

Below are descriptions of the first nine Wood River Deer Hunts. Congratulations to all of our first-time hunters.

Hunt 1: Anna

Anna harvested her first deer Sunday September 5th with her 5year old daughter Morgan and her husband Zeke both present to help celebrate the occasion. Anna's Mentors for her hunt were Bruce and Tammy.

Hunt 2: Ashton

The second hunter is this year's Wood River Deer Hunt program to successfully harvest her first big game animal is Ashton. Ashton harvested on the Antler Ranch on Monday September 6th after a unique stalk.

Hunt 3: Alyssa

The Third Hunter to complete the Wood River Deer Hunt Program by successfully harvesting a Whitetail Doe is Alyssa. Alyssa was Mentored by WyO Board Member Tim Barry on the Antler Ranch. Alyssa harvested this Whitetail Doe on Tuesday September 7th. Way to go Alyssa and Tim on a job well done!

Hunt 4: McKenzie

The fourth hunter to complete the 2021 Wood River Deer Hunt by successfully harvesting a Whitetail Doe is McKenzie. McKenzie was able to harvest her doe with the help and assistance from WyO Board Member Jim Boles. On McKenzie's third stalk of the day on Thursday September 9th she harvested this fantastic doe. Congrats to McKenzie.

Hunt 5: Gunner

After a few blown stalks on some whitetail does (and of course getting well into range on several beautiful, whitetail bucks), Gunner was the first to spot this doe on the opposite bank of Wood River. She was feeding undisturbed. With a quick set-up of the shooting sticks, Gunner made a perfect shot at ~75 yds. and dropped her in her tracks!! After the initial excitement, his first comment was "I thought this was going to be a tougher shot, but it was just like shooting targets at the range". Thanks to his grandfather Dick S for some additional range time and extra practice w his family rifle!!

Hunt 6: Tonia

After getting her grandson off to school on Monday September 13th, Tonia met her Mentor Bruce at the Cody Game and Fish office parking lot at 7:00 am. Bruce drove Tonia to the Antler Ranch where they arrived at about 8:00am to begin their hunt. Tonia had the opportunity to meet the owner of the Antler Ranch, Mr. Sam May and then she and Bruce headed off to find a cooperating Whitetail Doe to harvest. After watching another Hunter and her Mentor interact with a Bachelor Group of three beautiful Whitetail bucks it was Tonia's turn to put a stalk on a Whitetail doe. A group of eligible Whitetail Does and Fawns were spotted across the Wood River, so Tonia and Bruce locked arms and waded across the river to the far riverbank to begin their stalk. Tonia walked under cover of the riverbank for about 250 yards to the point where they had to climb up the riverbank into the tall grass lining the field where the deer were grazing. Tonia's next step was to belly crawl about 80 yards to get to cover and to close the distance on the closest Whitetail doe. With that completed Bruce helped Tonia prepare for a safe shot by getting set up in a stable position, coaching her on controlling her breathing and holding the gun steady. When the largest Whitetail doe grazed to 176 yards and appeared that she would not come any closer, Bruce gave Tonia the OK to shoot when the doe was steady in her crosshairs. Tonia fired one clean shot and the doe was hers!!

Hunt 7: Annie

The 7th hunter to complete the program is Annie. Annie hunted on Monday September 13th with her Mentor Kathy Crofts. Annie and Kathy enjoyed a beautiful Monday morning on the Antler Ranch scouting for Whitetail does while also seeing a handsome bachelor group of Whitetail Bucks and a large and curious herd of Bison on the Antler Ranch.

After their first stalk was unsuccessful Kathy showed Annie a second potential spot that gave Annie a shot opportunity on the Whitetail doe that she was able to harvest.

Congratulations to Annie

Hunt 8: Jack Van Norman

After a few blown stalks on some whitetail does (and of course getting well into range on several beautiful, whitetail bucks), Gunner was the first to spot this doe on the opposite bank of Wood River. She was feeding undisturbed. With a quick set-up of the shooting sticks, Gunner made a perfect shot at ~75 yds. and dropped her in her tracks!! After the initial excitement, his first comment was "I thought this was going to be a tougher shot, but it was just like shooting targets at the range". Thanks to his grandfather Dick S for some additional range time and extra practice w his family rifle!!

Hunt 9: Jake

I picked up Jake and his Dad, Jeff, early on the morning of September 19th. We stopped and checked out the "pea patch" and glassed a few deer before driving on into the ranch. We headed up the river road and did some stalking and found the wind wrong in every direction we went. I decided to drive out to the North end and we spooked a few deer out of the tall grass on the river. The wind was our enemy most of the day. What felt like hurricane force winds had us clambering back into the truck watching and waiting for a huge dust cloud to die down. I drove back over to the "pea patch" and found a herd of "nice bucks" that we glassed and enjoyed watching for a while. We headed back to the ranch and spotted a few deer south of the buildings. While Jeff stayed in the pickup, Jake and I did a stalk on a small herd and they all crossed the river. By the time we got back to the truck, my hunters were getting a little weary and frustrated and it was midafternoon. Jeff reported that a deer had crossed behind the truck and headed to the river. I took Jake and we did "a sneak" along the river and our luck changed. Jake took his shot and put down his first deer! All the weariness and frustration of the day vanished into exultation and celebration at a one shot kill and success! Next, came "the work". I told Jake to get out his knife and I tutored him through the cleaning process which also included a surprise blood smear across the face that "back in the day" was the sign of a successful first kill for a first-time hunter.