving money for each chapter. This magazine is a great member fulfillment piece but keeping costs down helps our chapters have more money to spend on projects. Also, we want to encourage members to participate in the magazine by sending in pictures and/or articles to Mark. You don't have to be able to write like Craig

Boddington. You don't even need to write an article if you don't want to; just email a picture or two of you and your animal, along with your name, animal species, where you took it, name of outfitter if you had one, and the location. And if your child or grandchild went on a hunt, send in their photo(s)! Everyone loves to see the next generation out there loving our sport!

Next Dan Trawicki gave us a very interesting and informational update on what is going on in Madison. Be sure to read his report in this issue.

Then Jordan gave us some chapter training and what new items are available to chapters for our fundraisers. SCI National is a lot more supportive of the chapters than sometimes people realize. Just for getting members, we chapters get points and can redeem them for guns

or life memberships or all sorts of swag. They also have a print of the year, free to each chapter. I could go on and on but ask your chapter president about it.

I would love to personally and publicly thank all those who attended. They really are the best and show their dedication and commitment each year at this event. And a special thank you to Dave Bahl, Sr., who allows us to use his beautiful Weldall facilities for our meetings. Weldall is Dave's breathtaking trophy room, a perfect setting for conducting SCI business!

So, as always, shoot straight, be well, and God bless.

SE WI Bowhunters Chapter Report

by Dan Trawicki, President

You can definitely tell its banquet season around the state, and many of us will be heading to Nashville soon for the SCI National convention. The SE Wisconsin bow chapter will be having our fundraising banquet March 20 at Weissgerber's Golden Mast in Okauchee. We have our online registration all set and would love to see you there!

On Saturday February 7th, we were happy to be a co-sponsor of the Whaletales Archery big buck contest in Dousman. This was the 14th annual and did not disappoint! Hundreds of archery hunters from throughout southeast Wisconsin came to see the biggest bucks displayed from last season. Several of us managed the bow chapter booth, and met with perspective members, and interested parties. A lot of the time, it's an opportunity to explain the mission and philosophy of SCI and especially the bow chapter. I definitely feel we gave a new perspective to many of those who attended.

I've mentioned it before, but when the Southeast Wisconsin bow chapter was formed over 25 years ago, the main focus was being politically active and working with legislators that support our mission. It's for that very reason we formed as a 501(c)4 nonprofit that would allow us to lobby and donate to elected officials through our SCI state-wide conduit fund. The Northeast chapter is the only other chapter in the state that is a C4. Both Wisconsin and Badgerland are 501(c)3's. They are allowed to be involved politically, but on a much more limited scale.

At the most recent meeting of the Bow chapter, the decision was made to go "all in" on the Governor's race here in Wisconsin. After years of lobbying and running into roadblocks, we have come to understand the importance of having a Governor that supports our constitutional right to hunt and fish here in Wisconsin. With the annual help we get from the Northeast chapter, and the support from Wisconsin and Badgerland, we plan on putting \$50,000 into this Governor's race. Yes, I said \$50,000!

Win, lose or draw, we are making a stand to support our passion. Every person reading this can help. At banquet time, bid high and bid often. Bid like your very hunting existence depends on it... because it does. If you can't bid, not a problem. Get out and vote! We could literally change the outcome of every election in this state if we got more than the pathetic turnout our men and women have typically given. Voting is our most important tool to combat complacent legislators. I look forward to seeing you in Nashville and at our banquets!



Your HUNTERS Magazine Wins Top Honors

Competing against publications from SCI chapters all across the country and around the world, Region 16's HUNTERS took top honors. The official magazine for all members of SCI chapters in Illinois and Wisconsin was awarded first place in the international competition which included both print and online publications.

"Special thanks goes to Mark Snyder and the Northeast Wisconsin Chapter for entering it on behalf of all of us," said Regional Representative Charmaine Wargolet. "And to our HUNTERS editor Mark LaBarbera who does an award-winning job of creating magazines loaded with great content. All SCI

members here can be proud of this accomplishment, and it's not the first time HUNTERS has won top honors."

On behalf of editor Mark LaBarbera and all Wisconsin and Illinois chapters, Mark Snyder accepted top publication honors for HUNTERS magazine at the SCI Convention in Nashville.



Lake Superior Chapter Report

by Scott Olson, President

Hello hunters and fellow conservationists. It's banquet season! I look forward to seeing many of you at regional shows as well as Nashville. The Lake Superior Chapter is working hard on our 2026 banquet and fundraiser, March 27-28th at the Grand Casino in Hinckley, MN. I invite everyone to attend. We have fun events from sporting clays and bourbon and wine tasting to the best food at any banquet you've attended. Raffles, games and a two-night live auction as well.

I am amazed every year at how much time and effort it takes to organize and host a fundraiser. Multiply that effort times the number of banquets each year for SCI and us SCI members are a formidable force for conservation and hunting rights! The Lake Superior Chapter works hard to partner with other conservation organizations, "Critter Clubs" as CEO Laird Hamberlin calls them, to spread the SCI message as the leading hunting organization. We gain many members



each year with these partnerships. I encourage other chapters to do the same. Ultimately, we are all working hard for the same cause. See you soon!

Northeast Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Kathryn Thede, President

The past several weeks has been a whirlwind of cold weather, expo preparation, banquet celebrations, helping teach hunter's education, and researching our upcoming hunts. Such a busy season where there doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day, yet you blink and the time has passed.

Each year since I first started volunteering with expo and the SCI banquet, I am in awe over how much work it takes to put on an event and completely humbled by the support and money raised for an amazing cause. Thank you to each person who became an SCI member (renewed their membership or are continuing to live their life membership) and to those who came to expo supporting a big hunting and fishing show. To the donors and outfitters thanks

for all your time and generous donations. Thank you to all the attendees of our banquet and the other SCI banquets, your support helps us make bigger and better the hunting community as a whole through various efforts and grants we are able to provide with money raised at our banquet and through our auction. We appreciate YOU! And special thank you to ALL of our volunteers; your countless hours (often behind the scenes), time at the banquet that you are hustling so others can enjoy a relaxing, fun evening, and ideas that make our banquet bigger and better each year do not go unnoticed or unappreciated. They say it takes a village and it does to raise a child and to provide future generations with the same hunting rights and privileges we have, if not more! It won't be done unless we all continue to work

together. THANK YOU!!

This time of year is also the time when we start thinking about and finalizing details for our next hunting adventures. I pray that whatever hunting opportunities you are going for that they will contain happy memories, a meaningful adventure, and stories to last a lifetime.

Please check out our website newisci.org for the most up to date information on our chapter.

Also do not hesitate to reach out if there are any questions or concerns that I can assist with now or in the future.



Legislative Report

by Dan Trawicki & Joel Kleefisch, Lobbyists

The sandhill crane hunting bill and the Knowles-Nelson stewardship fund have been major Issues for 2025 and continue into 2026. This is the third time in approximately 12 years we have had a sandhill crane bill, and this is by far the furthest the issue has been moved forward. There has been a lot of lobbying, visits to the capital, and committee meetings. At this stage, it's still up in the air.

Knowles-Nelson stewardship is something that expires in June of 2026. This fund is used to purchase private land for public use, improve and establish hiking

trails, boat launches and other public uses. There is bi-partisan support but not in the specifics of the bill. There is still currently debate on the merits of the land acquisition part of the bill.

Other bills of interest, we are working on and deal with on a regular basis include the following:

Senate Bill 670 and Assembly bill 682 which deals with a modest (about 10%) increase in all non-resident hunting, fishing and trapping fees. This is for non-residents only.

Senate bill 665 and Assembly bill 687 which would require the DNR to establish a population goal for our state's wolf population. Currently the state uses a

census analysis but has never established a goal population for the state should wolves get delisted again, and we get a season back.

Senate bill 112 and assembly bill 117 dealing with the issue of establishing a hunting season for sandhill cranes.

Assembly bill 16 which would create language to change an established DNR administrative rule on possession of firearms while fishing.

We continue to push forward our pro hunting agenda and ideas. We have great support from the sporting heritage committee. The question and main issue at times is the support of the Governor in signing such efforts into law.



by Mark LaBarbera

SCI member Chris Caliendo returned to Cinder River Lodge for his second hunt in two years. Late on the fourth afternoon of a 10-day hunt, he spotted a big brown bear about three miles away.

"The weather was extremely inhospitable on both hunts," said Caliendo. "I like to say it was like hunting in a car wash, except much colder."

The Wisconsin bowhunter was near Pilot Point. Cinder River Lodge was the main base for the hunt, located about midway down the Alaska Peninsula in prime brown bear and moose habitat. The area has plenty of game and produces trophies. It stretches from the Pacific Ocean to Bristol Bay, the full width of Alaska.

The lodge is comfortable with a bunkhouse, shower house and main lodge with kitchen. Bush planes are based at the lodge. The spike camps put you closer to where you spot and stalk for as many days as you need. The weather often adds to the physical challenge, and Caliendo embraces adversity. He describes them matter-of-factly.

"The rushed late afternoon stalk was over three miles through swift rivers up to your mid-thigh, he said, noting that he and his guide did not have hip boots.

"We were able to get to 76 yards without the bear knowing it," he said. "Then the bear turned and slowly started walking away. The wind never subsides here, so I literally had to yell at him to get him to stop."

Caliendo, factoring in the wind and distance, drew his bow. Muscle memory kicked in but was challenged by the cold and the wind. He released, and he watched the arrow hit where he aimed.

"My shot was lucky," he said modestly.

The bear died in less than 75 yards. "It truly was a dream come true," said Caliendo with his signature smile, adding that the bear squared 10'1".



SCI Badgerland Chapter Hunter's Expo '26 Scored Big

Photos by Toby Keeler & Mark LaBarbara

by Mark LaBarbara

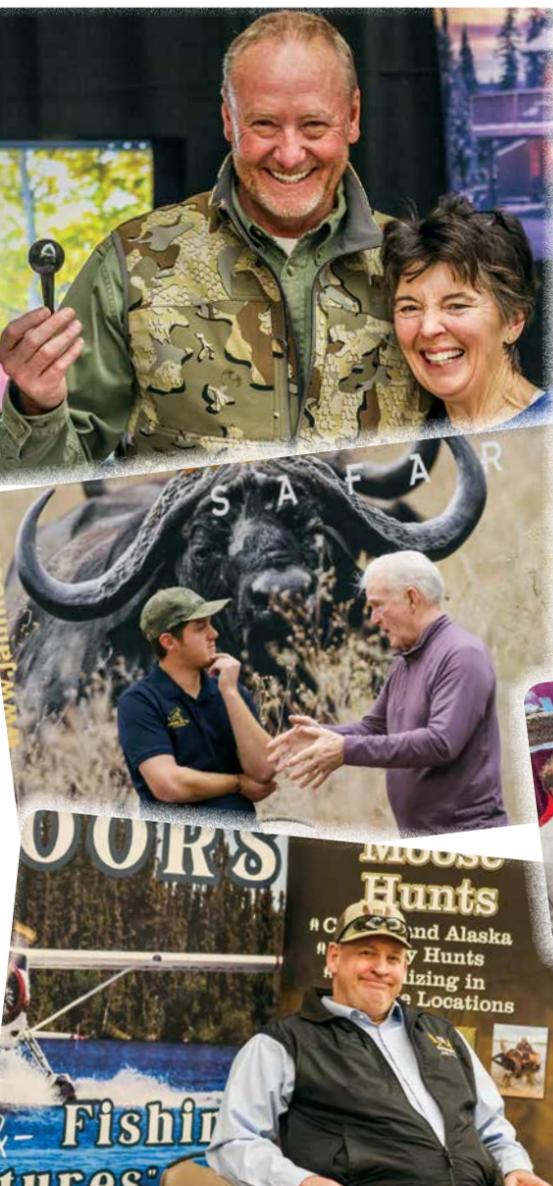
Every year, Badgerland leaders generate an impressive amount of funding for the mission while making it fun and memorable for all the families and friends participating. Chula Vista Resort's Mike Kaminski is also an SCI member dedicated to passing along our outdoor heritage to his grandchildren and others. His resort is home to Badgerland's annual event that again impressed all comers February 14-15. Great food and camaraderie among

members, sponsors, volunteer leaders, donors, and world-wide exhibitors are just part of the fun.

The photos here are not the same as being there, but they do capture some of the experiences at Badgerland events.

It was clear again this year that the hard work of all involved paid big dividends in raising money that will continue to support the Badgerland's great initiatives on behalf of all hunters

and conservationists. Plan now to spend the weekend at Chula Vista next year but start by attending the informative monthly social gatherings that the Badgerland Chapter hosts at various restaurants in south central Wisconsin. Newcomers are always welcomed with open arms. So are new volunteers willing to pitch in any amount of time and talent to keep this successful chapter going strong.



Badgerland Chapter Report

by Randy Mayes, President

A big THANK YOU! Many of our annual SCI chapter fundraisers in Wisconsin are over for this year. I thank all of you who attended and supported these chapters! The majority of each chapter's annual funding for grants and projects comes from the proceeds of their annual events. Even if you weren't able to attend, if you are getting this magazine, you are a supporter of a great organization that supports hunting on so many levels.

Thank you is also in order for everyone who worked so hard to put these events on! Most people would be amazed at the amount of effort it takes to successfully pull off these banquets. We do it because we believe in what SCI stands for... Conservation,

Education and Protecting Hunter's Rights.

If you were fortunate enough to purchase a hunt or other trip on one of the auctions, congratulations! After your hunt, don't forget to send in pictures and a write-up to Hunters magazine. One of the major things that contribute to the success of the award-winning magazine is the great pictures and stories from our members! As I once heard a member say, "You don't need to be Hemingway to write your story!" Your story can be as simple or as detailed and descriptive as you want. The bottom line is we can't have a great magazine without your stories!

With regards to the magazine, a big congratulations to Mark LaBarbera for receiving the "Publications Award" from



SCI for our great magazine! He has worked tirelessly, putting his great design and editing skills to use. I remember "back in the day" when each chapter had their own newsletter. Often, they were just a few black and white pages stapled together. Oh, how far we've come since then! Thank you Mark for all you've done with our great magazine!

Illinois and Chicago Chapter Report

by Brett Hensley, President

With winter just settling in, comes the busiest time of the year for our chapter! This coming year there is a lot of new opportunities for hunters and lovers of the outdoors.

Two events coming up to put on your calendar include our Annual Banquet as well as our first ever Hunters Happy Hour.

On March 26th our chapter is launching Hunters Happy Hour. This event is a great opportunity to get to know and connect with fellow chapter members and win some awesome raffles! It will take place at Shoeless Joe's Ale House & Grill, 1480 W Lake St., Addison, IL 6010, starting at 6pm.

The chapter board has been busy securing donations, hunts, and raffle items for the upcoming banquet that will take place on April 18th at Medinah Banquets in Addison, IL. This year we are celebrating Women Hunters! Women are the biggest demographic of new hunters and women involvement in

hunting has been growing since 1955, to the point that about a quarter of all hunters are women. This banquet is our must attend event of the year as we are always trying to make it grander than the last! Returning this year is renowned auctioneer Adam Karrels who will bring excitement and energy that only the best auctioneers can bring! More information about new raffles and invites for this event will be coming out shortly so keep an eye out!

Keep an eye out on our website and in Hunters magazine to see and learn more about our chapter's efforts and projects we are working on this year. We hope to see you at these events!



Elisha Jensen fed the family with his first deer. Proud grandpa Randy Mayes mentored Elisha. After the youth hunt, Mayes said, "Pretty sure he's hooked! I think Elisha was just as excited to help butcher it as he was shooting it!"



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SCI WI Chapter Hosts Grand Banquet

by Mark LaBarbera

Just when you think it can't get any better, the SCI Wisconsin Chapter's Annual Grand Banquet exceeded expectations.

SCI events like this are fun to share with others and they make us proud to be First for Hunters. Chapter President Dean LePoidevin, Vice President Monte Whitaker, and the event planning team

can be proud of the Grand Banquet's success once again at the Brookfield Conference Center. All SCI members, friends, and guests who pitched in to raise funds for SCI's mission can also be proud.

In this issue, we are sharing photos from the event, but as we've said in the past, they don't do justice to it. There's nothing like experiencing it firsthand.

If you are not a regular attendee at SCI chapter banquets and events, I recommend you register for future ones and see for yourself how good they make you feel as a hunter, conservationist, and engaged U.S. citizen. Meanwhile, please enjoy the photos and join all of us in thanking the chapter leaders, volunteers, and donors behind SCI's success.



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Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Dean LePoidevin, President

The 49th Annual SCI Wisconsin Banquet & Fundraiser was sure a crowd pleaser as more than 850 hunters and conservationists filled the halls during the two-day event. As you can see in the accompanying photographs, attendees had a great time speaking with outfitters.

With another successful SCI WI Banquet behind us it's time to turn our attention to spring membership meetings and two popular summer outings. Mark your calendars for the March 19, April 16 and May 21 monthly membership meetings as we have entertaining speakers, savory food and plenty of informative conversations on tap for all attendees. And while you're at

it, add Monday, June 1 and Saturday July 11 to your calendar as we once again host our annual golf outing at the Legend of Brandybrook in Waukesha, and our 37th annual sporting clays event at the Wern Valley Sportsmen's Club. Be sure to look for details in upcoming SCI WI newsletters, our website at www.sciwi.org, and on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SCIWisconsin>.

If you could not attend this year's banquet you missed a chance to renew or purchase a new



chapter membership there at special prices. For information and pricing on SCI membership see <https://sciwi.org/membership>.

Hunt Report: BC Lynx

Sometimes It's Better to be Lucky

by John Kubichek

I've had a fairly lucky hunting career. Weather, health, knowledge of the area and many other factors have contributed to that. I just experienced one of the luckier hunts I've had in quite a while.

Steve and I have wanted a lynx mount for a decade. At SCI National in Nashville last year, I talked with Troy Ginn from International Outdoor Consultants about lynx and booked a hunt with one of the best outfitters there is – Steven Leuenberger from Ram Creek Outfitters, in S. E. British Columbia. Steven's concession is in the Kootenay mountains, east of Elko where he has hunted mule deer, white-tails, elk, Shiras moose, goats, bighorn sheep, cats, and wolves for 31 years.

I flew to Kalispell, Montana on December 3rd and was driven about three hours to a cozy, fully stocked remote cabin, just a few yards from Ram Creek. Eight to 10 inches of snow had fallen three days before I arrived, and I couldn't believe that Mother Nature blessed us with another two inches, early on the 4th, just as we started hunting.

It was easy to pick up the snow-covered impressions moose, coyotes, rabbits and lynx had made over the last few days. Spotting anything fresh in the newly fallen snow would be a no brainer.

Steven, a dog handler named Daylon, and I left the cabin on snowmobiles at 7:30 in the morning. A smorgasbord of older tracks and a few rabbit tracks appeared as we ascended the logging roads. At 9:00 Steven and I spotted tracks leading up a steep, snow covered slope. Steven hollered out "Bingo!" as



the tracks were from a decent size lynx and had been made in the last half hour.

Lynx can either be hunted by calling or with the use of dogs. Fifteen minutes of calling produced no action, so the dogs were released on the smoking hot tracks just before 10:00. By 10:30 the

howling of the hounds and the monitors on the dog collars indicated the cat was treed. We began a several hundred yard walk and climb toward the chorus. Although some of the hounds were circling, Dalen spotted the big tom, perched high in an unbelievably dense spruce. Getting a clear shot was tricky, but after a bit of effort and expenditure of more than the anticipated amount of ammunition, the tom was on the ground.

Honestly, the hunt was simple. Why? Logistics was easy, I picked the right outfitter AND it would have been impossible to pick better conditions to cut a fresh track and enable the hounds to get through the snow as easily as they did. Another two feet of snow was forecast over the next few days, so we were very lucky to connect in so tight a window of opportunity.

Thanks to Troy, Steven and Daylon for making this happen.



Linda Bahl, alongside husband Dave Bahl, Sr., prepare for the live auction.



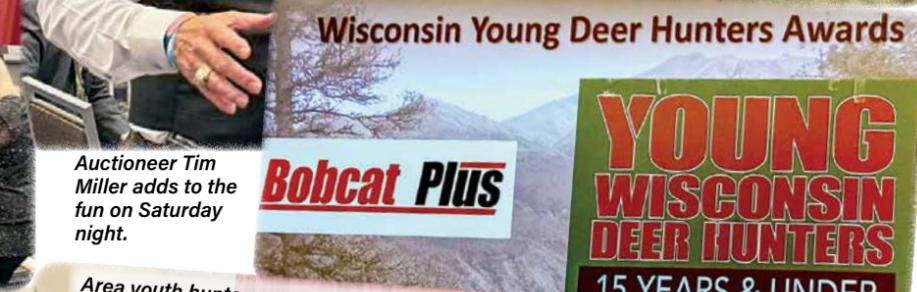
SCI CEO Laird Hamberlin joins professional hunter Melissa Bachman and chapter president Dean LePoidevin for the evening's entertainment.



Outfitter Anton Smit from Marromeu Safaris receives the International Outfitter of the Year from Hunt Chair Monte Whiteaker.



SCI WI Member Emily Schmidt celebrates winning the Reverse Bingo game, along with emcee Dan Trawicki and SCI Regional Rep Charmaine Wargolet.



Auctioneer Tim Miller adds to the fun on Saturday night.

Area youth hunters were celebrated on Saturday afternoon



SCI CEO Laird Hamberlin sparks laughter from auctioneer Heidi Miller and guest Brad Konek.

1st Bear Too Close

by Brent Cochems



BIG BEAR GUIDE SERVICE
IRON RIVER, WI
715-815-0155

After another year went by, I questioned whether to let other obligations take priority or if I should commit to hunt bear this year? I already had 13 preference points, almost a guarantee for a black bear permit in Wisconsin Zone A. For the last few years, I couldn't go because of family or work. This year was going to be different, I decided. My attitude was you never know what tomorrow will bring so it's time to stop talking and start doing.

Next, I had to decide what guide service to use. I looked at a bunch of them. One day a co-worker mentioned I should check out Big Bear Guide Service in Iron River. His nephew used them the prior year and had a great experience; he got his bear the first day.

I called and talked to Mark Karshbaum, the owner. He gave the whole low down. It was just like my coworker had explained. These guys take care of everything for the hunter. Mark said once I got awarded my permit to call him back. I applied and months passed, but then in the mail came my permit. It was kind of like Christmas had come early. I went right in the house called Mark and reserved my spot!

Next on the to-do list was a few weeks before bear season. Mark asked the hunters to come up and pick their bait site. Fast-forward a few months to mid-August, my son and I go up to Iron River and meet Mark. He takes us on some bait runs showing us some of the different sites. When I went to the second site, this is what I envisioned, and I told Mark this is it! This is the site I want for bear season. We pulled the game camera and there was already a nice bear hitting the site.

That year, dog hunters went first so the opener for bait hunters was Wednesday September 10. I headed up a day earlier. It was recommended, so I could run bait to make sure I could find my site and get my chair set in the natural ground blind that was provided.

It was 11:00am on Tuesday, so I stopped by the Big Bear Lodge. I picked my bucket of bait, which was a concoction of gummy bears and cookies, and headed to my site. I got my chair set, site baited, and I put up a game camera.

The night before opener Mark's wife puts a meal for all the hunters and guests. This year there were 26 hunters in the camp plus all the guests. After dinner Mark reviews how things will

work, followed by a presentation from the local DNR warden on the rules, introductions to the local meat processor and the on-site taxidermist with their offerings.

Finally, it was opening day, my plan was to get out in the afternoon as that seemed to be when bears were the most active. I grabbed some breakfast in Brule and couldn't wait any longer. I had to get out and hunt! It was 11:00am Wednesday when I grabbed my bait and headed to my bait site. On the way in I passed my blind, but wait, my chair is gone. My first thought is why would somebody take my chair, are you kidding me?

I filled my stump with bait, sprayed Big Bear's special bear attractant all over the bait site, pulled my card out of my game camera, and settled in my blind. I sprayed the attractant on the blind to cover my scent. I had to sit on the bait bucket, as I had no chair. I then checked to see what was at the bait over the last 24 hours. I was pleasantly surprised to see that I had two different boars, a sow and two cubs. I was thinking, "Five bears. Wow! That's some great activity!"

Thirty minutes into my hunt I look up and I have two boars at my bait. Then a fight starts with the large boar running off the smaller boar. Here we go!

I get the large boar in my scope. One problem is he lays down to eat, and I don't have a shot, so I wait.

Meanwhile the other boar starts working his way towards me. He gets closer, and closer, as I am still trying to get my shot on the large boar. I thought the approaching bear will turn around.

But soon he is at only 15 feet, so I swing the gun to this bear just in case.



I was hunting on the ground near the bait site.

One problem is I have a high-powered scope and all I see is black. So, I keep the gun pointed at him just in case, he just keeps sniffing and coming closer. Not a great time to be sitting on a bucket that smells like girl scout cookies and gummy bears in a blind smelling of bear attractant!

Now he is at six feet! What would you do?

Time to make a decision! I assumed that my only option was to point the barrel at his vitals and eyeball it. Bang! I shoot. He tears off in the woods. My heart is pounding out of my chest. I take a minute to gather myself and think about how close I was to being a bear snack. I then notice that the large bear is still eating the bait 40 yards away. I pull out my phone and start filming this brute who is approximately 350-400 pounds, almost twice the size of the one I just shot.

I know I need to look for my bear, and I need to get rid of this guy, so I stand up, and then he stands up. We are looking at each other 40 yards away. What would you do?

While waving my hands, I start yelling at him, "Hey bear! Hey bear!"

It worked and he ran off in the woods!

I called Mark with much excitement. He said we will be right there. While I am waiting, I am looking in the direction my bear went to see if I can see him. Then I spot something in the woods. Wondering "What the heck is that?" I walked towards it, slowly at first.

It was my chair, 25 yards away. A dang bear must have dragged it in the woods.

After 20 minutes, Dave and help from Big Bear Guide Service shows up and they take over. They helped me recover the bear, hauled it out of the woods and drove it back to the lodge. Back at the lodge they registered it, weighed it, pictures, cleaned it, and then I had the onsite taxidermist cape the bear. I chose a rug for this bear. Wrapped it in plastic, put it in my truck and had a prearranged processor ready and waiting 10 miles away.

Within 24 hours after shooting, I was picking up my frozen bear from the processor and heading home.

The whole way home I kept thinking about the incredible experience I just had; not only the great job that Mark and his family do for every hunter but having a hunt I will never forget. I can't wait to do it again!

It Takes a Team

by Rick Rollo

On a cold spring day, I opened the mail to find an orange card from the Wisconsin DNR awarding me a 2025 Wisconsin black bear permit for area B. This came as a bit of shock to me because I knew guys that have been putting in for a bear tag longer than me and still had not received one. My only guess was because of the area I had picked I became eligible sooner or was just plain lucky.

This presented a bit of a dilemma for me. I have never hunted bears and knew little or close to nothing about hunting bears but here I stood with a tag. I was excited but worried at the same time, what do I do now!

The very first thing I did was look up Wisconsin bear hunting on the DNR website where I learned the dates and requirements that I would need to follow.

You learn there are two types of bear hunting; hunting with dogs, and hunting over bait. I'm 75 years old so that was a pretty easy decision. Now do I wish to hire a guide or do this on my own. To me, the hunt has always been about the work to make the hunt successful, so now I have narrowed it down to hunting over bait and teaching myself how, what, where and when. A

decision that I questioned many times during this adventure.

This would be the point where I learned very quickly that it was going to take a real team effort if I was to be successful. Our cabin is just south of Niagara, Wisconsin or approximately 235 miles from my home in Waukesha. Immediately, all of the questions flood your brain. Where on the property is the best place to bait? Where and what am I going to do about bait? What is bait? Am I going to hunt from a ground blind or a tree (remember that 75-year-old thing) etc.? You get the idea.

Wisconsin says your bait must be protected so that no other animals can get at the bait. This means digging a hole and covering it with logs after placing the bait or hollow out a log, placing a solid piece of wood on top and weighing it down with a rock or other heavy object. System number two seemed to me to be the most logical and easiest. Enter team member Jason, my nephew who owns Precision Landscaping. A quick call and Jason had one of his guys hollow out a stump, ready for bait.

Now it is time for bait. Enter the next team member. A quick internet search and Bob's Bear Bait, which has about seven locations across the state,

became my best bet. A phone call and visit to Bob's in Appleton made him an amazing team member. I think Bob has probably forgotten more about baiting than I will ever know. In less than an hour Bob taught me about bait, different kinds, when to bait, when to change types of bait but most importantly the use of scents to attract bears to your bait and cover your scent. After trying different ones, I discovered that Butterscotch was the scent that bears around me seemed to like the best. Every time we baited, we would spray the bushes, trees and grass around the bait, then as we backed out of the bait area, we would spray the grass and leaves in hopes of catching a bear crossing our path and leading him to the bait.

Once I had most of the tools, then I needed a location to bait and a logical place to watch the bait from, better known as a hunting blind. We own 240 acres of all varying terrain from hard woods to dense cedar swamps. Time to call the many friends on the team that know bear hunting and accumulate all their ideas and still not have a real solid decision as to where to hunt.

Stepping up next as a team member was my brother. Chris has a beautiful tower blind deep in the hardwoods of our land. It is approximately 18 feet high

with stairs leading up to the enclosed blind, a comfortable chair, and some great views. Chris also has a number of cellular cameras set up, so with a little adjustment we would be able to put one directly on the bait log to give us real time information.

As we hauled the bait log out to the area, I sat in the comfortable chair and Chris moved the bait log around until I was satisfied it was far enough away yet awarded me a clean shot (approximately 60 yards).

Now, the biggest dilemma of them all. How does one continuously bait for black bears when one lives 235 miles away?

Enter the next team member. As you reach the end of the paved road before you enter the old logging road that will take you to our camp there is a beautiful old



Art Helin photo



home that has been there since the 1800's. In that home is a couple that have lived in the area their whole lives, Brian and Sandi. Brian is an avid, avid deer hunter and just an all-around good guy. The kind of guy that would give you the shirt off his back if you needed it (and I sort of did). I approached Brian in late July and explained my problem; he never so much as hesitated. "Show me what you want me to do, and I'll take care of it!" Every other night Brian and sometimes Sandi would get on their ATV and drive out to our place about ¾ of a mile into the woods. There he would go into a concrete shed we have and fill a bucket about half full of bait, grab a scent sprayer and drive another half mile-plus to the bait station, fill the bait and back out. Sometimes within 45 minutes we would have a bear in the bait. We figured that bears would listen for the sound of the ATV and knew it was feeding time.

I would make periodic trips up to do work around the cabin and give Brian a reprieve from baiting.

September 10th was approaching quickly, but now we have another problem. My 75th birthday is September 13th and the majority of my four daughters and 10 grandchildren would like to see me on my birthday. This is one of those times when, as you get older, you learn to set up your priorities. Although they insisted it was okay if I wanted to hunt, this was important and I wanted to be with my family. It was absolutely the best decision.

Originally my brother Chris was going to the cabin with me to work

around the cabin while I hunted. Chris called me on the 10th and told me his wife had fallen and broken her elbow. My wife was not comfortable at all with me going by myself, as the case had been it was another team member to step forward. Hearing what was going on, my brother Mike rearranged his life so that he could join me at the cabin!

Sunday the 14th we are off to the cabin bright and early arriving late morning. I helped Mike get things opened up. I changed clothes to go on my first bear hunt. From noon until dark (7:24pm shooting hours) I didn't see a squirrel much less a bear. The bait had not been touched for two days, and I of course began to lament not being in the stand on opening day. That evening a neighbor from down the road stopped and told us of shooting a 150 lb. bear Saturday night. I wasn't too worried because I had promised myself, I would wait for a larger bear.

Monday morning came and the plan was to hunt in the morning, come in for lunch and back out for the afternoon/evening.

The morning came and went. I returned to the cabin, had lunch, and took a shower. By this time, it was already 80 degrees, and I knew it was going to be a warm afternoon in that blind.

As I climbed into the blind, I followed myself all the way up with scent spray and settled in for a long afternoon.

Again, it's very quiet. As the sun started going down and the temperature was going down, it looked like another night of nothing.

Suddenly about 6:15 I caught movement coming straight into the bait. I couldn't see what it was, but it was small and fast.

A fisher jumped up on the bait log and started doing circles trying to figure out a way to get at the bait. It broke the boredom, and I was totally entertained watching him scamper around. At some point he looked up and took off like a shot to the East.

I thought that was strange but didn't think too much of it until I saw movement coming from the West. My heart started beating so hard I swore I could hear it.

Here he came, slowly, step by step, putting his nose in the air and catching whiffs of the scent spray. As he approached the bait log, he walked past a stake we had put in the ground that was 3 feet from the ground to the top of the stake. I could see immediately that his back was over the top of the stake and felt he was a shooter.

To my surprise, he walked right past the bait and began smelling the trees that I had sprayed with a scent. He now turned directly toward me and stopped.

I don't think he knew I was there but just felt something was different.

By this time, I had the barrel of the gun out the window and had him in my crosshairs. He looked up toward the stand and then lowered his head to smell the ground. I was afraid he was right on the path used to bait the log and would bolt from the human scent. I put the crosshairs right between his shoulder blades and right behind his head, and the gun cracked! I remember thinking "Man, that gun is loud." He went down like a stone, never moving an inch from that spot. Now the shaking starts! As I got to him, I could tell he was a decent bear, not a giant but a nice bear. After field dressing he came in just under 300 pounds!

Now it was time for more team members, Mike, Brian and my friend Scott all joined in to help drag him and get him into the truck to take to the butcher in the morning, which is a whole together different story.

So, you see, my first bear hunt was truly a team effort that would not have been successful without all working together. This is what sportsmen and women do and one of the reasons I love hunting so much. Thank you, team!



Buddy Knew Jake Was Dying

Dog helps SCI mountain guide crawl 11 hours after UTV crash

by Mark LaBarbera

Jake Schmitt knew the pains and pleasures of guiding. He understood the extreme risks and rewards of serving clients seeking success and adventure in mountainous terrain.

Jake loved the mountain lifestyle so much that when the self-employed 34-year-old was not welding or guiding, he was hunting or fishing. And when he was not hunting or fishing, he was scouting, mostly in Utah, but he also guided or hunted in Montana, Pennsylvania, Saskatchewan, Wyoming, and New Mexico.

He respected the mountains, the fields and forests, and he cherished his time preparing for and pursuing big game, upland birds and other species with or without clients. He savored the smells, sights and sounds of wildlife and wild places, whether it was the cackling of flushing pheasants or the bugling of bull elk. The smell of a wallow, aspens and alders soothed his soul. The sight of sunlight on velvet antlers revealing a big mule deer's location, added optimism to his adrenaline. Jake lived for such moments.

He stayed in shape, constantly on the move. He sometimes referred to running

a 5k every other day in the thin mountain air.

He was driven by his love of the hunt and caring for clients. He shared in their success and celebrated their accomplishments.

Clients like Wisconsin SCI Badgerland Chapter member Dale Hudack will tell you that Jake was often the key to success.

"Jake learned what we were looking for," said Dale, "He knew who wanted a certain minimum size rack and who was content to focus on the experience, camp life, or method, like bowhunting. And he spent months preparing in order to give us the best chance of achieving our goals."

So, it was no surprise that Jake was spending the July 20 weekend scouting for mule deer in Utah's Uinta Mountains. He parked his pickup, backed his UTV off the trailer, and loaded his German Shorthair Pointer, Buddy, and his gear onto the Polaris Ranger. Buddy jumped into his special kennel in the rear box. As usual, Jake packed his binoculars and spotting scope, knife, and first-aid kit, plus cell phone, and Garmin In-Reach GPS emergency locator. His healthy respect for the mountains moved him to always be prepared. He was no stranger to danger, and experience taught him to be diligent.

Six months earlier, he was in the mountains welding a high fence when a bear approached. As he told it, "Buddy and I got charged by this 400-pound boar. Had to be 400 pounds! Buddy started barking and went at the bear and scared this thing away like it was a little girl. He saved my life more times than I can pitch."

Jake is bear aware and watches for fearless mountain lions, but he was not thinking about the many other accidents, close-calls, and mishaps that left him with fake teeth, missing spleen and pancreas, assorted scars and mended bones. Geared up as he drove into the mountains that day, Jake Schmitt thought he was prepared for whatever nature and fate might send his way.

As he followed the dirt two-track leading to familiar vistas where he hoped to spot distant muleys, there was moisture in the air. A mixture of moist air and blue sky with some clouds created a beautiful rainbow that heightened his enthusiasm and optimism. What a sign that this was an ideal way to spend a summer day.

Driving and hiking to favorite overlooks, he spent the morning looking at deer and elk but didn't really find what he was looking for yet.

Jake said, "By 6pm a storm started rolling in. That's about when I came around a bend in the road and hit the brakes on the four-wheeler. It was the start of a wild weekend when things started happening to me."

He just wanted to get away from this storm and get out before getting stuck.

"In Utah you have like chalk on the ground, and if it becomes wet, it turns into like glue," he said. "And once it sticks on your tires, you're done, and you're gonna slide off the trail or dirt road. You may as well be on ice skates."

He continued, "So I hustled to get out of there and in the downpour almost ran over what I thought was a rabbit. It turns out it wasn't; it was a live fawn mule deer that got washed down this Ridge and just drops right in the road."

The fawn was drenched and weak, even easier prey than usual for mountain lions or bears. The storm lightened but the sky was getting dark.

"Almost certain her mother is nearby, I started cuddling this baby deer, pulling burrs out of her, and trying to dry her off because it's cat central here," Jake

explained. "I mean, a week before that I was trapped by a cat walking this same trail, so I don't want to leave her there. I don't really know what to do. I spent an hour and a half there and she's screaming. She does not like it. Pretty soon the storm rolls back in I got to make a decision to get myself out there and hope that the doe finds her fawn."

Jake made it safely to the truck and home.

"I gambled, I know," he said, "but, happy news, I got back the next day and read the tracks in that same spot. You could see the fawn's tracks on top of my tire tracks for almost half a mile. No cat tracks. I'm pretty satisfied that the fawn survived."

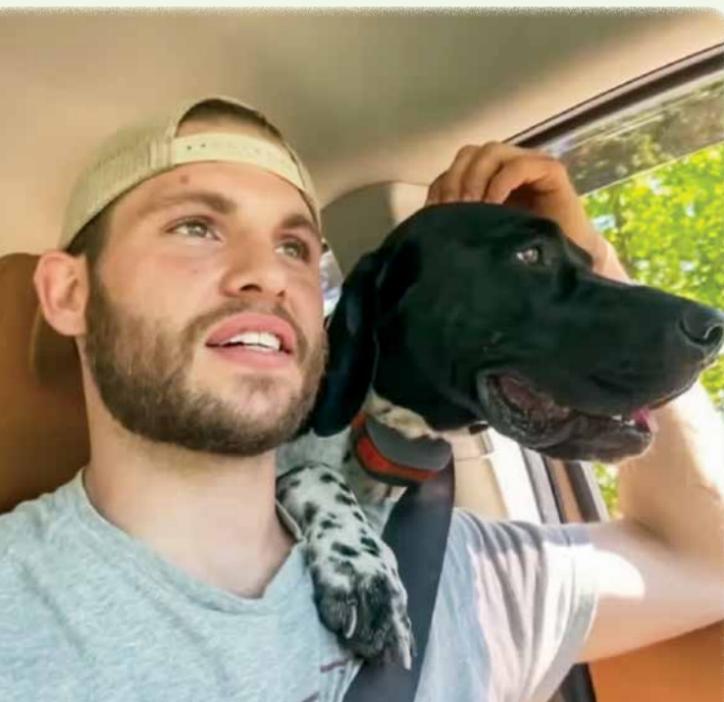
Jake said, "I went back the next morning and found a ton of muleys. I was looking for target animals at this point. It's end of July and you're going to start seeing those third and fourth branch-offs."

He was scouting for bull elk and older mule deer bucks with good antlers in velvet, still growing and showing even more trophy potential by the time the early fall bow season opens.

He knows the best vantage points where he can see mountainsides, canyons, and other hangouts from miles away with high-powered binoculars and spotting scope.

"You're looking from miles away. I had probably gone five miles on the UTV to get to elk," Jake said. "It's another five miles to where I usually see good muleys. So, I get there and find the one I've been keeping an eye on. He's a 4x4 but he's probably only 2½ years old, maybe 3½, and not worth my time."

Jake said, "Next morning I go back to kind of the same area doing the same things, covering outrageous amounts of area, and then I find what I think might be worth spending some time on. Later in the day, I see a bachelor group of bucks about two miles away. There is one deer in here that shows his antlers and gets me curious, and that starts my



whole problem. He has a kicker on his left antler and later I find out he ended up scoring 196 inches. In the moment, I want him so bad, and that's the problem."

Jake felt the need to get a closer look.

"I got an idea of where he's at, how he got there, and where I can get a better look before dark," he explained. "The big bucks don't want to move in daylight. I don't care who you are, you'd have to step on them half the time to make them move. Some of these big deer don't get up 'til it's pitch black, and they go to bed when it's pitch black. I'm spending days to find one like this, and he's actually right here. So, I got a little closer."

The buck was still tough to see and harder to judge. Jake became even more curious and knew there was no guarantee the subordinate bachelors and the big buck would be there tomorrow.



The light on Buddy's collar was a beacon of hope.

Jake continued, "Now it's about 6 pm, and I find the one sub with him. You can see him walk, and all these deer are in there, but I need to shorten the distance between us. I go back to the Ranger and make my next get-closer push. Suddenly there's an elk calf right around the corner. First, the fawn, now the calf, but it's hoof is in a bear trap near the tire track. I grabbed my phone and took a quick video while I thought fast about how to get her out of there. I'm a half mile from where I want to be and I'm trying to go around the path, right? So, I see her, and obviously I'm not just going to drive away."

Somehow Buddy broke out of the kennel.

"Things get a little western," Jake said. "The dog is excited. The calf is not quiet as its pulling against the trap's chain staked to the ground. I'm trying to talk to the calf and calm it down. No

joke. I don't want to remove the stake and leave the calf dragging a trap and chain. Finally, I grab the calf, step on the trap, and somehow got the calf free. It took a while, but then it didn't run. It stood there and looked at me. And it's like 'Are we friends now?' I don't know what's going on or what happened. I shooed her away and got back to the Ranger."

As Jake hurried to a new vantage point, he thought about why someone would have set a bear trap there, let alone in July. Many of the two-track roads are cut into the slope with thick cover above and below. Rock-filled creeks with thick over-growth often flow at the bottom of drainages. Jake and Buddy drove through six crossings between the truck and the big mule deer. The two-tracks or "roads" they used were more like game trails for part

of the way. For humans, leaving the trail or looking for shortcuts through the thick cover in a lot of areas can become a deadly decision.

Fortunately, Jake knew the trails well.

"To get a better look at the big buck near the top of the mountain at about 10,700 feet," he said, "I gotta get to 10,000 to see if he's got the character I want, but I don't have a lot of choices. It's either I'm a mile away or I'm 400 yards away, so I'm getting to the 400 yard spot. It's July 21st. Me and a handful of really dedicated guys are usually the only people out here, and I'm trying to find a physical path to get a better look at this deer without having to hike because it's 7:15. I've got half an hour to get a look, so I take this path and I take that path, and then I take this other one, and it's like, OK, I know where this goes. I've been there before but there's washouts from the winter. I go up there and I

find one trail that's going to go exactly where I want to go and I get, you know, 100 feet up it, and it's just brushed like you can't believe. It's a little more treacherous. You can't see tire tracks anymore, so I'm saying, 'I'm not going up that.'"

One hand on the wheel, he looked over his shoulder, paused, and took a breath.

"I didn't even put it in reverse. I kept it in drive and just kept on the brake. I kept backing down. It's not just steep; it's aggressively steep. Switchback between switchback, right, so I came down and what other people tell me happened was instead of just coming smoothly I bumped a stump or a rock, and it hit my back right tire barely off the trail. Remember, I've obviously braked so this accident happened at 0 miles an hour. I saw my left front tire spin which doesn't usually happen when you're on the ground, so I was, like, you know, immediately 'Oh shit! Jump out!'"

Jake tried to get out of the moving UTV.

"It was slowly going over like a capsizing ship. I tried to jump out as it starts to roll. I get halfway out of the window, and it shatters my ribs as I'm thrown back into the machine. It smoked my head off the frame. The machine rolled and shot my body through the roof 95 feet to where I hit a tree."

When he regained consciousness, he could see the machine had gone about 300 feet, and must have rolled about 20-30 times, leaving a trail of parts. No axles on the frame. No seat belts. Three wheels thrown off.

"You know the sick part is all of me just was, like, 'Yeah dude, like shit, I lost my side-by-side.'" Jake laughed as he told the story to SCI Badgerland Chapter members seven months after the accident but then was choked up and fighting back tears as he thought about his dog and the rest of their adventure.

"The dog was strapped in the back still. I have no idea how he got out of there. But I believe Buddy saved my life like he probably did when that bear attacked."

On the mountainside with darkness approaching, reality sunk in.

"I kept trying to get up, and I was, like, 'What is going on here?' I kept falling down, not realizing what happened. It fractured both of my ankles. My right

ankle was pointed to about 5 o'clock. My left leg I couldn't see. I snapped my right ankle back, and it made like a gunshot noise so I knew it was broken. My tibia and fibula had shattered. I also dislocated my right hip and tore part of my shoulder. I'm sitting there with four ribs broken, a concussion, plus bruises and cuts everywhere. So, at that point I'm at 10,400 feet with a dog and nobody else."

Jake thought about how the stark reality of his situation despite all of his emergency gear and preparation.

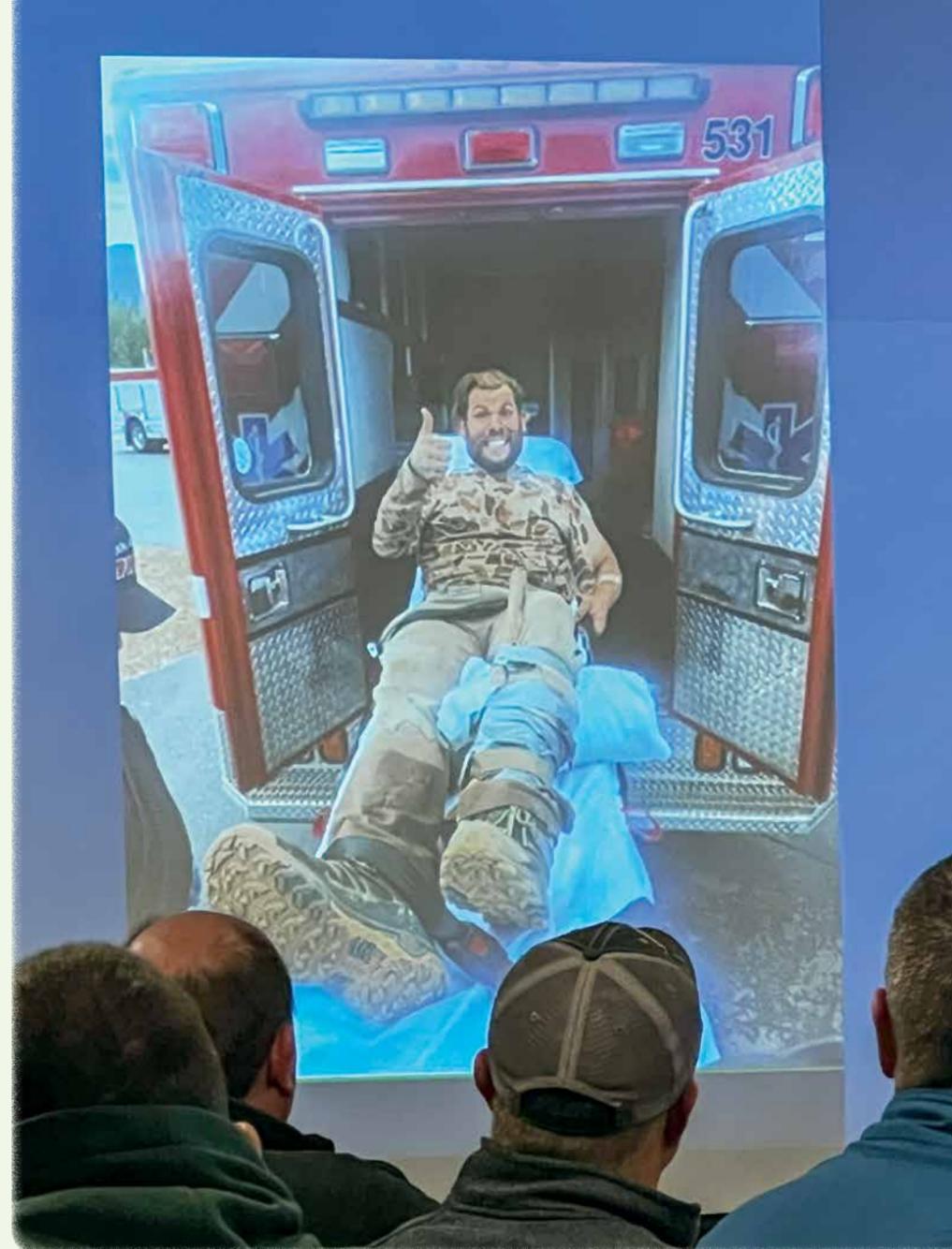
"I had packed everything you could possibly imagine that we all go out into the mountains with, but none of it stays on your body when you get cartwheeled and thrown," he said. "You know what I mean? When your body hits a tree and you don't know where your gear ended up or if it was shattered too. I couldn't find my binoculars; they hit my face and shattered over my nose. I'm not finding my In-Reach or my phone. It was time to make some big boy decisions."

"I decided to grab my leg with all my might and roll down the mountain to my side-by-side, hoping anything I had preparation-wise was there. The pain was terrible, but I was probably in shock and not even aware that I must have been unconscious. I went through what was left of the Ranger; couldn't find anything but duct tape."

Jake said, "This is a weird world we live in. I had about a quarter inch thick left on a roll of duct tape in the middle of my center console. OK, here we go. My leg is flopping like a dolphin's rudder. It's like I didn't know what to do. I'm not a medic. I grabbed that roll of duct tape, and I found the nearest stick. I took off my belt and tightened it around the splint, and I duct taped the hell out of my leg. I didn't know to allow for swelling. I didn't know that my skin could burst open. I didn't know that I could add to the danger by how I wrapped the tape."

Understandably, Jake may not have been thinking clearly immediately after the crash.

"I was probably, I think, like four miles from the truck and trailer," he said. "I knew I had to head downhill but didn't know for sure which trail to take. I was a little banged up and didn't know exactly where I was. This trail goes way over here and that one goes way over there, and, oh, it's 7:45. It's getting darker than



Jake described himself in this ambulance photo as the happiest dude on the planet and "duct taped to high heaven."

the inside of a coffin on the moonless night to take Chris Farley's words."

Experienced hunters know that things can look a lot different coming in on a trail versus going out on that same trail.

"I started panicking," he said, "and, at first, you know crap doesn't look familiar, like from the back. I know I need to get to my truck. I'm not sure exactly how much time I have, how much the internal bleeding or other issues are going to affect my ability to survive. OK, it's pitch black now, and then my dog comes up again like this little miracle worker. On his Sport Dog collar is a tiny light that

helps you see where your dog is in low light conditions. As Buddy is sniffing and sensing my condition, I turned on the light. That is the only light I had. At first, Buddy might have thought we were just hunting so he ranged further out than I wanted. I was screaming in pain and yelling at him to 'heel' until he would come closer. He sensed something wasn't normal and stayed closer as I had him 'heel me' as my beacon of hope."

Bears and mountain lions are more active in this darkness, but Jake found comfort in Buddy's presence. The

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New Zealand Fly-fishing Adventure

by Chuck Horn

My infatuation with fly-fishing began in my youth reading classic outdoor sporting magazines such as Field and Stream, Outdoor Life and Sports Afield. Stories about Zane Grey, Queen Elizabeth, Jimmy Carter and other notables fly-fishing for trout in New Zealand were especially captivating but growing up a kid in the shadows of the Niagara Escarpment and close to the shores of Lake Winnebago, I didn't have a lot of trout fishing opportunities. My first fly rod was a garage sale special, a \$3.00

Heddon Presidente' bamboo fly rod (Oh, if I only knew then what I know now!), which I promptly broke off the tip on a small lake fishing for bluegills with a dime-store popper. Luckily, the rod came with a spare tip and after the first four-inch lunker sunfish, I was hooked!

Fast-forward to (more) current times. I was fortunate to spend most of my career as a Wisconsin Conservation Warden in the Driftless Area of Southwest Wisconsin where I met with and learned from many folks who had much more experience with fly-fishing than I and were happy to share with the ignorant "rabbit sheriff!" Fast-forward even further, after losing my first wife to brain cancer in 2016, I started fishing with a long-time friend, whose husband was a deputy in the county I worked and was tragically killed in the line of duty in 1990. Unbeknownst to me at the time, these fly-fishing excursions were really "dates" and eventually led to Diane Reuter and I getting married in 2018. Our fly-fishing escapades led us to current times, where the fleeting dreams about actually fishing in New Zealand became a reality!

We were discussing where to go on our next vacation and our travel agent daughter-in-law, Kari Reuter, (kari@kari-planstravel.com), suggested and set up an 18-day trip to New Zealand, touring both the North and South Islands as well as a fly-fishing excursion on each. Don and Michelle Gehrke, friends of ours from our little Country Church, accompanied us on a good portion of the Holiday. Our trip included touring the

scenic coastlines of the Pacific Ocean and Tasman Seas, the rainforests on both islands, the beautiful Southern Alps, geysers and hot-pots similar to those in Yellowstone National Park, and visiting the Maori Culture Center, where we feasted on traditional Maori dishes and saw the Haka and other ceremonial performances.

Our first fly-fishing adventure began at the Tongariro Lodge, located on the Tongariro River, a tributary to Lake Taupo which is a world renown trout and salmon fishery and the most popular trout stream in New Zealand. Mid-November in the Southern Hemisphere is the equivalent of mid-May in our neck of the woods, and the rainbow trout the stream is most noted for, had recently completed their spring spawning activities. Our guide for the day was Tim McCarthy, head guide for the Tongariro Lodge who has over 20 years' experience as a guide on these waters. As we did not bring our

caught regularly! The Tongariro is over 100 yards wide, much wider than most of our spring creeks and ultra-fast, super clear water. The preferred fly of the day was a trout/salmon egg pattern on a size 16 hook (think pea-sized) of Tim's own design and was the only pattern the



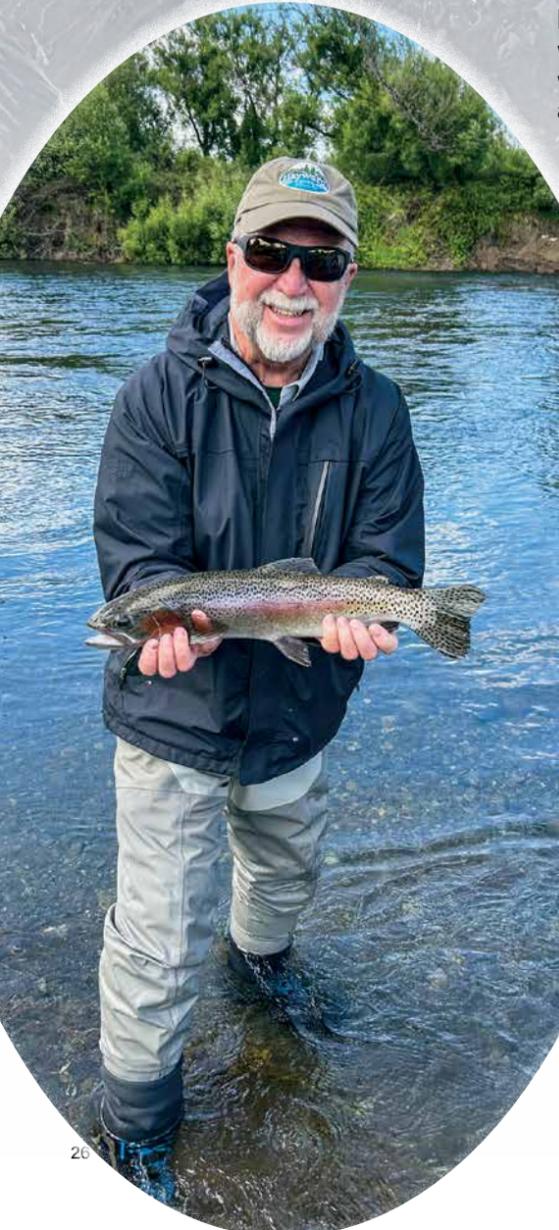
fish were interested in.

We quickly learned that we needed a lot more power and distance in our cast, to get the fly in the proper strike zone. The egg pattern was a dropper fly on a heavy beaded nymph, whose sole purpose was to get the egg deep in a hurry. This rig was topped off by a New Zealand Strike Indicator, a dyed wool and synthetic blend of fiber bound to the leader about 6-8 feet above the hook. I have tried these before on our local streams, but after seeing how effective they are when applied and fished "correctly," they will become my go-to strike indicator!

We worked likely pools, seams and riffles by casting upstream close to us and stripping the line back quickly as the fly rig drifted down with the current, if the buoyant strike indicator disappeared, you set the hook. We worked out a little further with each cast to cover as much water as possible before

own fly rods, Tim provided us with 9 ft. 6 in., 5 wt. fly rods, which were very similar to the rods we use in the driftless region. Both fisheries contain water and trout, and that's where a lot of the similarities end! Whereas some of our better Class 1 trout streams may have 2,000-5,000 fish per linear mile, the better streams in Kiwi country may have only 15-20, but they average about 4 pounds, with 10 pounders being

moving upstream. We had to be careful not to zip the line back off the water which would spook the fish and mend (pronounced "Meend" if you're in New Zealand!) the line right after each cast to get the proper drift without the current dragging the fly in an unnatural way. Sounds simple, right? We missed a few fish before we got the hang of it, as well as some false hook-ups in the rocks. Tim was very patient with us, giving excellent tips to improve our casting in the fast water. After about an hour of trying, Tim was giving the more difficult of the students (me!) extra help. He repeated instructions; I let the fly drift by me and "Wham!" about had the rod yanked out of my hands. I was able to both get a good hook set on the fish and get the stripped line





onto the reel while maintaining enough pressure on the fish to keep it from throwing the hook. The drag on the reels was set very light, so when the fish ran, you let it take as much line as it wanted while keeping a tight line, after what seemed like an hour, but actually only about five minutes, I was able to bring the first fish into the net, a nice rainbow about three pounds. Diane was quick to follow up with a fish of her own, expertly fighting the fish even after some spectacular leaps, and bringing it to net. Her fish was

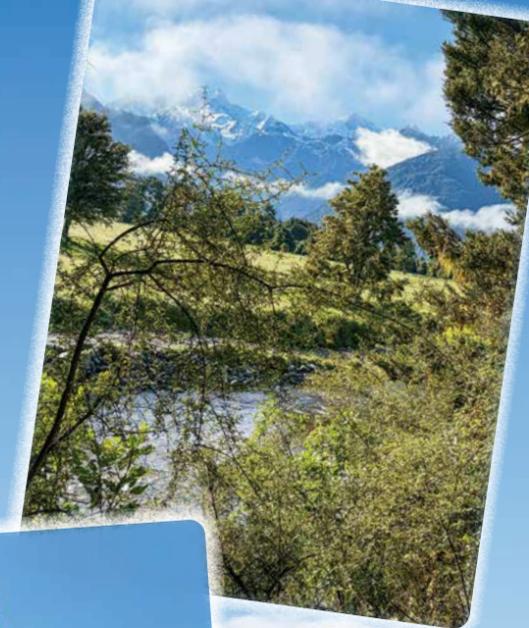
bigger by several inches and a pound or so in weight, which is the norm whenever we are fishing together, and after reviving the fish by holding them headfirst upstream, both fish were released successfully to fight another day.

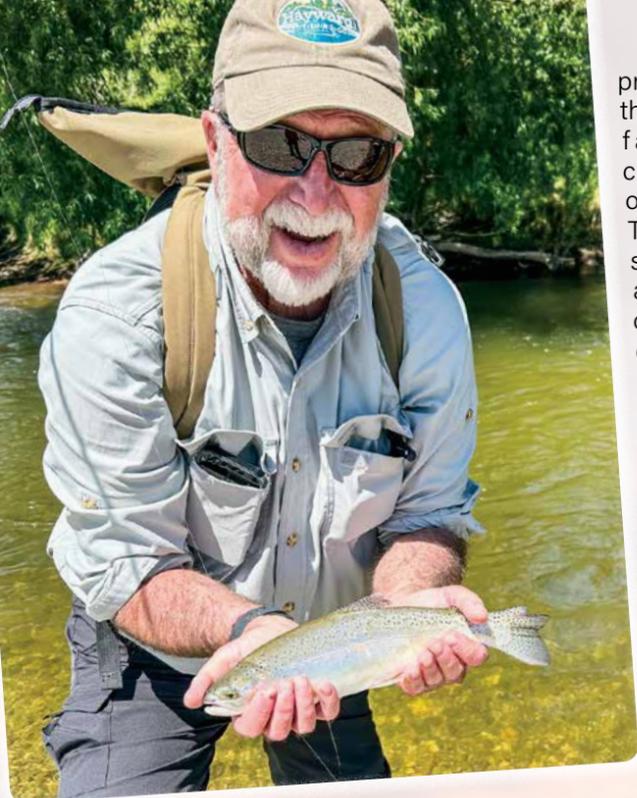
Standing all morning in waist-deep, 40-degree water can make a person really hungry so after a delicious shore lunch prepared by the Tongariro Lodge staff, we continued moving upstream. By this time, several other fishers had come down to fish, but we found a nice stretch of open water a quarter mile or so from where we first started fishing. This particular stretch was wide, deep and fast-moving over rocks ranging from a few inches across to rocks the size of basketballs, which made wading a little challenging. The water depth was about 6-8 feet at the deepest and

we again stood in waist-deep water casting in a similar manner as when we first started. We managed to pick up three more nice rainbows before calling it a day. All the fish we caught were beautifully colored and gave us a battle and all caught on the same egg pattern. Tim told us at the beginning of the day that a good day on the streams in this area was bringing five fish to net and we accomplished this goal. Our friends Don and Michelle had spent the day touring the area and met us for a delicious steak dinner and sharing our day's adventures at the Tongariro Lodge, followed by a great night's sleep dreaming of "meending" the line and solid hook sets.

The following day, we flew from Rotorua on the North Island to Christchurch on the South Island. To put things in perspective, New Zealand

is about 1000 miles southeast of Australia. The North Island is closer to the Equator, and the South Island is closer to Antarctica. Like many European countries, you drive on the left side of the road and the steering column for vehicles is on the right side. This really screws up one's internal compass, even left and right were confusing at times! We spent the next six days touring the South Island and the majestic Southern Alps including a helicopter ride where we landed on a glacier! Again, this is some of the most beautiful scenery in the world.





practice sight-fishing, that is spotting a fish facing into the current and feeding on bugs drifting by. The bed of the stream was generally a lighter strip of rock near the edge, followed by a darker strip about 3 feet wide and then a light sand bottom and the fish were lying in the darker strip making them very hard to see. When the fish moved into the

deeper water, they would stand out pretty well against the sand, even in six to eight feet of water!

We saw a few fish rising to feed on insects on the surface but couldn't fool them with the dry flies we offered. Nymph patterns became our go-to pattern again, this time without the egg dropper, after a good "Meend" of course.

After a short while, I had a solid strike and soon landed a chunky 16-inch rainbow on a dropper nymph trailing the heavier weighted one. A quick photo and the fish was gently released back into the stream. We

worked our way upstream, keeping an eye out for fish, but did spook several from the dark band of rock before we spotted a couple of larger fish in feeding in a pool about six feet deep and 30-40 feet below a riffle. Diane was up and had to power-cast



quite a distance upstream to allow the flies to drift down into the strike zone. Her persistence and Andrew's coaching paid off when about a half hour later, the larger of the two fish took the dropper and took off like a torpedo downstream. The rod/reel combos were also 9 ft, 6, in 5 weights; Andrew had the drags set tighter, so Diane had to hand-strip line off the reel when the fish ran, as well as run downstream to prevent the fish from snapping the leader. Several tense minutes later, Andrew was able to get a net under the fish and it turned out to be one of the largest fish of the trip, a beautifully colored rainbow about 24 inches in length.

We made a few more casts but felt that the commotion that Diane's big trout had caused might have spooked other trout nearby, so we headed upstream about another quarter mile or so before we came to a nice long stretch of moderately slow water. I had researched and tied up some classic New Zealand Fly patterns and wouldn't mind trying a few of them out if he thought they might work. Andrew

picked out a size 14 Pole Position nymph as the lead fly and a "modified" size 16 Hare & Copper nymph as the dropper! "Modified" in this case, means I forgot to tie the tail in first and left it off because I didn't want to have to start over! This turned out to be the hot fly of the day as the first two casts with it produced two nice, silvery brown trout, each about 15 inches long. We continued to work this stretch for a while but our day was coming to an end so we headed back downstream. Lo and behold, when we got to the spot where Diane had caught her big rainbow, the second fish was still there actively feeding! Diane started casting again, muscle memory took over and she was able to put the fly in front of the fish's nose. The trout bit and the fight was on, almost a repeat of her first catch, except this time it was a 24-inch Brown Trout! My motto in all types of fishing is "just one more cast!" and on this trip, it paid off. I was working my lucky little Hare & Copper a short distance downstream from where Diane hooked the big brown and got another hit from another rainbow, bringing it to net and a perfect way to end a perfect outing.

Our bucket list trip was truly memorable, we can't say enough about the fantastic scenery, the friendliness of the locals and their environmental concerns. You rarely see any litter anywhere on either island and they are doing their part to reduce microplastics. A lot of the fast-food type restaurants provide bamboo utensils instead of plastic and most restrooms have air dryers rather than paper towels. There are many active government and volunteer programs to control invasive species which pose a threat to the native Kiwis, and other flora and fauna. If you are looking for the adventure of a lifetime, give New Zealand a try. Again, our travel agent, Kari Reuter at kari@kariplanstravel.com, did a great job setting us up with an itinerary that met our desire to experience the natural wonders of the islands and both our fishing guides, Tim McCarthy with Tongariro Lodge (<https://www.tongarirolodge.co.nz/>) and Andrew Buckland at <https://www.cardronafishing.com/> provided us with unique and exciting fishing opportunities. The articles I remembered from my youth, they're all true!



A Hunt for Normalcy

by Michael Marchetti

How do you make two young brothers from Ohio that struggle to walk feel adventurous? When some of the simplest tasks are difficult to impossible, what can a parent do to bring some sense of a normal childhood to them? That is where the United Special Sportsmen Alliance (USSA), Link's Wild Safaris, and a dedicated group of Wisconsin bear hunters come to the rescue.

AJ (16) and Thomas (12) Marchetti were both born with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, a debilitating muscle wasting disease that currently

has no cure. Their parents Michael and Sarah Marchetti often struggle with finding opportunities for the brothers due to the nature of their illness. Last February, their father found the USSA website and submitted a hunt application for AJ. Within 24 hours Brigid O'Donohue, the CEO of USSA, called and said they would love to have AJ hunt a bear. When explaining that AJ had a younger brother with the same condition, Brigid didn't hesitate to offer both boys a hunt together and that the entire family was invited to join, including the youngest brother, John. When expressing concerns about

getting the boys into the field to hunt, Brigid said: "Those big strong Wisconsin hunters will carry them on their back if they have to, and USSA would handle getting the boys their Wisconsin hunting license and bear tags for the hunt, as well as coordinate lodging and meals for the trip." Thus, the die was cast for an adventure the boys and their family would never forget.

Fast forward six months, and the Marchetti brothers with their family made the 12-hour journey from Ohio to Minong, Wisconsin. Arriving at Pogo's Bar & Grill, the family was warmly

The Marchetti family celebrating Thomas's Bear (L-R: John, Thomas, Sarah, AJ, and Michael)



AJ, Ron, and Jay celebrate AJ's Black Bear harvest

greeted by Jay Link and the entire group of bear hunters that would help the boys harvest their bears. The boys met their hunting mentors Ron and Kevin, as well as Jay, to discuss the gameplan for the morning. After discussing the plan, Jay took the family to his Whitetail Safari Resort Lodge where he would host the family for the weekend. The family nestled into the lodge for a few hours of sleep before the morning excitement began.

The 4:30 a.m. alarm came early, but the boys were eager to get into the field



Jay Link carrying AJ on his back

and see what a bear hunt was like. AJ, his little brother John, and his father hopped into Jay's truck with his boys Jackson and Jaeger, while Thomas and his mother hopped in Ron's truck. The rest of the hunters loaded up into their trucks and the convoy departed for their positions around the property. The hunting team had a recent trail cam image of a bear in the area and released hounds to track and tree the bear. The boys watched eagerly as the GPS display showed the dogs moving through the forest. As the dogs closed in on the bear, their barking became louder and more vocal, until finally a cacophony of howling quickly followed by the GPS collars indicating the bear was in a tree. The truck convoy convened at the nearest access point from the road, and Kevin walked into the woods to assess the situation. After a few minutes his voice came over the radio saying the bear was treed about 150 yards into the woods, and to bring in the team and AJ. As his father was helping AJ out of the truck, Kevin's frantic, panting voice rang out over the radio "It's coming down! It's coming down!" Kevin sprinted back out of the



Jay coaching AJ on the aimpoint while his hunting mentor Ron watches the bear.

woods to the safety of the trucks as the bear began running again, and the chase reconvened in earnest.

Another 20 minutes elapsed as the hounds chased the bear through the forest and swamp until finally, they had it treed again. Kevin and the team went into the brush again to assess the situation, and this time all was well, and AJ and the team began the 200-yard hike to the bear. Due to his weakened legs, the walk through the brush was very

difficult and slow for AJ. Without hesitating, Jay hoisted all of AJ's 110 lb. frame onto his back and carried him (just like Brigid said those several months earlier).

Arriving to the bear exhausted, it took AJ several minutes to catch his breath and calm himself to make the shot. Using a modified, suppressed, .308 AR-10 on a tripod, AJ settled in, collected himself, and made a stellar shot, killing the 300+ pound bruin instantly...and with that pull of the trigger, AJ felt like a normal able-bodied man with great accomplishment – something that always felt out of touch for him. A quick field dress and the bear was off to a processor who graciously donated their services to the boys. The team remounted the trucks, AJ and Thomas switched positions, and the Thomas's chase began anew. However, after 30 minutes the group collectively decided to halt for the day due to high temperature and begin again the next morning.

An hour later, the entire team of hunters and their families met at the Sportsman's Headquarters in Minong for refreshments and food. Smiles,



Jay and Michael coach Thomas on shot placement

high-fives, hugs, and stories filled the gathering space. A celebration of life and achievement for not just one little boy from Ohio, but for his family and

the entire bear hunting group. The warmth and love that these families showed AJ, Thomas, and their family is something that will never be forgotten. AJ not only harvested a wonderful trophy, a lifetime memory, but also a sense of normalcy.

The next day, the scene repeated itself and Thomas harvested his 270 lb. bear. A shoulder shot from Thomas' .350 legend AR-15, followed by a quick back up shot from one of the guides and the bear was down. The team quickly strapped the bear to the back of the four-wheeler, and got it out of the field and headed to the processor before 7:00 a.m. The cheerful group of hunters had another morning of celebration at the Sportsman's Headquarters, followed by a wonderful dinner that evening hosted at Jay's home. As the father of these boys, I cannot express enough gratitude to the USSA, Brigid, Jay, Ron, Kevin, and the entire group of hunters and their families for the hospitality and kindness they showed us during the weekend. They truly made us feel like part of their families and gave the boys a gift of a lifetime and a true sense of normalcy.

The entire group of hunters and their families celebrating Thomas' black bear harvest



Buddy Knew (from pg. 25)

shorthair pointer was good for both heeling and healing.

"I tried crab-crawling on my hands and butt," Jake explained. "Buddy naturally stayed on the trail, lighting the way, then checked back with me, rinse and repeat. We kept going. My broken ankle and twisted foot are causing me to hook onto everything, slowing me down even worse, and adding to the time it will take to get back to my truck."

Jake heard the sound of metal on metal. He paused and listened intently, trying to figure out what it was.

"In the darkness I could hear this unnatural sound. It took a minute but then I figured out it was a Utah State weather meter that I have driven past a lot," he explained. "That was my clue to where we were. It was good to hear but at the same time I was, like, 'Oh, my God, it took me six hours to only get this far!' That's when I knew crab-walking was not the best way to get out alive. I'm not sure if I'd be here if I kept doing that. I figured, OK, I'm not going to get out of here at this pace."

Jake said, "I thought I was gonna lose my leg and I'm getting nowhere. I'm feeling that I don't care what kind of shock I'm in, so I flip over, decide to rebreak my ankle and snap it back so it wasn't dragging like this. I know that sounds disgusting but it would have kept getting hooked on everything that

I was trying to crawl past, so I broke it back. Not a decision I would ever think I'd have to make but this time I was, like, 'Well that sucks to hook everything but this will suck less. It's too bad.' That's pretty much it. I knew I had to be able to crawl on all fours—well, almost four."

He snapped his ankle and repositioned his body to be able to crawl, belly down. The pain was excruciating. Either way, the rocks were scraping and tearing Jake's hands. The bugs were terrible. Darkness, chilling temps, and lack of food added to the misery. His spirit and energy were down, no matter whether he was facing up or down. Each small stream was a physical and mental challenge.

"I can't get soaked," I told myself. "At two in the morning at 10,000 feet it's like 38; it's cold! Six creek crossings, I had to manage a way to not get wet. So, what would happen was I would throw rocks in them and crab walk on the rocks and kind of lay the broken part of my leg over them and keep moving as fast as possible. Sometimes I would have Buddy stand right next to me and tell him to 'Stay' while I put my arm and some weight on him to help me over part of the creek. I know that sounds messed up but you try anything to not be wet. If you're wet, you're dead!"

Buddy must have sensed Jake's worsening condition.

"I know he could smell the blood and my tears. He realized I was in rough shape, real rough shape," Jake said. "And he started to pause more for me. At one point, I won't lie, I gave up. I laid down next to a tree and I was, like, that was it, dude."

Buddy helped keep him warm in the cold, damp mountain air. There was no relief from the pain. There was no inner peace or warm light. He and his dog were both cold, tired, and hungry. However, there was something in Buddy's eyes. There was strength and energy.

"Honestly," he said, "every inch of me wanted to lay down at first but when I did it was like the feeling of dying like is that you don't get relief, if that makes any sense. It was like being the most tired person on the planet, and you lay in your bed, but you still feel like shit. If that's dying, and you don't get relief; it sends you into this panic. It was, like, well I'm not gonna stop; if I stop, I die!"

Jake said, "So, I got back at it, with Buddy leading the way. Buddy was tired, yes, but not completely exhausted. He kept nudging me to keep going. I couldn't have done it without him. The reality was that I got so cold and scared that I would die that I found enough energy and willpower to keep going," Jake said. "I told myself, 'You gotta get out of here or you're gonna die.' Out of nowhere, I started thinking about

Jake shared his survival story with SCI Badgerland Chapter members.



Disney's 'Finding Nemo' and the song 'Keep Swimming' that I used to hear over and over again when I was babysitting my niece and nephew. Keep swimming. That was a decade ago. I have no idea why that happened, but it got me out of there. Thank you, Dory! As weird as that sounds, it worked. Keep swimming. Keep crawling! It kept repeating in my brain."

With Nemo in his head and Buddy at his side, Jake dragged on, slow but making progress.

"I had full-body shivers at times, and I hadn't peed in eight hours," he said, adding, "I think once Buddy realized that I was so messed up physically and he could smell the blood and tears, he knew I was in dire straits, and he didn't act normal until we got to the field about 7:30 the next day. He found a grouse. He flushed the grouse, and I was in tears crawling because I saw the truck a half mile away. Nothing you could do to stop me at that point."

Jake said, "Long story short, it took us almost 12 hours to crawl to my truck, which I forgot I had a big trailer on, so on one elbow and one knee I lifted the trailer tongue off my truck, monkey crawled on my pickup rack to the side door, whipped it open, and somehow got inside."

With the left leg hanging, he relied on his right leg that was actually stiffened and supported enough by the swelling to help him drive.

"I drove like 30 minutes into Oakley the nearest town and scared the hell out of the girl working at the Oakley diner," Jake said. "Oh, my God, I screeched into this place, and I was, like, 'Man you gotta call 911. I'm real messed up. Is it closer for me to drive there now or can they come get me?' And she just goes, 'What? Slow down and say that again.' And I was, like, 'Man, I'm all kinds of fucked up and I need an ambulance like, but is it faster for me to drive there?'"

She looked at Jake and into Buddy's eyes and called the paramedics from that diner in the mountains.

Jake explained, "We're in the middle of nowhere. That dude was only three minutes around the corner coming back from a call! He shows up in a mountain rig, which is like a Suburban that can get to more places in the backcountry. He comes to the truck, and asks, 'What's wrong with you? You think your leg is broken?' I told him to look and see

for himself but as he peaks into the window and starts to look down, he snaps back, averts his eyes and moans, 'Oh, oh, oh, oh!' like he didn't even want to look at it."

The paramedic got on his radio and called for his co-workers to bring the ambulance rig from the South Summit Fire Protection Service's Station 42 right there in Oakley. They were there in 10-15 minutes. They got Jake on the gurney and into the ambulance.

"Before they knocked me out with drugs," Jake said, "I asked them if Buddy could come to the hospital with us. I was, like, 'Hey man, I got a dog there.' And he's, like, 'Well, you have to go in the ambulance.' That's why I was asking what to do."

He later found out that the crew at Station 42 took care of Buddy.

"They let Buddy hang out with them for four days. It was incredible," Jake said.

Jake found out later that the ambulance driver had called Jake's mom, and her first reaction was, "I knew it; he got eaten by a bear!" She said she had a premonition around midnight that something had happened to her son.

"All my mother heard in New York was me screaming in the background saying to the paramedic, 'Are you gonna cut my leg off?' and then I was out," he said. "I knew 25 more minutes on the pot-holed Utah roads, after I had

crushed, broken, dragged, and dangled the one leg, that it was not going to survive. That's why I was just so convinced that I was, like, 'Alright, I don't have a leg. That's fine. There's no chance.'"

At the Park City hospital, 20 minutes away, the medical teams treated Jake's injuries, big and small, saved Jake's legs, reset his ankles, and marveled at his will to survive.

Jake was surprised and relieved, saying, "I was wrong, they saved it! I thanked the doctors and nurses, and still wish I could do more"

Being in top physical condition made a difference, but Jake felt that it was more than strength and conditioning that kept him alive.

"I woke up the next day with everything repaired," Jake said nonchalantly. "I have six bolts, a hundred staples, and a giant rod in my leg. In the x-rays, you can see about four pieces of bone that shattered off and kept breaking. Essentially, they were all floating around in there. So, when I taped it together I kind of got lucky and I got two out of the four bones close but the other two are just stuck in my muscle now."

Seven months later, January 21, 2026, Jake spoke gratefully and emotionally (especially every time he mentioned Buddy's role in this tale of survival) to members of the SCI Badgerland Chapter at Rex's Innkeeper in

Waunakee, Wisconsin. They asked him about his recovery as well as any advice he would now share with fellow hunters.

"I'll get a checkup again before I know for sure," he said, pointing to various body parts as he continued, "but I'll probably have to have this knee replaced, that ankle replaced, just a slight tear here which seems to be fine, but other than that, you know, my teeth were already fake from other accidents anyways, and my nose is fine. The shoulder will be ok. Scars from burst skin where I wrapped duct tape are taking longer to heal. The hip is not great but it's back in, and I'm walking with a cane."

He admitted that a month after surgery was getting bored and depressed hobbling around the house: "I managed hunting this season. I got so depressed, clinically depressed, just sitting on the couch thinking bad for yourself. I couldn't stand it, so I went to archery camp. I guess I may as well be depressed while missing elk. Why not? August 16, with my bow and cane, I was working a bull but didn't get it."

Still, it was better than laying in a hospital, or on the mountain road, or worse, the cemetery.

Schmitt joined SCI member Dale Hudack bowhunting for elk last fall. Hudack said, "Jake was a little hobbled. He was finally going my normal speed. We were slowly working in on a bull bugling nearby. All of a sudden, the bull took off and Jake started going full bore, and I had to grab him and hold him back. He could have re-injured himself. A bull isn't worth it."

Jake admitted, "I get really into it. It's pretty much my addiction. I had a decent season actually. I already guided at that same spot of the accident. Even with a broken leg, it was decent. I usually have 13 clients each year, I did six this year. Unfortunately, that left me just below 1,100 professional days as a guide, which has been a long-term goal of mine. I want to get that total over the years to be 1,100 days of guiding.

Next year I'll get to that goal in four months."

In January, Jake said, "I expect to jog by February."

As for advice, he said, "You never realize that in the flick of the switch you can be done. Your safety is always on thin ice when you're hunting the backcountry. Make sure that you tell people

where you're going and when you expect to return. I'm a super independent man. I've worked alone. I own my own Master Welding and Panga Expeditions businesses. Now I tell everybody where I'm going. My advice is to share your location with every person you know. Keep your phone and emergency gear on your body. Leave your keys at the vehicle. Even if you're going on a guided trip, pack your own survival gear because you don't know what might happen to the guy you're relying on to get you back safely."

Jake said he hadn't known that friends were camping only 2-3 miles from his truck and didn't remember that the Yellowstone TV show crew was filming about six miles away.

He also said, "My mom is forcing me to write a book at this point about all my life threatening adventures. She essentially became my PR agent. You know, I woke up in the hospital and the media was there. Literally, People magazine and all. Interviewers showed up at the house. And I still don't know how to handle PETA and other animal rights people attacking me in a lot of ways. They said things like I wish you had died. They figured more animals would live if I wasn't out there guiding and hunting."

After surgery, he also received a call from the local sheriff.

"I got this call and the guy asks, 'Is there something you want to tell me?' I said, 'No. Who is this?' He says, 'This is the Summit County Sheriff. Were you in an accident?' and I was, like, 'Yeah, but it wasn't an accident. It was me. Noone else was involved. I don't think I should report it to the sheriff.' And he goes, 'No you don't have to, but what am I supposed to tell all these interviewers calling me?' And I was, like, 'Oh man, nothing. Tell 'em nothing. OK?' And the next day my one worker at my welding business had media show up and an interviewer came to the hospital."

When some people said he was "hunting" instead of making the



Jake fractured both ankles.

distinction that he was "scouting" did not help the situation. It would not have made a difference for the anti-hunters.

"Online they were just attacking me for all the weird reasons," said Jake. "And then everybody in the news that doesn't understand what they just said, like I was hunting in July, added to the nightmare. Other people accused me of poaching. I went on a couple podcasts to clear the air, but still, I have no idea why people hate. Don't wanna deal with cyber bullies. I deleted everything from social media."

Jake has a Go Fund Me page now. "There's a million dollars in bills that keep piling up," he said.

Besides the happy ending of being alive and having his faithful companion Buddy by his side, there was one other pleasant surprise. Remember when he was in a hurry but stopped to free the elk in his way? He thought he had turned off his phone camera after recording the calf in the bear trap. A friend found Jake's damaged phone in the days after the crash.

"It was all smashed up," Jake said, "but I got Verizon to get the videos out." He thanked the phone company for retrieving the files and was surprised at what he saw.

"I didn't even think about when I tossed my phone down on the Ranger after I took the video of the elk in the bear trap, but it was still recording," he said. "I didn't realize I forgot to stop recording. I never knew I got the video until I was out of the hospital three weeks later. I didn't even know I got it. The whole elk thing was captured on video. Good thing. Who would have believed it?"

The accident was not recorded but it will live forever in the memories of Jake and Buddy.

Jake at Park City Hospital.





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Includes: Accommodations, Guide, Boat, Motors, Gas, Meals, Baits, Round Trip Float Plane from Missinipe, Saskatchewan

SUMMER SPECIAL PRICE



Canadian Fly-In Fishing

American Plan or Housekeeping packages available  Guided or Unguided
Dates available May - Sept  Prices range from \$795-\$2395 pp

SUMMER SPECIAL - JULY & AUG openings - CALL FOR DETAILS

TROPHY
WALLEYE
*NORTHERN PIKE



FISHING
LAKE TROUT
*SMALLMOUTH BASS



MONTANA Cow Elk Hunt

Specials

Dec - Jan
3 day hunts
Limited availability



CALL FOR PRICING

These are just a few of the trips we offer. Give us a call today to customize a package for you.

