

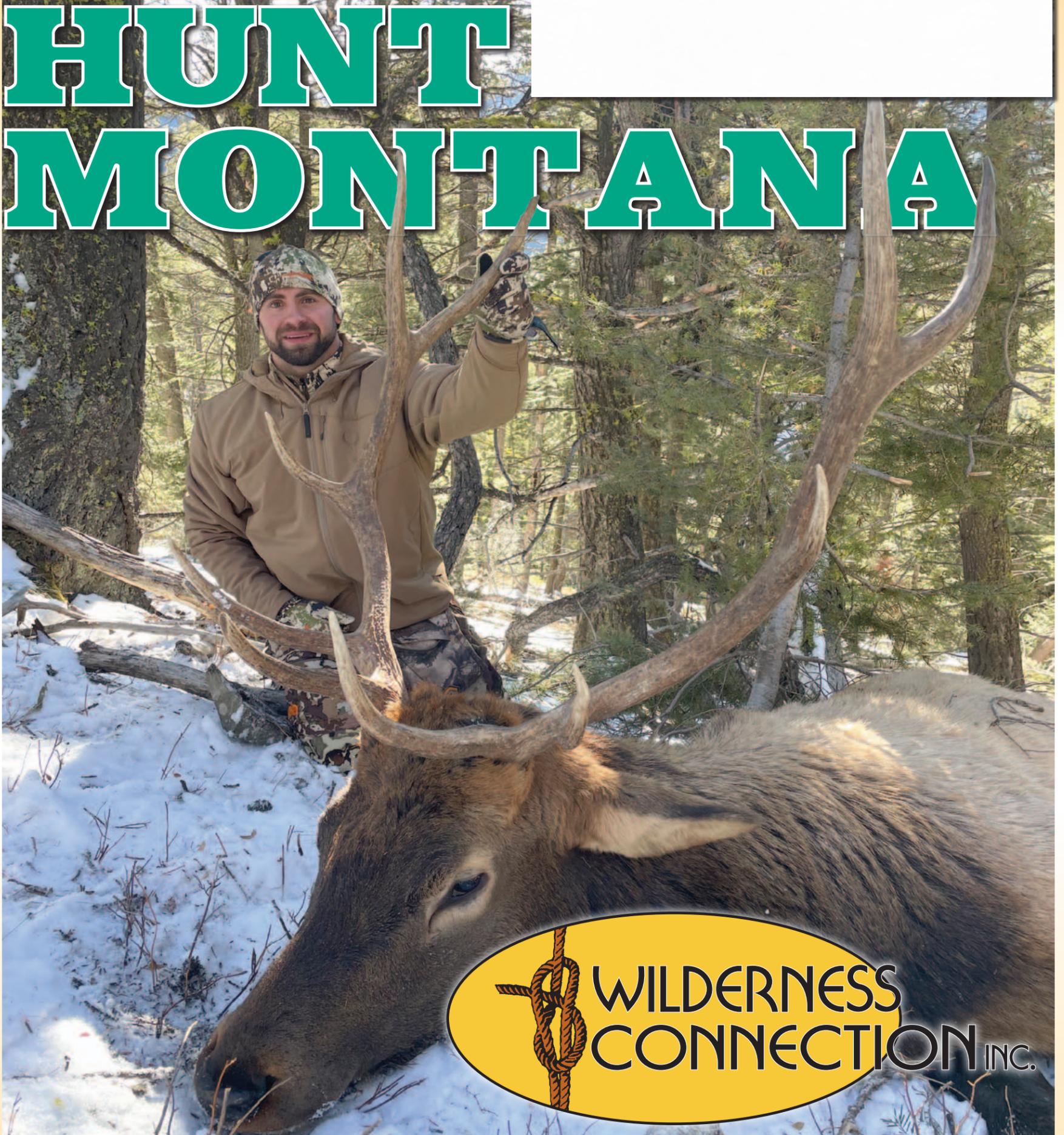
Bryson: (406) 223-0888

Mike: (218) 391-4003

e-mail: hunt@wilderness-connection.org

web site: www.wilderness-connection.org

HUNT MONTANA



New For 2026...
**Licenses Available for
Drawing until April 1st**

Visit Montana...
**Yellowstone
Vacation Rentals**
See pgs. 8 & 9

We Offer:

- Yellowstone Area
Elk & Mule Deer
Combination Hunts
- Guest Ranch Services

Inside:

- Pg. 2** Combo Elk & Deer Hunts
- Pg. 4** Where to see us this Winter
- Pgs. 7-10** See **Yellowstone Special Pull-out Section**
- Pg. 16** Montana Licensing Information

WILDERNESS CONNECTION



WELCOMES YOU TO MONTANA

Your Hosts:
The Stermitz Family



Bryson and Chloe, Tyler, Stacy, Joel, and Luke.

Wilderness Connection started leasing the historic Stermitz Ranch nearly 38 years ago. Hundreds of hunters have fulfilled their hunting dreams here since that time. Rob and Stacy Stermitz acquired the hunting business from the previous owners, joining the hunting business to the ranch that helped make the business so successful. Rob passed away in December 2023, following a 12 year struggle with brain cancer. We miss him dearly. Wilderness Connection is in good hands with outfitter Bryson Stermitz and hunt manger Mike Hoops running operations, while Stacy continues to run the business. Bryson and his brothers are the fifth generation to call the ranch in Cinnabar Basin home.

The owner of the Stermitz Ranch, Lorayne Stermitz would also like to welcome you and

hope your stay is a pleasant experience. The ranch was started in 1883, and is one of the oldest ranches in the Yellowstone area. Joseph Stermitz, a coal miner from Slovenia immigrated to the area in 1892, and purchased the ranch in 1900. Over the years he expanded the ranch into a viable cattle operation. In the 1970's elk began to be competitive with cattle on the ranch. Cognizant of the detrimental effects on the natural resources, the ranch cut back on cattle numbers. Working together with Wilderness Connection, Jim and Lorayne implemented a habitat program that would maximize hunter opportunity for game while at the same time maintaining the lowest possible environmental impact. We are proud of the fact that the landscape looks much like it did over 100 years ago.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
WILDERNESS-CONNECTION.ORG

YELLOWSTONE AREA (GARDINER) HUNTS



■ HUNT 1
 ■ HUNT 2
 ■ HUNT 3
 ■ HUNT 4
 ■ HUNT 5
 ■ HUNT 6

2026 hunt price is \$5600. 2027 hunt price is \$5700. Good hunting is weather dependent.

SEE BOOKING INSTRUCTIONS – PG. 16

How Physical Are The Hunts?

Some of the more frequently asked questions at sports shows are about the physical aspect of our hunts? My response is “this is your hunt, we can make this very easy to difficult”. Let us know what you can do.

Elevation is the hardest thing to prepare for, especially if you live anywhere but in the Rocky Mountains. But this is not extreme, we sleep at about 6,200 feet and hunt up to about 8,800 feet. Many people come out a day or two early to stay and do some hiking in the Livingston or Bozeman area, adjusting to elevation. Number one is forcing yourself to drink more water to prevent altitude sickness. We have had hunters bring along the small oxygen canisters if they are prone to shortness of breath. And quit smoking!



Outfitter Bryson with his 2025 Eastern MT pronghorn.

We have spots where we harvest animals that are a short walk from the vehicle, but is this the experience you want? If not, prepare for the hunt. Walking and working out in a gym are the best ways to prepare. Load up a backpack and carry it on your walks. Drop those extra pounds that you’ve wanted to get rid of for the past 10 years. It makes all the difference. As a 77 year old man who has to work to keep his weight down, this is tough but well worth it when on a hunt. 30 years ago, I was working a fairly physical job and thought I was in good shape. I’d arrive in Montana to hunt and wish I was better prepared.

Do we use horses? We do, and really enjoy being able to get hunters out on horses. We believe you shouldn’t walk when you can ride a horse. If you’ve never ridden and are anxious about it, look for someone in your area that has horses that will let you ride and overcome the apprehension. But, don’t assume that if you ride a horse, you don’t have to get in shape, there is a point you must get off and walk. And, if you wound an animal and have to follow, this can become a marathon. And, lastly, weather conditions can prevent us from using horses, i.e. icy trail conditions.

We do have a 250 pound weight limit for riders. Adding the saddle, your gear, clothing and rifle can push the load to 325 plus pounds. For the safety of the horse and the hunter we have to enforce this limit.



Bryson with two big 2025 Mule Deer bucks.

A Note on Shooting

One thing we happened to deal with more than usual this year was missed shots and wounded animals. As a hunter, there are a lot of things that you cannot control. The weather patterns and animal movements are not controllable. One thing you can control though, is your shooting skill and confidence.

Our average shot attempt is typically between 250-350 yards. This means that when you come

hunt, you should be prepared and have practiced out to at least 300 yards. Sometimes this is a tall order, as many ranges in the midwest and the east don’t reach out past 200 yards. However, oftentimes just knowing how far your bullet is going to drop is not enough to make a confident shot at 300 and above.

In addition, when you are shooting, practice taking shots that you may encounter on your hunt.

This includes standing shots, elbows on knees, prone shots, and shooting off bipods and shooting sticks if you have them.

While your guide will get you into a position that he thinks is a good shot, it is the hunter’s responsibility to adjust as needed to ensure that the shot will be a confident one. Practicing a variety of scenarios will help ensure that when the opportunity arises, you can make the most of it.



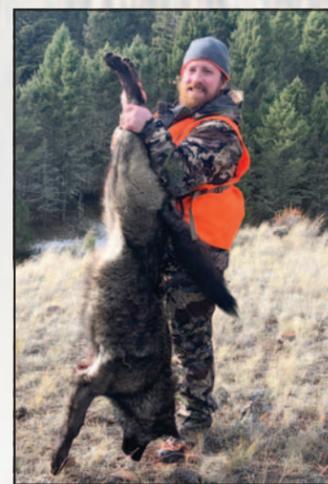
Eric’s 2024 broken 6x6 bull.



Ryan’s 2025 Bull.



Guide Ladan packing out a nice bull.



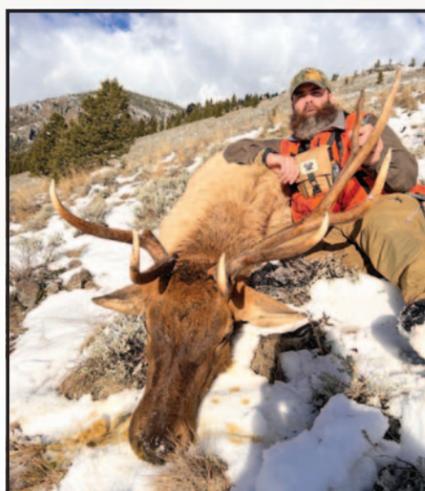
Brandon’s 2025 Wolf.



Dennis Armbruster had a great year in 2022.



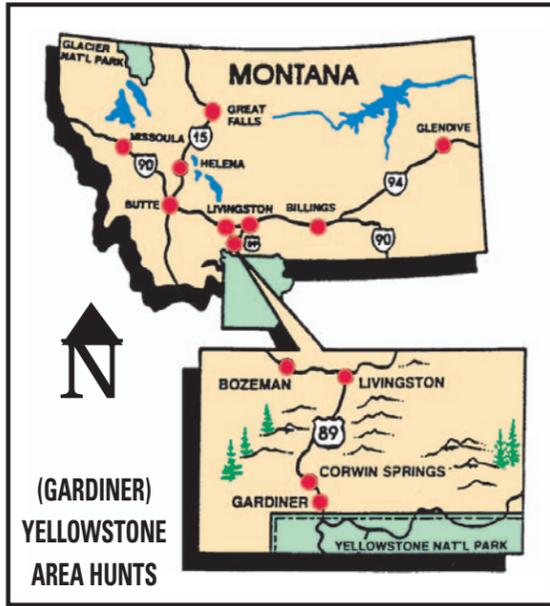
Ryan’s 2023 Bull



Dennis’ 2025 Mule Deer buck.

Call 406-223-0888 or e-mail: hunt@wilderness-connection.org

Fully Guided Hunts in the Yellowstone Area



USUALLY THE LAST WEEK OF OCTOBER THROUGH THANKSGIVING WEEKEND

a sandwich (and a nap) at mid-day, and continue the hunt in the afternoon. We typically spend some time and attention in the afternoon with a spotting scope locating game for the next morning.

Even though the Yellowstone area has been hammered in the hunting press for its wolf population, we still have one of the best elk populations in the state due to the fact that private ranches provide year-round food and secure habitat. Look at our pictures in this brochure. If the Yellowstone herd were decimated, would we still be shooting bulls? Not only that, but I would argue that this may be the golden age of shooting large bulls in the Yellowstone region. I personally have seen pictures of ten 380-410 B&C class bulls taken in the last two years! To get that big bulls have to get old, and Yellowstone National Park provides the thick timber that allows an animal to mature. Our average mature mule-deer bucks are 20-24 inches wide, although we have taken several in the 30" class.

The accommodations are comfortable, but not plush; this is a lodge-type ranch hunt. The food is outstanding. You can get a shower or borrow a phone if you wish. And, you can sleep in a warm bed every night.

You can drive to our location, or arrive by air.

The price of your hunt includes pick up and delivery back to the airport in Bozeman, Montana. Please schedule your flight to arrive no later than 2:00 PM the day before your hunt begins. We will mail you directions if you wish to drive.

THE HUNTING is done in a variety of manners, on both private and public land. We provide one guide for each 2 hunters. If you don't have a partner, we can provide one for you. Generally, we try to be where we think the elk will be at daylight, and we get there by horse, 4-wheel drive, on foot, or a combination of the above. We often go on a stand for the first couple hours before continuing the day's hunt. We often come in for a bowl of hot soup and



Where is Wilderness Connection this winter?

Put these dates on your calendar, and come see us. I'll personally be at the Harrisburg show, and you can call me at 406-223-0888.

Mike Hoops from Two Harbors, MN will represent Wilderness Connection at the Minnesota and Wisconsin shows.

You can reach Mike at (218) 391-4003.



Guide Cayden packing out a monster buck.



Guide Cayden breaks down a Bull.

DECEMBER 12-14, 2025
Arrowhead Icefishing and Winter Show
 DECC - Duluth, MN

FEBRUARY 12-15, 2026
Lacrosse Sport Show
 Lacrosse Center Booth #4

FEBRUARY 7-15, 2026
Great American Outdoor Show
 PA Farm Show Complex
 Harrisburg, PA Booth #5115

FEBRUARY 19-22, 2026
Northland Outdoors
Duluth Deer Classic - DECC
 Duluth, MN Booth #845

JANUARY 17-19, 2026
Minnesota Sportsmen's Show
 Canterbury Park
 Shakopee, MN Booth #111

Have a good winter,
 Bryson and Wilderness Connection

IS WILDERNESS CONNECTION THE RIGHT OUTFITTER FOR YOU?

This is the time of year when outfitters put the finishing touches on their fall bookings. It is also the time of year when it really pays for clients to do their homework on the outfitter they're either booking with or researching. Wilderness Connection Outfitters takes pride in our honesty, service, and the family nature of our business. To us, a client isn't just another hunter through the door, he (or she) is a potential returning client as well, so we make every effort to treat them as such.

It seems that every year we hear nightmare stories from clients who have hunted with So-and-So outfitter in Pickatown, Montana. Unfortunately they were promised more than the outfitter could deliver, or they were told one thing and showed up in camp and were delivered another. This is difficult for us, because sometimes these outfitters ruin a good client by leaving them with the sour impression that every outfitter is the same. I've come up with a few pointers for prospective clients to either ask their potential outfitter, or observe while they talk with an outfitter.

1. Beware the outfitter that spends a lot of money on flashy booths or personnel manning their booth. These outfitters have a lot of overhead, and they have to run a lot of hunters through camp to pay for it.
2. What percentage of returning clientele does the outfitter have? An outfitter who treats their clients right will often get a client returning in subsequent years, even if they don't harvest an animal. At Wilderness Connection we believe we can guarantee service, and we can guarantee that we won't lie to you or overstate the facts. Our brochure is also extensive so you can get a more thorough insight into what type of business we run. An outfitter who runs last minute deals might not have very many returning hunters.
3. How much time will the client spend in a vehicle getting to their hunting area? If you have to travel more than an hour in a vehicle to get to your hunting area, you've spent an hour not hunting.
4. How old are the outfitter's guides? At Wilderness Connection we have a mix of ages. Some are retired from their career, others are young and hike a lot, but the important thing is that this is your hunt, and being able to share it with a guide with similar life experiences is important.
5. How decent are the accommodations? Wilderness Connection has a bed for every hunter with sheets and blankets. And the food?.....Outstanding!

YELLOWSTONE AREA HUNT REFERENCES

Clint Lorenz 608-780-9963	Troy Eliason 218-348-8637	Mark Hadacek 414-349-6572	Ernie Swartz 218-341-5421
Ricky Johnson 715-556-4554	Dan Anderson 715-7980-4500	Gene Pelletier 218-391-7429	Joel Dietrick 717-697-0773

Yellowstone bulls have great genetics

Occasionally a bull comes along that just takes your breath away.

I first saw this bull Thanksgiving week 2010 on a piece of property owned by a non-resident landowner – a piece of property that we don't have hunting rights on. I next saw him in February 2011, and he wasn't looking very good. I took some pictures of him, and you can see his hips and ribs showing. I kept hoping for our vicious winter to break, but unfortunately it didn't. Stacy and I saw him almost every day from that point on. I last saw him on a Sunday late-March morning while I was feeding horses. Stacy didn't see him that week. My oldest son, Bryson, and I went hiking the next weekend and found him dead. The 12 year old bull just didn't have enough fat reserves to make it through the winter. In Montana it is legal to pick up winter-killed bulls.

The bull isn't very heavy horned. We occasionally shoot a heavy-horned old bull

that has circumference measurements over 10". This one only has two measurements over 7". This bull put all his energy into growing length, and he put it on everywhere. This bull is the 20th highest scoring typical bull in Montana, and the 3rd highest scoring typical bull in Park County, Montana. And, it isn't from the turn of the 20th century. The bull has 12-3/8" of deductions, but if you add up the right antler and compare it to the left antler, it only differs by 1/8"!

I've hunted our ranch for many years, and I've seen a couple other bulls that would compare to this one, but they were both non-typical bulls. Their genetics are still here, as are the genetics from this bull. They're rarely seen, but this bull proves that they are here.



I took pictures of this bull while he was still alive. Notice how little fat he had left in early March, 2011.



This bull unfortunately isn't alive anymore, but his genetics are. We know of a couple bulls that were harvested in the Yellowstone area recently that rival him in inches, but not in his typical frame and beauty.

TALE OF THE TAPE

No. points on right antler: 6
Length of right antler: 58-3/8
No. points on left antler: 6
Length of left antler: 54-7/8
Inside spread: 49-1/8
Length of first point: 15-3/8 (Right), 15-3/8 (Left)
Length of second point: 16-4/8 (R), 20-1/8 (L)
Length of third point: 17-4/8 (R), 19-6/8 (L)
Length of fourth point: 24-6/8 (R), 24-0/8 (L)
Length of fifth point: 17-4/8 (R), 16-2/8 (L)
Circumference #1: 6-7/8 (R), 7-2/8 (L)
Circumference #2: 6-2/8 (R), 6-2/8 (L)
Circumference #3: 7-0/8 (R), 6-6/8 (L)
Circumference #4: 6-6/8 (R), 6-3/8 (L)

Total Right Antler: 176-7/8

Total Left Antler: 177-0/8

Total Deductions: 12-3/8

Total Net Score: 390-5/8

Total Gross Score: 403-0/8"



Wilderness Connection has partnered with **Antlers by Klaus** of Wisconsin to make reproductions of this 403" bull. We searched the nation to find the best company for the job, and Klaus and his outfit have done an amazing job! When we put the original beside a reproduction Klaus made, we couldn't tell the difference between the two. There are many people out there that can copy antlers, but no one can paint the intricacies, the wrinkles, the divets, or the character of antlers like Klaus! The reproductions are priced at \$2500 each. Give me a call and I can put you in touch with them.



David's 2025 big Mule Deer buck.



Drew's 2024 Mule Deer buck.



Harry Williams' 2018 buck.



Kurt's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Dick's big 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Gary's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Clarks 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Gene's 2024 Mule Deer buck.



Doc's buck.



Clint's 2024 Mule Deer buck.



Eric's 2024 Mule Deer buck.



Dan's 2024 Mule Deer buck.

Mule Deer hunting with



As you can see in this brochure, our hunting area produces some decent mule deer. We shoot nice bucks for a couple reasons. Firstly, we've had a "reverse trophy fee" management program here since 1997 that strongly discourages harvest of small bucks. We don't think a forked horn buck should ever be harvested just because someone has an empty tag in their pocket. Secondly, our hunting season ends just as the mule deer rut kicks in, so a lot of our mature bucks live to breed.

I've done some looking around, and you can go on a deer only hunt in Montana for \$3000-\$8000. You'd probably see more deer on those hunts, than you see here, but you'd probably still shoot the same class of bucks we shoot here. I still don't consider our mule deer "trophy-class", but for the same price of those deer only hunts, you can hunt with us and harvest both elk and deer.



Boy #3 (Tyler) on Hawken surveying his domain.

SEE YELLOWSTONE

While staying on the historic Stermitz Ranch

Yellowstone National Park is rapidly becoming one of the premier family destinations in the United States. Our three vacation rentals provide guests with an opportunity to lodge in a quiet location and visit Yellowstone National Park on day trips. Two cabins are historic, our Creekside Cabin was built in the 1930s, and the 1916 Schoolhouse was built in 1916. Both are perfect for honeymooners, couples, or those with a couple small children. They have been beautifully and painstakingly remodeled for modern use.

For those with larger parties, the Aspen Cabin accommodates 10 people.

If you're lodging elsewhere in the Yellowstone area, Wilderness Connection on the historic Stermitz Ranch is also a highly acclaimed outdoor adventure company. We partner with rafting companies. The zip-line on the ranch that boasts of Montana's longest zip and has 7 lines through old growth Douglas Fir forests and 2 adventure elements. The views on our horseback rides are unbelievable.



Get away from the hustle and bustle and join us in the mountains for an unbelievable trail ride.



The Stermitz Ranch has been in operation since 1900.

The historic schoolhouse then.
Turn to page 9 to see it now!



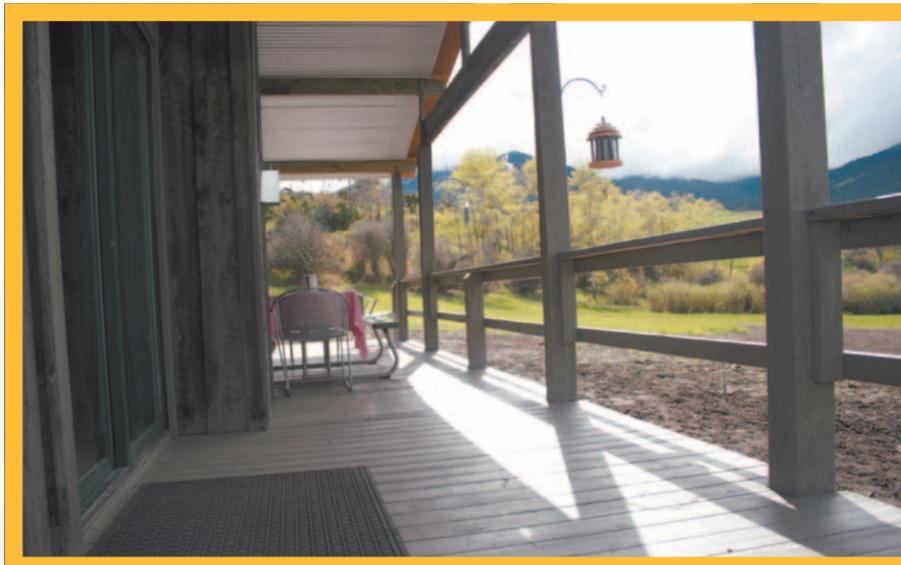
Winter has always been fun on the Stermitz Ranch!



Visit Montana YELLOWSTONE AREA VACATION CABINS

ASPEN CABIN

Our cabins rent for \$250-\$350 per night. I did some calling around to the hotels in Gardiner, MT which is a bedroom community for Yellowstone National Park and they rent for \$200-\$300 per night, but don't have kitchens and only hold 2-4 people. Our vacation rentals are not only a bargain, but offer room for more family time and a place to cook meals.



The covered porch is a relaxing place.

The Aspen Cabin sleeps 10 and has a full kitchen with pots/pans, utensils, etc., a cozy propane fireplace and comfortable seating in the living room, covered deck, covered porch with space for dining, and a huge outdoor space to recreate in. The 4 bedroom cabin has 3 full bathrooms. It has 2 master bedrooms (each with a king sized bed and private bath) and 2 additional bedrooms – one with a double bed and a bunk, and one with a bunk. Both bunk rooms share a bathroom down the hall. VRBO# 171379

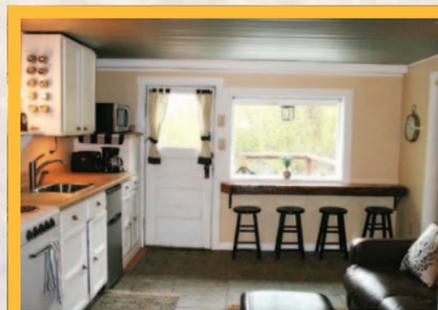
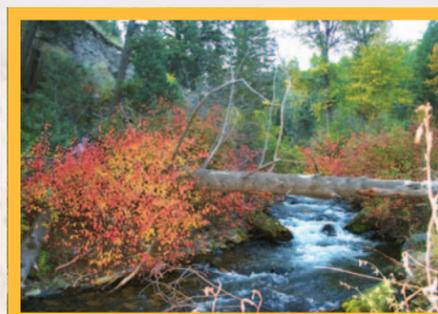


The great room offers comfortable seating and breathtaking views.

CREEKSIDE CABIN



1930s rustic log on the outside, thoroughly modern on the inside.



Creekside Cabin sleeps 4 and is truly a unique experience. Located at the confluence of two small creeks, the sound of rushing water will lull you to sleep. Great hiking trails await you just steps from your door. The building, built in 1932, and remodeled recently, is in its

original location on the Stermitz Ranch. It has a king bed, 2 twin pull outs for kids, a full kitchenette, a cozy propane fireplace in the seating area, and a full bathroom. VRBO# 364237

THE 1916 SCHOOLHOUSE



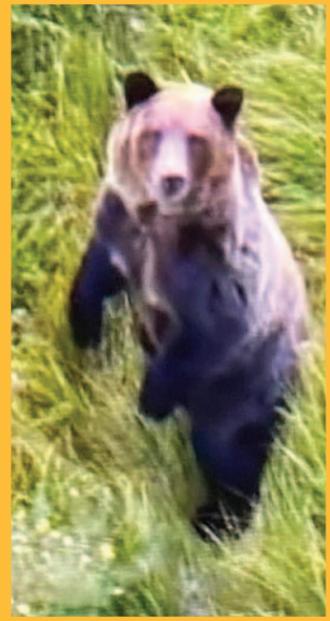
The 1916 schoolhouse is in its original location on the historic Stermitz Ranch. It has recently been beautifully renovated to preserve many of the original time period pieces. The schoolhouse has a full kitchenette, charming



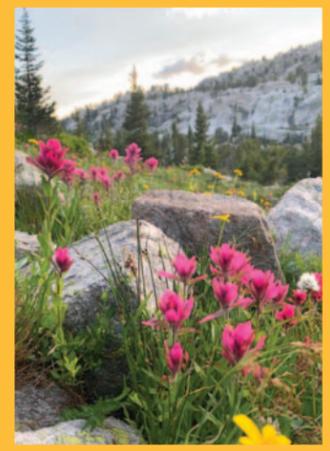
propane fireplace, cozy seating area, and tile bathroom. With its king bed and 2 pull-out twin beds for kids, the schoolhouse comfortably sleeps 4. VRBO# 294232

In 2012 USA-Today voted our 1916 schoolhouse as #2 in the top 10 renovated schoolhouses to stay in.

These vacation rentals are located 30 minutes from Yellowstone National Park, 30 minutes from Chico Hot Springs, 15 minutes from world-class fishing on the Yellowstone River, and mere minutes from recreating with us on the historic Stermitz Ranch. In the summer you can trail ride with our wranglers or take long mountain hikes enjoying our songbirds, abundant wildlife, wildflowers, and vast open views. In the winter you can cross-country ski and snowshoe from the backdoor. We are 2 hours from snowmobiling in the world-renowned Cooke City area. If you prefer a more laid back vacation, you can spend hours sitting on the deck drinking coffee and watching wildlife.



Sunrise over the schoolhouse



Things to do in the area while staying on the Stermitz Ranch



Go zipping on our zip line.



Go wading in the creek.



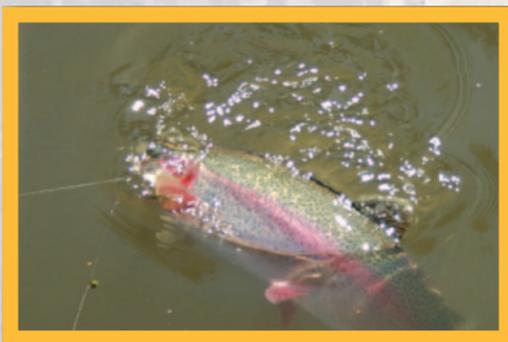
Watch babies be born in May.



Relax, and smell the flowers.



Go hiking on the ranch.



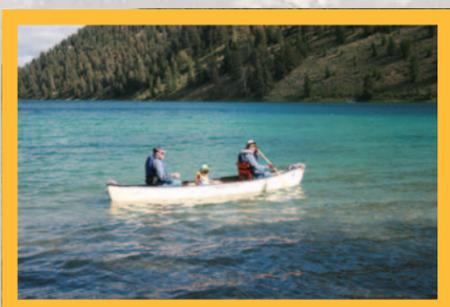
We're only 15 minutes from the Yellowstone River



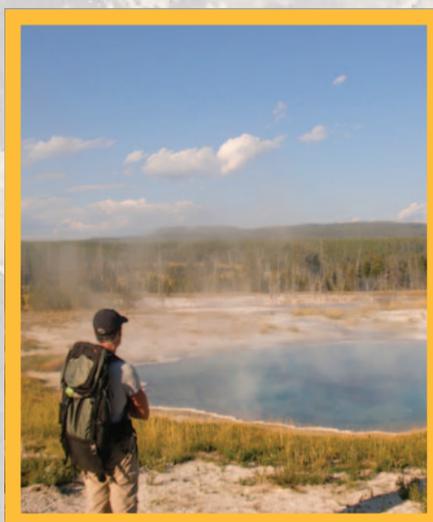
For Cabins Call:
406-224-7061
 FAQs- Wilderness Connection Inc.
 (wilderness-connection.org)



Take a snow coach into Yellowstone in the winter.



Go canoeing in Yellowstone.



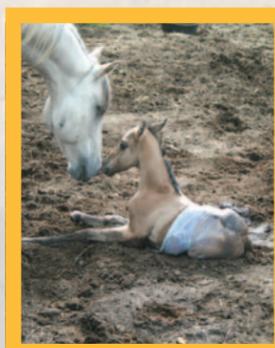
Go hiking in Yellowstone.



Relax, and read a book.



Watch a foal be born on the ranch.



2025 Year in Review

Following a 2024 season that was slow on elk but highly successful on mature mule deer bucks, our snow quickly melted out of the mountains in early spring, not leaving much moisture for the rest of the summer. June, July and August were among the driest on record



New lodge fireplace.

and the fall followed suit. September brought with it the first stages of the rut and the large local herd of cows were soon joined by some of the highest quality trophy bulls that I have ever personally seen. The state of forage in the fields, however, was quite poor as our irrigation season came to an early end from low water levels. September was quite warm still, but we had a snow fall at the end.

As rifle season came around, the abnormally high temperatures continued. We harvested a few bulls off the local herd,

but the rest of the bulls in the basin stayed high and made us work hard to get to them. We were plagued with missed opportunities that stemmed from missed shots on large bulls. As the season progressed, snow was nowhere to be found. At the very end of the season bulls began popping up in lower areas, and we capitalized where we could.

These bulls were some of the same ones we had seen throughout the season, and the complete lack of any snow or cold over the month of November eliminated much of a chance of a meaningful elk migration from Yellowstone.



The lodge snow-covered.

While our elk hunting was slightly slower than usual, our mule deer buck success was the best on record, surpassing our 2024 season. While the rest of Montana has suffered from declining mule deer populations, our area has been slowly increasing. It was evident this year as early in November it was not uncommon to see different groups of 8-10 mule deer in almost every area we hunted. As the rut began, mature bucks materialized everywhere across the ranch. While mountain mule deer typically do not have the lifespan or the trophy quality of mule deer living in hayfields, we were able to harvest some tall, dark, and heavy bucks. The pictures of bucks taken in the last two years in our brochure is solid evidence that a self-imposed restriction on the size of bucks that we allow clients to harvest has been paying off in dividends.

We were blessed this year with an amazing staff of guides and staff that continue to put in the work and do what it takes to run a top-notch hunting camp regardless of what the weather throws our way.



Dining room, 2021.

2026 Outlook

As of December 2025, winter has yet to really show up. The snow line has been around 7500 feet, and the ranch bottoms are bare. The temperatures have consistently been in the low 40s. Bull elk have been moving through to their winter ranges, but they aren't in the bottoms, they are still travelling high in the mountains. Unless January and February are brutal, it looks to be an easy winter for the elk population. However, a mild winter leads to a dry summer as the creeks have less water from snowmelt to feed the fields.

The elk population in the Northern Yellowstone herd continues to increase steadily. While wolves remain a large factor in the elk numbers, the elk herds have adapted and no longer take the losses that they did a few years ago. The age class and large numbers of mature bulls that showed up in September is a promising insight to the health of the bull population, however the weather will need to cooperate in order to keep those same bulls in the area after the rut.



Dining room, 2021 Hunt #4.

For some, hunting is a hobby. For Wilderness Connection Outfitters hunting is a passion.

My Thoughts On Tipping

By Mike Hoops

I've been asked many times about tipping. This is always awkward for me. This is an individual decision, but tips are a significant part of the wage for our guides, packers, cooks and support staff. As a former paying client on outfitted and guided hunting and fishing tips I am embarrassed by the amount I tipped. And as a former guide, I understand how vital tips are to paying for new equipment and up-to-date equipment. Base your tips on the quality of the service that you receive, which I feel should be top shelf even without gratuities!! Remember that staff cannot make the weather cooperate or improve your marksmanship. Most of the tips that I see or hear about are in the 15-20% range, based on the cost of the hunt.

At Wilderness Connection we work as a

team. Even though your guide that is with you at the time you harvest an animal is extremely important, there is a whole support staff behind him. Another guide may pop over and help gut and quarter your animal. Someone different will probably show up to pack the animal to the ranch site rather than having your guide leave the animal out until he can get it the following day. This is extremely important with the bears we have. Another guide or a camp tender may be the one who does trophy preparation back at the ranch. Or skins and hangs your animal. Maybe he loads your animal and hauls it to the processors, who are now from 60-100 miles from the ranch. Other staff fixed the vehicle you used and repaired broken chains while your guide got you out hunting. The cook's helper is important to putting out

the quality of food we are known for. It takes many, often times unacknowledged, hands to run a camp. That said, I suggest at least 1/2 of your tip be placed into a group tip. This tip is then divided among all staff.

The guide that you are with when you harvest animals will usually receive a significant tip, as well as the other guide/s you may have hunted with. It is not uncommon for the guide that is with you on a successful hunt to receive an individual gratuity. From my knowledge of what is received, depending on the guide's service it will be in the \$200-\$300 range.

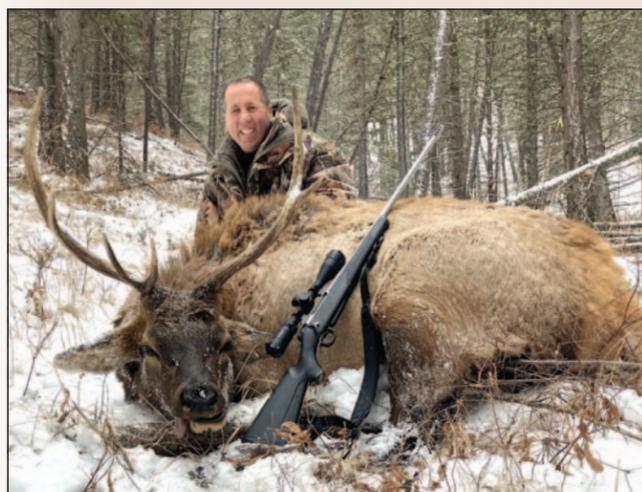
And, lastly, tip the cook. It is our cook who often can turn a bad day into a great day by the quality and diversity of the meals that are prepared for you.



Karl's 2024 bull.



Mason's 2024 bull.



Phil's 2024 bull.



Greg's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Greg's 2025 bull.



Greg's 2024 Mule Deer buck.



Saul Ramirez.



Jay Zullinger's 28 1/2 (!) inch 5x5 buck.



Saul's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Troy's 2024 Mule Deer buck.

List of what to bring

- Montana Hunting License & Tags
- Rifle with sling- .270/30.06 minimum caliber-zeroed at 200 yards
- Ammunition-40 rounds
- Toiletries and enough towels for a week
- Enough underwear for a week
- Polypropylene long johns or equal (Smartwool, Under Armor)
- Wool pants or equivalent -1 pair light and 1 heavy
- Wool shirts or equivalent- think layers
- Wool socks-several pairs
- When we speak about wool clothing, Stone Glacier, Kuiu or Sitka are great synthetic substitutes
- Small seat cushion or pad to sit on
- Warm hunting coat- must be quiet
- Gloves, mittens, cap-warm
- Orange vest, minimum 400 square inches- quiet, no plastic or nylon
- Rain gear, poncho or saddle slicker
- Footwear-1 pair casual shoes, one pair leather boots, one pair of pac boots such as Schnees or Kenetreds and one extra pair of liners, and a pair of slippers or moccasins for lodge and cabin wear
- Daypack, again quiet
- Matches in waterproof case, Bic lighter, candle
- Flashlight- Alarm clock - Pocket knife
- Binoculars, 8X or 10X
- Camera or cell phone and charger
- Compass or GPS
- Hunting knife and pocket steel
- Water bottles -2 Can be just empties you have from your trip out.
- Candy stash, enough for the hunt, if you are a big, sweet eater. We provide snacks.
- Meat bags-Can be made at home or purchased.
- Blank checks for meat processing, etc. but a couple of meat processors are Cash Only. Processing in 2025 was about \$475/elk and \$200/deer. Sausage making is additional.
- Bear spray is provided
- A range finder, if you already have one, it is a great addition to your pack.



Tyler's 2024 buck.



Lonnie's 2023 bull.



Claire's 2023 bull with dad Lonnie.



Jeremy's 2025 bull.



Cathy's 2025 Mule Deer buck.

We hunt these animals on their terms. Sometimes we're successful, sometimes we're not. This is fair chase.



Chitty's 2025 bull.



Nick's 2025 bull.



David Huddy's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Curtis' 2023 bull.



AJ's 2023 bull.



Jeff Sr.'s 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Keith's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Marv's 2023 bull.



Robert's 2023 bull.

Meat Processing

Getting your meat processed in a timely fashion is important to us as an outfitter. We want to see you have a supply of high quality meat to take home from your hunt.

We will bring your animals in from the field either by vehicle or packed out with our stock. Once meat arrives back in the yard we will skin and hang meat in our bear-proof trailer to allow it to cool. Using your game bags allows meat to stay cleaner and helps prevent drying out. Then decisions must be made.

We have a couple options for meat processing and we will take the meat to the processor if that is your desire. At times, processors can be backed up with meat and it may take longer than your hunt to get processed. Think, you harvest an animal the last evening of your hunt. Are you prepared to get a motel and wait for meat to be processed?



Every year hunters ask about processing their meat on site. We do not have the facilities for this. And everyone's thought on processing and what is acceptable to save is different. As an outfitter, if you process your meat on the ranch and leave meat on the bone, we can be ticketed for "Wanton Waste". Then there is the issue of bone and scrap disposal. So we cannot allow this in the future.

If driving, plan to bring several large coolers or a freezer. The quarters from a bull elk will weigh in at a total of 300 plus pounds. They are large and don't stack into coolers well. Add

a buck deer to your harvest and you will need more space.

In 2025 a new option for shipping meat became available through a private carrier making runs across the western states one week and across eastern states the next. Meat is delivered to your door. The cost for this is \$4/ lb. at this writing. There are no extra charges for boxes and handling. Please speak with us for up-to-date pricing and availability as you get close to your hunt.

If you wish to donate your meat to someone in need, we can find a recipient in our community. You will be responsible for the cost of processing.

Certainly, every hunter's options are different and it is something to give thought to. Do not hesitate to talk with us as you develop your hunt plan.



Secret to our Success Revealed!



Photo courtesy of Bruce Pitcher Photography.

This year, as in the past, our clients again repeatedly commented on what they felt was perhaps the single most outstanding ingredient in their hunt with Wilderness Connection.....**OUR GUIDES, COOKS, and HELP.** We recognize the value of these very special people to our operation and wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to them for a job well done.

For our 2025 season we'd like to thank the following for a job well done:

2025 Hunting Guides: Ladan Ricketts, Justin Martinell, Cayden Rose, Kurt Peters, Greg Lyrek, Luke Stermitz, Aaron Kinter, David Pirsig, and Jim Gustafson.

2025 Staff: Stacy Stermitz, Patty Barnes, and Audrey Gustafson.

Thanks to Mike Hoops and Nancy Mancini for representing us at all the Minnesota and Wisconsin sport shows. It's a ton of work and a lot of driving.



Adam's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Guide Justin packs out Eric's 2024 buck.



Mike's 2023 bull.



Neil's 2025 bull.



Joe's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Mike's 2023 buck.



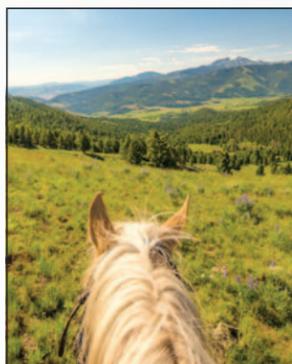
Denny's 2024 Mule Deer.



Rob's 2013 10" goat.



John Healy's 9 1/4" goat.



Come ride with us next summer.

It's impossible to guess what the weather is going to do. Any hunting in the west depends strongly on ideal weather conditions. Remember, this is not a high-fence hunt!!! If the "success" of your hunt can only be measured in meat and horns, elk hunting is probably not for you – I know some outstanding outfitters and guide services that can take you caribou or antelope hunting. However, if you come with the mind set that you are going to hunt hard, do your best, and enjoy your hunt, regardless of outcome, you will never go home disappointed.

Mule Deer \$500 Reverse Trophy Fee

As you can see, we shoot some nice bucks. A major reason is that for almost 20 years we have been encouraging clients to pass up immature mule deer bucks. By charging our clients age 16 and over \$500 for shooting immature bucks, our "gentlemen's agreement" has been very successful. To qualify as a mature mule deer buck, it must have at least 4 points on one side or be more than 22" wide inside the main beams.



Saul Ramirez's 2019 bull.



"Uncle" Arnie Ramirez with his 2019 6x6 bull.



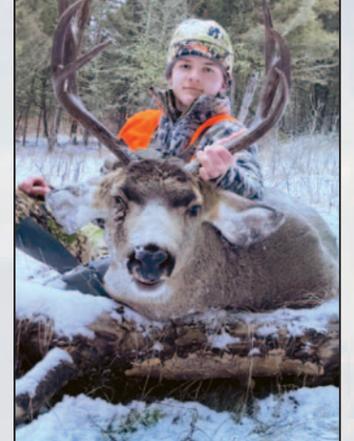
Steve's 2025 bull.



Doc Sheaffer's bull.



Theo's 2025 bull.



Theo's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



David Hanne's 2021 bull.



Kaleb's 2025 bull.



Cody's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



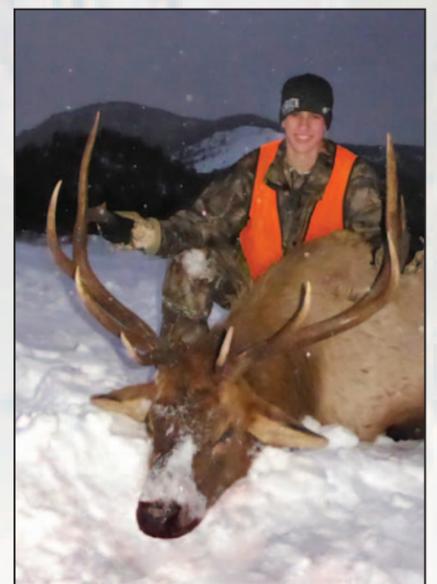
Kaleb's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Bill's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Chad's 2025 Mule Deer buck.



Bryson's bull.



Todd's 2025 bull.



This is what happens when two hunters both tag out within 5 hours of the start of their hunt. Saul Ramirez and Kevin Roosma, 2015.



Steve Arnold's 9 3/4" billy.



Our boys - Luke's first mule deer a handsome young 4x5.

**2026
Hunt
Price
\$5600**

HUNT MONTANA WITH WILDERNESS CONNECTION, INC.

LICENSING IN MONTANA

2026 MT license prices were not available at press time.

Montana's deadline for licensing is April 1st, 2026. The licenses go on sale on March 1st, 2026. Montana has a new licensing category for those who have booked with an outfitter. Those

that have can now purchase 2 preference points at the time of license application. Coupled with the preference point purchase period of July 1st-December 30th. A non-resident hunter can now go into the drawing with 3 preference points, making the license drawing almost guaranteed. For the state of Montana, hunters with 2 preference points for 2023 had an 84% chance of drawing. Those with 3 points had 100% success.

REFUND POLICY

CALL 406-223-0888 or e-mail: hunt@wilderness-connection.org

A 25% non-refundable deposit is required to hold your hunt reservation. Upon successful drawing of a license in late April, another 25% is due bringing the total hunt deposit to 50%. Fill out the reservation form below and enclose the required deposit. Your final payment will be due October 1st of your hunting year.

All deposits are non-refundable. If unsuccessful in the drawing, your 25% deposit will hold a spot for you in next years' hunt schedule. Your 25% deposit will



Rob and Stacy and their 4 boys. It's a family thing...

continue to hold a spot for you as long as you: **1)** continue to apply yearly (and on-time) for a license and retain proof of application, **2)** continue to purchase preference points, and **3)** continue to provide updated address, phone number information, and e-mail addresses to Wilderness Connection. Under some conditions we will allow transferring of deposits to another hunter not previously booked. However, Montana drawing bonus points are not transferable.



Rob and Bryson with Robs record-book Montana Bighorn.

2026 YELLOWSTONE AREA (Gardiner) SCHEDULE

All 2026 hunts are priced at \$5600 each.

HUNT #1	OCT. 24 - OCT. 28
HUNT #2	OCT. 30 - NOV. 03
HUNT #3	NOV. 05 - NOV. 09
HUNT #4	NOV. 11 - NOV. 15
HUNT #5	NOV. 18 - NOV. 22
HUNT #6	NOV. 24 - NOV. 28

(GOOD HUNTING IS WEATHER DEPENDENT)

- HUNT PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE LICENSE PRICE -

2027 YELLOWSTONE AREA (Gardiner) SCHEDULE

All 2027 hunts are priced at \$5700 each.

HUNT #1	OCT. 23 - OCT. 27
HUNT #2	OCT. 29 - NOV. 02
HUNT #3	NOV. 04 - NOV. 08
HUNT #4	NOV. 10 - NOV. 14
HUNT #5	NOV. 17 - NOV. 21
HUNT #6	NOV. 23 - NOV. 27

(GOOD HUNTING IS WEATHER DEPENDENT)

- HUNT PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE LICENSE PRICE -

BOOK NOW FOR 2027!

You can book now for 2027.

A 25% deposit is required to hold the dates of your choice until May 1, 2027.

Upon successful drawing of a license your remaining 25% deposit is due.

Call for more information

406-223-0888 OR e-mail:

hunt@wilderness-connection.org

TRIP INSURANCE - DO YOU NEED IT?

We now can offer trip insurance through an independent insurance agent who has researched what we feel to be a good price. Do you need it? Well, I'm not sure about you, but if I can't go on my trip, I'd sure like to have the cost of the trip back in my checking account.

The biggest share of our hunters are at least middle-aged and when you reach that point in life, many things not anticipated happen. You can get sick, family members can become ill or accidents happen. In this last year, we've had three hunters who could not make the hunt due to medical problems that were not in their plan when they booked their hunt. Wilderness Connection cannot refund their trip and we sympathize with them.

We, as an outfitter, feel that even though this is discretionary income that you are using for your trip, you should really protect your investment. Our contract with you will give the details on this policy and the option of purchasing or declining. Please consider this!

REPLY FORM



492 CINNABAR BASIN ROAD
GARDINER, MT 59030
406-223-0888

e-mail: hunt@wilderness-connection.org

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE # (____) _____-_____ WORK PHONE # (____) _____-_____

MOBILE #: _____

EMAIL: _____

KEEP REMOVE ME FROM YOUR MAILING LIST

ENCLOSED PLEASE FIND THE \$ _____/PERSON DEPOSIT REQUIRED TO HOLD THESE DATES. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS DEPOSIT IS NON-REFUNDABLE BUT IS APPLICABLE TO A FUTURE HUNT ACCORDING TO WILDERNESS CONNECTION'S DEPOSIT POLICY. I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL HUNTS ARE WEATHER-DEPENDENT FOR BEST SUCCESS - OPPORTUNITIES ARE NEVER GUARANTEED. FINAL PAYMENT IS DUE OCTOBER 1ST.

YOUR SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

1/26

I WISH TO BOOK THE FOLLOWING 2026 HUNT:

- Hunt #1...Oct 24-28
- Hunt #2...Oct. 30-Nov. 3
- Hunt #3...Nov 5-9
- Hunt #4...Nov 11-15
- Hunt #5...Nov 18-22
- Hunt #6...Nov 24-28
- 2027 season. Hunt # _____

Bryson and Wilderness Connection are licensed or permitted by the following agencies:

- Montana Board of Outfitters license #60110
- Montana Department of Health
- Montana Department of Labor
- USDA Gallatin National Forest - Gardiner Ranger District

In addition, Bryson and Wilderness Connection are members of the following organizations:

- American Quarter Horse Association lifetime member
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Outfitter - donating member
- Gardiner, Montana Chamber of Commerce
- Montana Outfitters and Guides Association
- Gallatin National Forest Outdoor Recreation Association
- National Rifle Association lifetime member
- Boone and Crockett Club lifetime member