

# WYOGA HUNTING STORY CONTEST WINNER #3

# Hang On For The Ride

by Nick Renemans

*I have been looking forward to shooting a moose my entire life.* By far, my favorite of all the antlered game. After discovering that I drew a WY moose tag for 2011, I lined up my hunt through Elk Mountain Outfitters. The anticipation throughout the summer was enough to drive my wife crazy! Working, shooting, conditioning and talking about the hunt was all I did for a solid 2 months.

After reporting to camp I met my guides Randy and Steve. They had really done their homework. The day before the archery open found us sitting in a drainage watching moose. They scouted a big bull in the area for a few weeks. Only draw back was that it was in a very busy area. We spotted the bull about an hour before dark. He had good paddles, decent spread, and a great set of 4x5 brows. We put the bull to bed that night as darkness set and snuck out to camp. I didn't sleep much that night. Who would? Opening morning included getting up shortly after 3am, taking the ATV's in a ways and then walking the last 1-2 miles as to not disturb the big bull. We got set before you could even make any shapes out of the dark. As dawn was approaching the bull was exactly where we left him the night before. Only he had picked up two other small bulls and a cow. We immediately began putting the moves on him. We had closed the distance to 90 yards. The sun was just coming up over the horizon when I heard it. The sounds of ATV's coming our direction. Knowing where the ATV trail was in relation to the moose, my first instinct was the ATV's will push the moose my way and I will get a close shot. I began to get ready. Well, here came the ATV's, and one of those little bulls reacted by running towards the ATV's and out in front of their path. The big bull stayed with the cow, but the jig was up.



The hunters saw the little bull, stopped, looked around and saw the big bull standing 40-50 yards off the trail. Thinking they were sneaky (as if the moose didn't see and hear the ATV's) one hunter quickly got out his bow and knocked an arrow. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. The hunters were directly on the other side of the moose from us. At this point Randy and I came out into the open and started waving our hands to give away our position. We were there first, this was supposed to be our opportunity. I know they saw us. It didn't seem to stop the "early risers". We saw the hunter shoot the moose right out from under us. It was heartbreaking watching that bull die right in front of us. We headed back towards camp to regroup. I was speechless. To make matters worse, Randy discovered he had lost his Swarovski spotting scope sometime during the morning. That afternoon and the next day found us putting a few stalks on some smaller bulls but no big bulls. It was all I could do to keep a positive outlook. I kept reinforcing to my accompanying father that we were going to get a big one. It was tough not to think about it though. I can't imagine how Randy felt. We had been hit hard, but when

hunting nothing good comes out of being negative.

On the third day my dreams came true. We decided to change drainages. We had spotted the bull before the sun came up. He was about 250 yards away feeding in a bottom with another bull. One look at that big rack and I decided I wanted to pursue him. Randy, Steve and my father left me with the final 200 yards to go. We came up with a gameplan and I kept on. I snuck through the tall willows and came upon a creek. I had to cross it. The remaining 90 yards were on the other side. No time to remove boots. First step was over the top of the boot. Second step was knee deep, Third and remaining steps were almost waist deep! I got to the other side, belly crawled through the grass up to a pine tree. Quickly, knocked an arrow and grabbed my range finder. The bulls hadn't seem to notice me. I peeked out from the tree and ranged him, 56 yards. No time to think. I slowly stepped out and drew. The giant bull was standing broadside and turned to look at me. I settled the 60 yard pin and released. I remember seeing the arrow in flight, and then suddenly the bull turned to run with my fletching sticking out his side. He ran 30-40 yards and stopped. He stood for a minute or so and then started to expire quickly. I heard my father yell "WOOHOOO!" from a ways behind me. Words could not express the feeling that I experienced that day and then next few months. I had done it. I had stayed positive the entire time and it had paid off. That night we all enjoyed grilled Moose tenderloins. The bull was a giant and even bigger than the bull stolen the first morning. He measured 352 3/8" SCI. His spread with 53 2/8". He scored #12 SCI Archery Shiras Moose all time. After sending in the teeth, Game and Fish reported that he was 11 years old. He is truly a giant and now lives forever at my house. A very special thanks to Elk Mountain Outfitters, Randy Jones, Steve Wine, Mike Wakkuri, Myron and Karma Wakkuri. 🍷