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FALL 2016

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A Well- Planned Hunt

Good planning leads to
remarkable success

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Photo Courtesy of Kyle Zuercher



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A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
DALLES CHRONICLE

A Life on the River

Deschutes River guide and fly shop owner shares his passion

By Mark Gibson

John Smeraglio fell in love with the Deschutes River, and the art of fishing, during family hunting trips to the Maupin area when he was 6 years old.

"My dad was an upland game bird hunter. Chukars and doves, he loved that. We would come to the Deschutes every fall," he said, the family camping along the river's access road in the Maupin area.

His dad and brothers would go to hunt

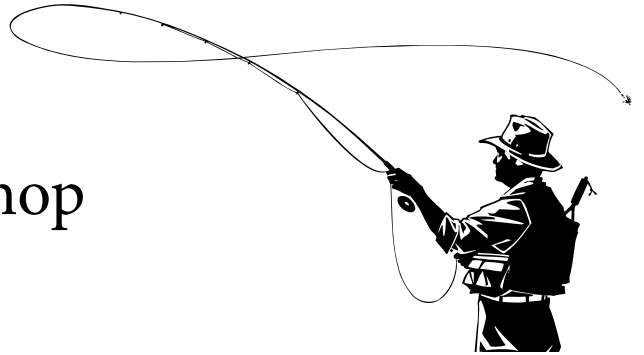
the upland game birds each day. But not Smeraglio. Unlike his two older brothers and his father, he was not drawn to the field and the gun but to the rod and the rushing river.

"I would walk the banks and fish. They would all go hunting, so I had the river pretty much to myself. The access road was real convenient, it was just wonderful," he explained with an intensity that hinted of the true magic of those early days.

Those family trips, the intense magic of stalking wild trout on one of Oregon's most famous rivers, lit a fire that burns to this day — Smeraglio has guided others along those early paths for 31 years now, working out of his fly fishing shop in Maupin.

BEGINNINGS

Born and raised in Portland, learning to fish at 6, Smeraglio started fly fishing when he



John Smeraglio has owned and operated a fly shop on the banks of the Deschutes River in Maupin for 31 years.
Mark B. Gibson photo

was 10. When he decided he wanted to be a fly fisherman, he found out he could buy rod components and set out to build his own fishing rod. "I built my rods on a ping pong table, I took the net off and that was my work table. I built myself probably 10 rods." He also started tying his own flies at that time.

The notion of making a career of his interest in fly fishing took form on the banks of an Oregon river when he was 11.

He was fly fishing on the Clackamas River, located on the west side of Mount Hood, met another fly fisherman and they got to talking. "He noticed the rod I had made, on a Browning blank and we talked. We shook hands right there on the river, and I built him the rod he wanted."

"That's when 'Crystal Creek Rods' was born," he said

Business grew by word of mouth, and he was soon making from one to three rods each week. His fly tying skills were top notch as well, and he began doing small fill-in orders for Portland fishing stores.

When he was old enough, he took a job in the industry, got his driver's license and purchased a car. "As soon as I had a car and a license, I started coming to the river on my own," he said.

DESCHUTES CANYON

His dedication to fly fishing, his growing dream of starting his own fly shop, lead him to work in the industry — he became a tackle store manager — and in 1985, at the age of 25, he opened Deschutes Canyon Fly Shop on the banks of Deschutes River in Maupin.

"I remember the night I drove here from Portland, it was March 14, 1985. The next day, I signed the lease."



A large selection of fishing gear is available at John Smeraglio's Deschutes Canyon Fly Shop in Maupin. The patterns, he noted, have all caught fish at one time or another. Mark B. Gibson photo

His first store was located in an old garage along the river that had been built around 1903. His second shop was next to the Maupin Bridge over the Deschutes River, and in 1997 he moved into his current shop, located at 599 South Highway 197, just across the bridge from Maupin and overlooking the river.

Making the fly shop a success hasn't been easy. "Owning a fly fishing shop is a lifestyle choice, more than an income potential," he explained.

Custom built rods were an important component in the fly fishing industry when he first opened, and Smeraglio stocked his shelves with his Crystal Creek Rods and hand tied flies and tapered leaders, as well as general merchandise from various distributors.

In the 1980s, the river closed to trout fishing on Halloween, a scary time for the new shop owner, and he worked in Portland to keep the cash flow going. Eventually, however, regulations changed and the river was opened to fishing all year.

He still had to take winter work occasionally, but he was able to live in Maupin throughout the year. "I made do, and kept growing at a healthy rate," he said. "Fly fishing is a very niche market."

THE FISH

The Deschutes River is one of the top 10 fisheries in the nation, and a world-wide destination for trout, and is famous for its summer steelhead run. Both fish species are native, wild fish and challenging to catch.

By 1986, two years after setting up shop in Maupin, Smeraglio began offering guided trips on the river, including "walk and wade" trips, a way of fishing reminiscent of his earliest days on the river as a 10-year-old boy.

"You have to have a lot of diversity, to



THE JOY OF STEELHEAD

By Mark Gibson

The Deschutes is famous for its steelhead. These are a traveling fish, moving up the river to spawn, and they do not feed — but they can certainly be caught.

"When they hole up to rest, they become very territorial and aggressive," explained John Smeraglio, owner of Deschutes Canyon Fly Shop in Maupin.

"A real joy to do is to fish a skating pattern," he said. This is a surface fly attached to the line or designed in such a way that it can be "skated" across the surface of the water, leaving a wake like a tiny boat. "They will chase it down and attack it, it's really exciting."

The presentation is fairly simple: The flies cast out and downstream at about a 45 degree angle, with a swing-style presentation. "The fly skitters and skates across the water like a little boat," he said. "They get excited and whack it, it's almost scary."

Although he has his favorite patterns, like most fly shops in the region he carries a variety of styles and they all work. "Every fly you see here has caught fish," he said.

STEELHEAD FLIES

Rusty Bomber, size 6 or 8. This is used as a "skater," a presentation method which "skates" the fly across the water. This presentation leaves a "wake," much like a boat.

Buck's Bug, size 6. Another skater. There isn't much to this pattern, but it does what it needs to do.

Muddler Minnow, size 4, 6 and 8. This is a very versatile fly, can be used as a wake or skater, or fished just under the surface — it all depends how the fly is attached to the leader. A riffle hitch will skate the fly, a straight tie allows it to be fished wet.

Street Walker, size 4, 6 and 8. A proven pattern, with many years of success, this is a wet fly.

Tube flies, various sizes. The bigger flies work well. These come in a variety of colors, including black, blue, purple and maroon.

SPEY-STYLE FLIES

Various, size 2, 4 or 6. Because of the material used, these flies are big in the water and have a lot of movement. That movement is important, because the fish don't feed and the fisherman is trying to get them to chase the fly.

make it in this business,” he said, and working as a guide was just one. He worked as a casting instructor as well, taught entomology classes and offered stream side clinics. Entomology is the study of insects, a branch of zoology, and is important to fly fishing for trout on a river like the Deschutes.

“It’s a wild trout, native to the river,” he explained. “They are very keyed in on the insects of the river. You have to have the right fly, and the right presentation.”

Offering the trout the right fly at the right time, or “matching the hatch,” is often critical to success, he explained.

In the entomology department, Smeraglio tips the hat to Portland fisherman Rick Hafele, who joined him in creating a series of videos on fishing the river, displayed on one wall of Smeraglio’s shop. “I’m amazed by his knowledge of entomology, he is one of the best in the nation,” Smeraglio said. “He is just a great guy as well.”

CHALLENGING WATERS

One of the reasons guided trips along the Deschutes River work is that it is a very challenging river to fish.

“I nickname the Deschutes the ‘Varsity

River,” said Smeraglio. “It’s challenging to get up and down the bank. It’s challenging to wade, it’s very slick. There are a lot of bottom types, including boulders and lava. And it’s a big river.” Even advanced fly fishermen, facing the river for the first time, might throw up their hands and say “how do I fish this monster?” he said.

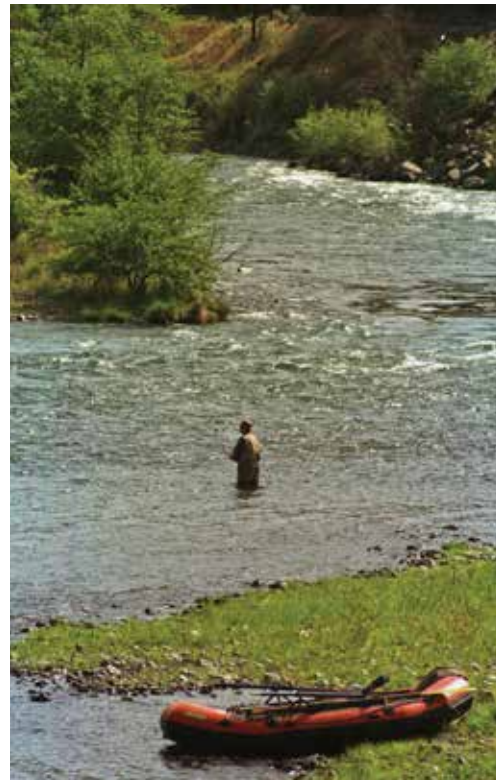
It’s not that you can’t learn to fish on the Deschutes — Smeraglio has taught plenty of people to do just that — but they have to be physically ready and know where to go. “You can learn to fish here, even though in my opinion it’s an intermediate to expert river.”

A guided trip of a day or even half a day — his walk and wade trips are the most popular — can really jumpstart a fisherman’s ability to fish the Deschutes successfully. “They learn about equipment, casting, presentation, and I show them the water types that you find in the river,” he explained.

Each type of water has to be approached differently, he added. “If you are fishing an eddy, your approach is completely different than fishing a ripple, for example.”

After over four decades fishing, and thinking about, the Deschutes, Smeraglio is still in a state of wonder.

“It’s a lifetime sport, I’m still learning things,” he said.



A fly fisherman tries his skill on a riffle of the Deschutes, which he accessed with a raft. Mark B. Gibson photo/file



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Casting for Vets

Fishing and hunting trip offer vets unique experience

By RaeLynn Ricarte

After nearly four years of providing hunting and fishing trips for wounded warriors, Fred Coleman, president of Outdoor Adventures with Military Heroes, said the group has learned “some pretty humbling lessons.”

“We have had veterans in wheelchairs and vets who were missing limbs -- as well as those with other disabilities -- and they have all been determined to turn their injuries into a positive,” he said. “It’s pretty amazing how strong people are.”

The biggest lesson brought home to Coleman and other emergency responders on the nonprofit board, is how much America owes the men and women it sends into battle.

“If each one of us will just do one thing to thank a vet and make his or her life a little easier, then it would make all the difference,” is often said by Wasco County Sheriff Lane Magill, an OAMH board member.

Thanks to a recent \$5,000 donation from the Rainforth Foundation and \$6,000 raised by the Maupin Chamber of Commerce at

“Lifelong friendships have been formed at these camps.”

the annual poker run and bike show in June, Outdoor Adventures has funding available to cover a variety of expeditions this fall and beyond.

Over the last several years, the group has sought donations for tents, stoves, trailers, generators and other amenities for the hunting camps so that veterans, many with chronic pain, are made comfortable.

Outdoor Adventures can now set up three complete camps at one time.

“This program is really up and running,” said Coleman.

The biggest issue now facing Outdoor Adventures, said Coleman, is locating new veterans within Sherman, Hood River, Wasco, Deschutes and Jefferson counties.

“A lot of vets think you have to be disabled to qualify but you don’t, you can also qualify with a Purple Heart,” said Coleman. “We want to give as many veterans as possible the opportunity to get out in a low stress environment with people who have also served so they can relax and enjoy good



Retired USMC Capt. Dan Brophy, who was disabled by a .50 caliber bullet during a deployment to Vietnam, is assisted in a doe hunt last year by Barry Hammel, left and his father, Bill.

company.”

Warriors within the five-county area are also eligible for the trips if they have the “hidden wounds” of TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).

“We’re up for any challenge, we want you to come out and have fun,” said Coleman as an open message to veterans.

He said all expenses are covered for participants, including gas to get to and from the camp and meat processing.

And Outdoor Adventures is prepared to set up a camp to accommodate any type of need, such as a washing station for veterans with prosthetics.

Last year, the group opened up the hunts and fishing trips to female veterans. Coleman said that was a good move since women are a minority group in the military who often get overlooked but have played just as vital a role in national defense as their male counterparts.

“I think it’s more about the camaraderie of souls than harvesting animals,” he said. “Lifelong friendships have been formed at these camps.”

He believes the board, which is comprised of present or former firefighters and police, is attuned to the needs of veterans because all emergency responders share the bond of making a commitment for public safety that can put their lives at risk.

Coleman served 15 years with the National Guard is now a captain at Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue in The Dalles.

He will be taking two veterans on a water fowl hunt this fall or early winter, a new addition that replaces the spring turkey hunts. “We are trying a couple of new things this year,” he said.

Also new on the roster is a bear hunt for

two veterans led by Kyle Zuercher, a National Guard veteran and officer with the Hood River Police Department.

“There are several Hood River orchardists who have volunteered their property,” said Coleman.

Wasco County Sheriff Lane Magill, seated

on the Outdoor Adventures board, joins Steve Pribyl, retired Oregon Fish and Wildlife biologist, and resident Travis Duddles on Coho and Chinook salmon fishing trips for eight veterans in September or October, depending on river temperature conditions.

In October, there is a doe hunt for four



Mike Caldwell, a retired Oregon State Police game officer, and Lane Magill, sheriff of Wasco County, are shown during the feast that followed a full day of hunting with veterans in 2015.

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veterans on the properties of Larry and Vicki Ashley led by Mike Caldwell, a retired Oregon State Police game officer.

That same month, there will be a cow elk hunt on the lands of the Stuart Von Borstel family in Sherman County organized by Hal Woods, vice-president of Outdoor Adventures and also a Marine veteran and firefighter with MCF&R.

"Things have just gone extremely well, the landowners we're dealing with have been fantastic," said Coleman.

Eric Hyatt, an Outdoor Adventures board member is a Marine veteran and cowboy who volunteers with the Wamic Rural Fire Protection District. He will be taking two veterans on an pheasant hunt between October and March. He will also be assisting with the elk and doe hunts.

Keith Nantz, a cowboy and former federal firefighter, is an at-large member and will also volunteer time at the elk and doe hunts.

Coleman said Outdoor Adventures will soon be looking to expand its geographic area and revisit its five and 10-year business plan, with a goal of establishing three more chapters in the state of Oregon.

"We are going to expand, we just haven't figured out how and where yet – but we are excited about the challenges and growth to come," he said.

To date, he said Outdoor Adventures has only tackled hunting and fishing trips, but the group is game to try anything a veteran proposes.

"I don't always have the answer when I jump into a project, but I figure it out and I think we are up for any challenge," said Coleman.

Veterans interested in being included in a drawing for 2017 events, or people wanting to make a donation, can send mail to: Outdoor Adventures with Military Heroes, P.O. Box 9, The Dalles, ORE. 97058.

More information can be found on the organization's Facebook page or by emailing Coleman at medichunter@hotmail.com.



George Fort and Scott Neet, both veterans, show off the day's catch of Coho salmon from a 2015 trip arranged by Outdoor Adventures with Military Heroes



Richard Chance, a National Guard soldier, stands on a knoll enjoying the view from the 2015 hunting camp.

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Kody Justice - Turkey from Ramsey Creek, Dufur Oregon



Kyle Zuercher - 4x4 blacktail



John Ringlbauer - wild pig hunt

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PRIZES: Winners will have the winning photos announced and printed in the spring publication of *Hooks & Horns* and \$350.00 of cash prizes will be given out. Nothing in these contest rules obligate The Dalles Chronicle to publish or otherwise use any photo submitted in connection with this contest.

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The Last Hunt

New puppy learns the ropes on Yesina's final hunt

By Frank Davido

It's 3:58 a.m. and I'm woken by a Thump...Thump.

The alarm won't go off for two more minutes.

Thump. Thump.

I open my eyes and struggle to focus in the dim light from the nightstand.

Yesina's nose is no more than an inch from my face at the edge of the bed, her wagging tail softly hitting the dresser. She is holding her breath and

trying to be quiet but the expression in her bright little eyes ask her question: "Are we going today?"

I have been trying to take her and Molly hunting every other day on the Deschutes River since Christmas.

Yesina came to live with us as an eight-week old puppy in August. My wife and I decided that we should get her and let Molly help teach her how to hunt ducks.

Molly has probably been my best retriever, but over the last year, her age is starting to take a toll. Rather than being without a dog during a future duck season, we decided to become a two lab family.

On the day we went to get Yesina, Molly sat in the back corner of the car and looked out the rear window for an hour and a half - all the way home. Molly looked at us and you could see

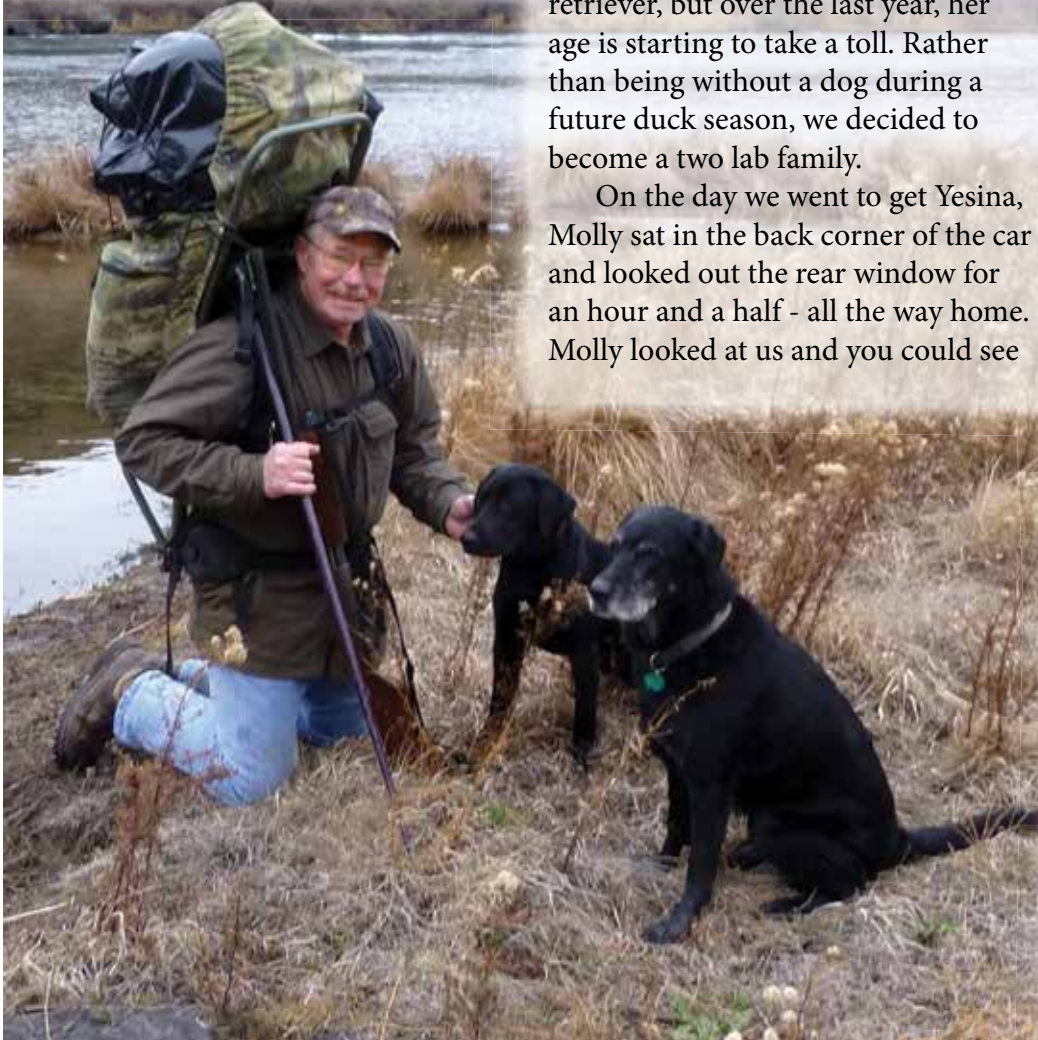
that she couldn't understand how we could do this to her.

For a couple of weeks Molly wanted nothing to do with Yesina, but slowly the puppy's persistence won out: They started playing tug-of-war with toys, chewing on opposite ends of sticks at the same time and teaming up to tear apart toys for hidden squeakers. Molly had finally accepted Yesina.

Once Molly let Yesina run with her, I took them to the country and loaded my .22 with CB caps to begin getting Yesina used to the sounds of a gun. She was startled with the first few shots, but since Molly became excited and started thoroughly searching the heaviest cover, soon Yesina's tail was wagging in a blur and she was helping Molly search for whatever it was that Molly was looking for.

On the first trip up the Deschutes River in October to build my blind, I happened to jump and shoot one duck. Yesina saw it fall in the water and float, then she saw Molly swim out to get it, but when I tried to get her to play with it, she didn't like the smell and didn't want to be close to it. That evening I took the wing tips from the duck and played with her on the family room floor until she finally started chewing on the feathers.

A cold snap before Christmas dropped the water temperature of the river and the dogs had to start wearing their neoprene coats. Yesina thought I was holding her down and



she didn't realize she could even stand up when I first put a coat on her.

She liked wading in the river to set and pickup decoys as long as the water wasn't too deep, but she wasn't too sure about swimming. She was a "splash-master" in deep water: Rather than reach out with her front legs when swimming, she was trying to climb up on the surface.

I would need to spend some time in the summer teaching her how to swim.

On the first few hunts, Yesina was content to dig holes in the sand and chew on the sticks in the blind, but soon she started seeing ducks as they came to the decoys, see them fall and watch Molly swim out to retrieve them.

You could see her understanding of duck hunting grow with each trip up the river. By mid-January she started swimming out to get a duck of her own, but Molly was faster in the water.

Yesina's competitive nature and determination made her forget about climbing on top of the water – she was now stretching her front legs as far as they would reach and pulling as hard as she could to get to a duck before Molly got it.

Today will probably be Molly's last duck hunt.

The season is coming to a close, and I doubt that she will live to see another season. Molly is 13, she's deaf, she has arthritis in all of her joints from spine to toes, she has cataracts that have severely clouded her vision and she has a tennis ball sized tumor next to her heart.

I have rationalized that hunting every other day is the humane thing for her – you might think leaving her home would be a better option, but she is a lab and hunting is her life.

She would know that Yesina and I

had gone hunting without her and she would be heart broken.

We were only able to get a couple of birds today for Molly to dream about over the coming months.

It is probably good that the season is ending: Yesina's exuberance has caught up to Molly's experience and the old girl needs to think that she is still the top duck dog.

As I changed out of my waders and camouflage and packed up my decoys and equipment, the two dogs played keep away with a large stick – a lab is a puppy forever.

Yesina and I will have the time now to perfect our hand signals for blind retrieves. She is already getting good at right-fetch and back-fetch, but the

third direction always seems to be confusing and I have rushed my other dogs into it before they were ready.

Anyone can train a lab to hunt, just break it into individual steps and make it a game: Given an opportunity, they will almost teach themselves.

But when you do teach them, you then have a responsibility to take them hunting at every opportunity for the next 10 years or so.

Molly and I have taught Yesina to hunt and now, at age 70, I am going to have to ride my old bicycle some extra miles in the spring and summer for the next few years to be in good enough shape to be able to give her the lifetime of hunting that she now deserves.



Yesina, above right, and Molly attack a stick together as Molly learns the ropes of retrieving along the Deschutes River. Facing page, Frank Davido poses for a photograph with Molly and Yesina during their last hunt together.
Contributed photos

RECOMMENDED PATTERNS FOR FALL TROUT

Mayflies

Mahogany Dunn, size 16. There are a couple of patterns that imitate this hatch. The mayfly hatches in the late morning to around 4 p.m., and are more prolific on cloudy or drizzly days.

Blue-winged olive, size 20 or 22 in the fall. These mayflies hatch in the late morning or midday and last until around 3 p.m.

Caddis flies

October or Fall Caddis, size 8. This caddis emerges in the afternoon and evening.

Elk Hair Caddis, sizes 16 and 18. This matches end of day caddis hatch. Hatches start earliest and last longest on cloudy days.

General/attractant

Rainbow Warrior, sizes 16, 18 and 20. Can imitate midges, caddis larva and pupae.





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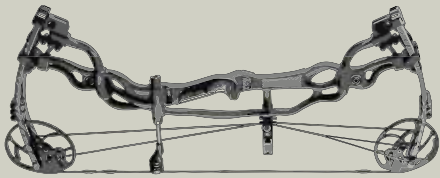
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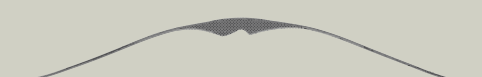
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CHOOSING THE RIGHT BOW



Before heading to your local outdoors shop, you have to decide what type of bow you want to use. Do some research on the variations, including compound, recurve or long bow. If you're just starting out, the compound bow will most likely be your best bet.

That's because they are equipped with various accessories to increase your shooting accuracy and improve your sight. The other types of bows require more training and practice before you can expect to feasibly take down your

game of choice, but you may be up to the challenge. Sign up at your local range for training sessions to start sharpening your skills.

When it comes to what you're looking for in a bow, draw weight is one of the biggest factors to consider. Defined as the amount of force it takes to pull the bowstring back to the full draw, this measurement can vary by weapon. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources recommends 40 pounds or greater for a clean, ethical shot.



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Fast and Friendly Service

Kramer's Market in Dufur

Custom meat processing... for all types of game

By Jesse Burkhardt



As the sign on the door behind Kramer's Market Manager Jessie Rogers (left) and Deli Manager Charla Kozelisky shows, Kramer's Market has been in business in Dufur since 1905.

The tiny community of Dufur offers a service that is difficult to find even in most bigger cities: Kramer's Market, located in the attractive, 1905-era brick building at 121 Main Street in downtown Dufur, provides custom game processing for its customers.

"We can grind meat or make sausage if it comes to us off the bone," explained Charla Kozelisky, the deli manager at Kramer's. "We can make sausage or burger for them. We turn it into whatever they want. We can make anything if it's meat."

And at Kramer's Market, they are not exaggerating; they really mean

"anything."

"Bear, deer, cougar, mountain goat, bison, bighorn sheep, whatever," said Kozelisky. "Just bring me your hunting tag so I can verify the information."

Kramer's Market no longer has a deep cold storage facility, so it is a bit limited compared to the services it previously offered. Until 2007, Kramer's Market had a facility for hanging animals as well as the ability to store whole animals and take meat off the bone. But when John Dillon bought the business from Shari Kramer in 2007, the sale did not include the deep cold storage facility, so the market is currently limited as to

what it can do to process meat.

Yet with strong demand still there, Kramer's Market is working on a fix.

"We can't do it now, but next year might be different," said Jessie Rogers, the store's manager. "We are in the process of talking about expansion. We're aiming for next year for sure."

Kramer's Market is hoping to grow so the store's employees will once again be able to hang animals and cut meat off the bone at the customer's request. Plans include purchase of a bigger walk-in cooler and a place to properly hang animals.

"We're finally to the point of seriously considering bringing it back," Rogers said. "There is definitely a demand in this area. There are not a lot of places to take meat anymore."

Although it has now been nearly a decade, Rogers pointed out that the requests to store game animals haven't stopped, because many people did not realize that, in the wake of the sale of the business, the new owner no longer had access to a deep-freeze cooler.

"We still get calls every day, and that prompted us to address this. Customers are wanting this," Rogers explained.

"There is lots of demand; we're very busy," added Kozelisky, who has worked at processing meat in the deli kitchen since 2006.

Naturally, most of the orders for processing game into meat come during hunting seasons.

"In fall, it's all fresh game," she said. "We field a lot of phone calls in hunting season. We're definitely busier."

Although hunting season is when the demand to make wild game sausage and burgers is highest, the market provides the service year-round.

"We're open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day," Kozelisky explained. "We can take meat in any time in that time."

Rogers added that customers can even bring in frozen meat, and Kramer's Market will defrost it and return it processed to the customer's specifications.

"We can cater it to whatever the customer wants to get out of it," Rogers said.

Rogers added that Kramer's currently offers three types of treatment for its sausage: extra spice, Italian, or regular.

Kramer's Market provides another benefit as well.

"If you bring us 10 pounds of

game, for example, we'll add 10 pounds of pork, so that stretches the wild meat further," Rogers said. "It's just a recipe; it's how we've always done it to stretch out the meat and mellow out the wild game flavor. We can make sausage out of anything. We match it with pork or bacon."

Rogers pointed out that all orders are customized, and there is no mixing of meats from other customers.

"The meat you bring in is the meat you get back," Rogers said.

For 2016, the cost to process game meat is as follows: 85 cents per pound to grind and wrap the meat; the cost is 75 cents per pound to grind the meat only; to add pork to sausage, the pork is \$2.95 per pound; and to add spices to the meat, it's 75 cents an ounce.

Rogers said she is looking forward to next year when the market hopes to again offer a full range of game processing services.

"I think people will welcome it back," Rogers said. "It's worth doing."

Kramer's Market in Dufur can be reached at: 541-467-2455.



Jessie Rogers (left) and Charla Kozelisky relish making customized orders of sausage or burgers from an unusual variety of game animals, and they hope to be able to expand what they can offer next year. Photos by Jesse Burkhardt



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Bow Hunter Aims True

Helpful tips for your bow hunting experience.

By RaeLynn Ricarte



The advantage of bow hunting is that the season is 28 days instead of the week given rifle hunters, and archers are allowed to harvest both male and female deer/elk during that time, instead of having to draw a specific tag in most units.

Those are just two reasons that Bob Kendall, owner of Windy River Archery, enjoys taking his compound bow in search of game each September.

"The weather is usually nice and it's great to be out camping," he said.

Kendall said there are fewer bow hunters than gun enthusiasts so the chances of a successful harvest are high, especially given that late summer and early fall are times when animals are on the move.

Because you have to be 30 yards or less from game to get an accurate shot, he said bow hunters often get a front row seat for the bugling of a bull elk.

"There's nothing more fun than having a big bull screaming in your face," said Kendall.

After 35 years in the business of outfitting hunters, he has this advice for beginning bow hunters:

- Practice, practice, practice. The more

comfortable you are with the bow, and the more accurate your shooting skills, the more proficient you will be on the hunt.

- Make sure all your equipment is in order before you get to camp. That can save you from making a long drive back to town to replace something that's broken or missing.

- Broadhead arrows are aerodynamically different than field points so spend some time learning how they fly before the hunt so you can adjust your aim.

- Wash all gear with unscented soaps and store it where it won't absorb household smells.

- Use high-quality scent eliminator on your clothing and body before leaving for the woods. If you don't have specialized products on hand, make sure your soap and detergent is unscented.

- Don't eat pepperoni or other spicy foods before heading out, 80 percent of a human's odor comes from the mouth.

- If you're going to be calling animals, practice before you hit the field. If you wait until you are in the woods to learn these skills, you could end up scaring game away.

- Regardless of how hot or cold it is, get off your comfortable camp stool and get hunting

– the more time you are in the woods, the greater the odds of success.

- Exercise caution about alcohol consumption to prevent accidents and injuries – or having time in the beauty of nature ruined by a hangover. Leave the party at home so you leave the forest a better place than you found it.

- Be courteous to fellow hunters. If someone else is parked in your favorite spot, move on to another location.

"The forest is a huge, huge, space that has lots of room for you to go somewhere else," said Kendall.

Kendall said people interested in archery should consider membership in either the Celilo Bowmen in The Dalles or Appleknockers in Hood River. He said being around masters in the use of a bow is the best way to learn new skills.

Windy River Archery is located at 2680 Dock Road in Hood River. Kendall maintains an indoor shooting range that people can use to test bows and arrows.

Business hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

Kendall can be reached for more information about archery at 541-386-1142.



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Hunting Opportunities in the Mid-Columbia

Youth clinics offer range of outdoor experience

By Jeremy Thompson



Turkey hunting clinics for youth are offered in Wasco County.

The Mid-Columbia region is teeming with opportunities to experience excellent fishing and hunting, and the most exciting opportunities are geared toward youth.

As officials try to maintain interest in hunting, programs to get youth involved abound. On Sept. 17-18, there will be a youth pheasant hunt just west of Wamic at White River Wildlife Area. This hunt is designed for beginning youth hunters, and will focus on safe shotgun handling as well as how to hunt birds legally and safely. Any youth interested in this opportunity can get more information and register at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website, www.odfw.com.

In April, ODFW assists the Hoodview and Mid-Columbia Chapters of Oregon Hunters Association in putting on an annual youth turkey hunting clinic. This all-day event focuses on teaching youth the necessary skills needed to hunt wild turkey. It is held west of Tygh Valley, and registration will take place after the first of the year.

While these programs cater to youth, there is something for every age of outdoor



Fishing at Spearfish Lake near Dallesport



A wealth of rivers and lakes offer a host of options for young anglers.

enthusiast in the area. Hunting for deer and elk is popular, with deer tags available through a controlled draw every year and bull elk tags available over the counter.

For hunters seeking public land hunting opportunities, the Hood and White River game management units are the best choice, as the Mount Hood National Forest makes up the major landowner in both of these units.

For those with private land access, or a desire to hunt the rugged canyons of the Deschutes or John Day rivers, the West Biggs and Maupin units provide excellent open land hunting. Hunters need to remember to check the hunting regulations annually for important season information and application deadlines.

There are also opportunities in the Mid-Columbia for nearly every upland bird species found in the state. Forest grouse and mountain quail are found in a variety of forested habitats, with the best success in the higher elevations of the Cascades above Hood River, or in the managed timberlands above Mosier. California quail are found in nearly every riparian or agricultural habitat in the region. For pheasant, chukar, and Hungarian partridge, most hunters find the best success to be in or around either the Deschutes or John Day canyon.

In addition to upland birds, migratory birds also provide excellent opportunities and a long season. Starting with mourning doves and running through waterfowl season, there are ample opportunities in the local area for hunters to enjoy the challenge of hunting doves, ducks and geese.

For hunters who have enjoyed what our area has to offer for years, maybe it is time to look at the newer opportunities in the region. The first is the opening of the Columbia River refuge to waterfowl hunting. The area from the Celilo train bridge upriver was historically closed to hunters who wanted to pursue waterfowl on the Columbia River. Starting last year, Oregon decided that allowing hunting access along the Columbia upriver of Celilo would not have a detrimental effect on wintering waterfowl in the area and opened the area to hunting.

Also, more public lands have been added to the Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area. The River Ranch acquisition encompasses over 10,000 acres between Oak and Ferry canyons in the Deschutes river corridor. These lands are open to all hunting, and access is allowed from the Deschutes River. This remote chunk of land provides excellent opportunities for deer and upland birds, and the occasional elk or turkey. A map of this area can be found online at www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/visitors/lower_deschutes_wildlife_area.asp.

No matter what species you are pursuing, it is always essential to know the rules and regulations applicable, and also know the lands that you are hunting. Respecting private land is essential in maintaining positive relationships between our area landowners and hunters. If hunters in the area ever have questions, they can always contact the local ODFW office in The Dalles at 541-296-4628. Jeremy Thompson is the district wildlife biologist of the Mid-columbia district of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.



Choosing an Outfitter

Hiring a local outfitter can help you discover regions in your area that you may not have known about before. Trust these professionals to show you an unforgettable time, hopefully chock full of great catches and plenty of delicious grub.

WHAT IS AN OUTFITTER?

An outfitter is a person who offers services in hunting and fishing that might include guide activities, equipment, accommodation, lodging and food. Depending on the size of the operation, an outfitter may be a multi-staff organization or a sole proprietorship.

The size of the company shouldn't play a big role in your decision, but the quality of its services should. Remember you're looking for expertise in the game you're hunting, as well as the area, so choose wisely based on these factors.

HOW TO CHOOSE AN OUTFITTER

Once you decide to schedule your next big hunting trip, consider the local hotspots. Staying close to home means less time driving and more time hunting. Check in with your region's most popular outfitters to get quotes on an adventure.

Check reviews by others who have used their services. There are plenty of hunting forums online that allow hunters the chance to give their reviews. Be on the lookout through your local newspaper for upcoming specials. Follow your prospective outfitter on social media as well to stay connected.



Bighorn tags are few and far between, but could provide the hunt of a lifetime.

A Well-Planned Hunt

Good planning leads to remarkable success

By Justin McLaughlin

As I ran down the dirt road to my pickup, I felt as if I could have given the late track star Steve Prefontaine a run for his money. My mind was racing even faster, trying to register what had just taken place.

It was now 11:15 a.m. and two hours prior I was sitting on a hillside glassing two unapproachable bedded bucks lying near the top of an open side draw over 500 yards away.

One of the bucks appeared to be significantly larger. However, at that range, I wasn't quite sure how nice he really was. As I sat and waited for them to make a move, I took several pictures of him. I zoomed all the way, but still could not get a grasp on the exact size of the buck.

After an hour of watching and waiting, with the temperature on the rise, the smaller

buck decided to move to a cooler, more secluded spot to nap. Moments later, the larger buck followed suit. From my vantage point, which was also on a bare hillside across the main canyon, I could see the entire length of the side draw that the bucks had been bedded in. Midway up the side draw stood one big oak tree with half a dozen game trails dumping out of the side draw and into the main canyon.

As the two bucks made their way down the draw, a single doe appeared between the bucks and the oak tree. As the doe turned and walked toward the oak, it was as if she gave them the all-clear sign telling them to join her for a siesta.

While this was going on, I snapped more photos. Weighing my options, I remembered an article I had read by South Cox in East-

man's Bowhunting Journal titled "10 Steps to Becoming a More Effective Bowhunter." One step South wrote about was to always have a plan B.

With this in mind and still uncertain whether the bucks were going to bed in the shade of the oak tree or head out of the side draw into the main canyon, I ran different scenarios through my mind and had a different plan of action to account for each.

With the wind in my favor, plan A was to move quickly to the bottom of the main canyon and over to the base of the side draw. I had picked out a tree on the downwind side of the draw that I would sit by and try to intercept the bucks as they entered the main canyon. Knowing that I would be cutting it close to beating the bucks to the bottom, if they did choose to leave the side draw, I would need to act fast.

If the bucks chose to stay and bed under the oak, it would be time for plan B, attempting a stalk.

I crept away from my perch, slipped deeper into the main draw and hustled to the canyon floor. I discarded all unnecessary gear near a log in the bottom of the canyon, leaving me with my bow and rangefinder.

I quickly made my way up the main canyon to the tree I had chosen and hid in the shadows. I began ranging various trails that would be likely exits for the bucks to choose. To my surprise, the closet trail was 80 yards from me – from my glassing position it looked so much closer than that. Feeling the thermals starting to lift my scent up into the side draw, I knew instantly that it was time to abort plan A.

With no deer exiting the draw yet, I felt confident that the bucks had in fact chosen to bed near the oak tree. Now that I was in the bottom of the canyon, everything felt and looked steeper than I thought it to be while glassing from above. This gave me a renewed sense of hope for a successful outcome to plan B.

I jogged back down the main canyon away from the side draw that held the bucks. Once I found the route I had picked, I ascended the grassy area between two rockslides and began



heading straight for a rock outcropping which would put me above the oak tree.

With a strong, gusting wind in my face, I was able to pick my way through the boulder field quietly and with ease.

As I approached the side draw, I was shocked at how steep it was. I ranged the opposite hillside every 10 steps to within 110 yards and still could not see the top of the oak tree. After a few more steps, however, the top branches began to appear.

At that moment I realized that I had picked the perfect approach.

Less than 20 yards of rock now lay between me and the edge of the outcropping. I crawled inch by inch, gently placing my bow on the rocks by my side. With only feet to go, I nocked my lucky #1 arrow and set my bow to my left. Rangefinder in hand, I belly-crawled to the edge and caught a glimpse of tan in the sunlight between shadows. It was the back half of a bedded deer facing me with its head hidden behind the rocks.

I crawled backward a few feet and moved to my left. I then took a deep breath and once again inched forward to peek at the bedded deer. I knew instantly that it was the smaller of the two bucks. Not two yards behind the

small buck lay the doe and she was staring holes right through me! I had been spotted, and now the smaller buck had spotted me, too.

I knew this game was over in one way or another, so I had a quick decision to make – slip back to wait, hoping they would lose interest, or slip back to my bow. I did the latter.

Taking a deep breath, I drew my bow from a squatting position and rose to my feet. Assuming that the doe and smaller buck would do the same and bolt quickly, I hoped in that split-second I could locate the big buck before he knew what was happening.

I frantically scanned the shadows and at the base of the big oak his deep-forked rack and body materialized in the shade. He was bedded downhill from the small buck and doe with his back facing me.

I settled my pin and gently squeezed the trigger on my release.

After what felt like an eternity, the distinct “thwack” of a broadhead driving through hide and bone filled the canyon. The three deer exploded from their beds and ran downhill. He tried to follow a trail, but after a short 30-year sprint, he started to cartwheel downhill.

A rush of exuberance swept through me and I raised my bow in the air.

Knowing the buck was finished, I chose not to go straight to him but rather back to retrieve my pickup. I grabbed my water bottle and began the mile and a half jog down the canyon.

I must have had a million thoughts flash through my mind during that run, from wondering how big the buck would be when I finally got my hands on it, to reminiscing about how much fun and rewarding this bow season has been: Just eight days prior, I had taken a good 5X5 bull as well.

After retrieving my pickup and returning to the area where the buck lay, I took pictures on my approach to help me remember how I felt when I first laid eye on him up close. There was definitely no ground shrinkage on this buck — what I had thought would probably be a really nice four-point turned out to be a deep-forked monster 4X5 with a gross score of 185-2/8, netting 174-7/8.

For Wasco County, this buck was huge!

Justin McLaughlin lives in Dufur, and has hunted in Wasco County for over 25 years. His story was first published by Eastmans' Bowhunting Journal in 2011.



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Hunting Ethics

TIPS ON HUNTING ETHICS

Here are some tips from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources on hunting ethics and how to follow them:

- Always think of safety first and shooting game second.
- Respect the rights of land owners. You should never go on private property without permission, and remember that cooperation and respect are the keys to getting permission to hunt.
- Know your gun and what it can do. Maintain your equipment so it functions properly and does not pose a

safety threat.

- Shoot only when absolutely certain of your target, and make every effort to locate crippled or lost game.
- Pick up spent shells and other litter.
- Clean and care for your game properly.
- Alcohol and hunting can make for a dangerous combination.
- Be mindful of local regulations, and always be properly licensed. Taking game out of season and before or after legal shooting hours is poaching, not hunting.



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Gadgets for the Hunter

Whether you're planning for the perfect Christmas gift or buying a present for any occasion, you shouldn't have a problem tracking down a unique item — even for the hunter who seemingly already has it all.

WIND DETECTORS

A few companies have recently come out with innovative wind detectors that use advanced technology to identify wind direction and air movement shifts. These hand-held devices can even pick up wind that may be undetectable to humans.

Why is wind so important? Its direction and velocity can send your scent down-

wind to your target game and can wreck havoc on a bow shot. Knowing the specifics of the wind around you can help you be a more prepared, focused hunter.

RANGE FINDERS

You can purchase a range-finder that attaches directly to your bow. The newest models emit a constant beam that displays a real time reading. This helps prevent misses and gives you an accurate understanding of the distance between you and the animal.

Range-finders have long been friends to hunters looking to fire accurate shots. Being able to affix one to your weapon will help you avoid toggling back and

forth between a hand-held option and your bow, which can waste precious time.

HAND-HELD RADIOS

Communication can be everything on hunting day, especially if you're with a group of friends spread across a field or forest. You can find a rugged, reliable set of hand-held radios to help you keep in touch during inclement weather.

Most are waterproof and able to attach to your hunting vest. This makes working with your hunting party convenient. Many radios come with a desk charging station and USB cables to make sure you're always charged up.



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