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# BIG GAME HUNTS

## About This Bulletin

This bulletin is a summary of many questions we take from year to year, and it should give you a good overview of the type of experience you'll get with Circle 8 in our back country wilderness hunts. The Montana hunting season is the earliest and the longest in the lower 48 states. We start hunting in mid-September in the early camps, and move to the general season camps in late October. We wrap up with late November hunts along the Rocky Mountain front west of our place. As such, the seasons, type of hunting, weather, and many other factors evolve as we move through the Montana fall. We're sure you'll have more specific questions and we welcome hearing from you. Until then, enjoy!

## About Us

Our outfit has been continuously taking big game hunts into the mountains of Montana since the early 1920s. We've been taking hunters a long time. Our outfit was one of the first to begin taking hunts into the area now called the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Circle 8 has always been a family owned and operated outfit. We strive to provide a top-notch hunt to every guest. We do whatever it takes to ensure this high level of quality. In succeeding 100 years there have been many changes in the country, in our outfit, and in our guests. However, the one constant through it all has been our unwavering commitment to quality and dedication to service.

## The Camps

We hunt both the early and general seasons for rifle. Our early season camps are at Strawberry Creek and Big River Meadows. These camps are in elk and deer District 150 in the Flathead National Forest. Both camps are in the heart of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, which is home to one of Montana's largest big game herds. Our late season camp is on the South Fork of the Two Medicine River in elk and deer District 415 in the Lewis & Clark National Forest near Glacier National Park. All backcountry camps are accessed by horseback and pack mule train. Our camps are clean, efficient, and well equipped to support a true wilderness hunt. We also provide late season mule deer hunts on national forest land west of Choteau in late November. The deer hunts are not based in camps so they have a little different cadence to them.

### Strawberry Creek Camp

This is located at the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Flathead River on Strawberry Creek. We use this camp for our early season guided and unguided hunts in September and October. It is approximately a 7½-hour ride from the nearest trailhead. This camp has ready access to timbered bottomland as well as the open country of the Continental Divide.

### Gateway Gorge Camp

This camp is on another tributary of the Middle Fork of the Flathead River on Gateway Creek. Big River Meadows is an impressive open park nearby. We use this camp as our primary early season guided hunting camp in September and October. It is approximately a 7½-hour ride from the nearest trailhead. Strategically located between bottomland timber and open slopes of the Continental Divide, this camp has quick access to prime elk and mule deer country.

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### **Two Medicine River Camp**

This camp is located on the South Fork of the Two Medicine River. It is approximately a two-hour ride from the nearest trailhead. Our close proximity to Glacier National Park allows us to hunt the residential elk herds as well as some elk migrating out of the park to their wintering grounds. The valley is covered intermittently by open hillsides and dense timber in the bottomland. We use this camp for our general season guided hunts in late October and early November. By November, we can usually count on snow at this camp.

### **The Game We Hunt:**

#### **Elk • Mule Deer • Black Bear • Moose • Big Horn Sheep**

In our early season camps, the principle game we pursue are elk (wapiti) and mule deer. Black bear are also common in the early camps. We encourage our hunters to have the elk-deer combination licenses. There are mainly mule deer in the mountains.. During the last week of November, we hunt mule deer out of the ranch along the Rocky Mountain front. Additionally, in late November we also hunt big horn sheep along the Rocky Mountain front (if you are fortunate to draw a special big horn sheep permit).



### **Number of Hunters in Camp**

We typically limit the size of the camp to six hunters per trip. Camps of this size are consistent with the quality of hunt we provide. We are fortunate that our hunting areas are strategically located such that we can disperse hunters widely into quality areas. We will gladly accommodate hunting parties smaller than six. There is no extra charge for small groups. We will also take single hunters in the guided camps. If multiple, independent groups want the same hunt, we may choose at our discretion to combine them in the same camp. In the early rifle season we may use up to two camps in September for guided hunts. Unguided hunts are not mixed, but we may choose to fill hunts up to a maximum of six hunters in a guided camp.

### **The Trailheads**

The Bob Marshall is huge. There's no getting around it. In order to get to camp we stage out of a mix of public and private trailheads along the eastern Bob Marshall. Our main facilities are in Choteau, but we also have a trailhead near Swift Dam, west of Dupuyer and another one west of East Glacier. These are where the stock, gear, and supplies are staged, and where your hunt will begin and end.

### **Equipment**

We are confident you will find the equipment well maintained and in excellent condition. The guided camps are fully furnished. Literally, the only equipment our guided hunters need to bring is their sleeping bag, personal clothing and rifle. We have great flexibility for our unguided hunts. More information is provided on the rate sheet, or you may call for details and options on unguided hunts.

### **Camp and Food**

Our commitment to quality and service applies to everything we do. We do not cut corners with equipment, livestock or supplies. We think you would be hard pressed to find a cleaner, more comfortable, more professional camp in the mountains. There is a limit to comfort in the backcountry, but we make every effort to furnish the essentials for a high-quality camp. This includes comfortable cots to keep you off the ground at night, large heated wall tents for sleeping, large tables and benches in a comfortable dining tent, and some of the best food in the mountains. We make it a priority to serve hearty, filling meals. Breakfast and dinner are served in camp. Sack lunches are prepared for the day's hunt away from camp. Meals prepared in camp are complete with lots of meat, fresh vegetables and delightful desserts.

### **Crew**

We employ some of the finest packers, guides and cooks so that we can provide you the caliber of hunt you expect from us. We are very fortunate in that we have superior people returning annually to work our camps. We supply one guide for every two hunters.

### **Licenses and Permits**

We manage the licensing process for all of our hunters. Currently, all Montana non-resident licenses are allocated via drawing. The license application forms and pricing become available in late January, and we get that information out to you, along with additional information we require, in February. We submit the applications in March and the drawing results are available in April. Please see our "Fall-Districts-Licenses-Maps" document for more detail.

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## Meat Handling

In many states now, with the prevalence of CWD, it is not possible to take unprocessed meat back home with you. We have seen this trend reach across most all mid-western states and has reached the West as well. As such, we strongly encourage you to process meat locally. This reduces the amount of meat & weight that needs to be transported. We make every effort to get meat out of the mountains before your trip ends. This often allows the meat to be processed, frozen, and available for immediate departure with you. In the event that the meat comes out with you on the last day, we will get it to the processor in hopes that it can be processed overnight. If so, it will be ready for you when you depart the next morning for your home destination. If it cannot be processed in time, the meat processors can ship meat to you when its ready.



## Trophies

Should you wish to have your trophy done by a local taxidermist, we have trusted local partners we've worked with for years. These folks have done many of our hunters' trophies as well as our own. We are sure you will approve of their workmanship on some of our trophies around the place.

## Rifles

One of the biggest factors of success is shooting proficiency. The actual caliber weapon is less of a concern to us than your shooting confidence and accuracy. There are a great many debates to be had regarding big game rifles used out West, and our general observations are that anything in the 30 caliber range is going to be sufficient. There are other great options as well and we are happy

to answer any questions about specific rifles and ammunition.

## Included in the Hunting Trip Fee

Our mission is to provide you an outstanding big game hunting experience. For things we have control, we make sure it's done right. We take care of details for equipment, comfort, and safety. For guided hunts, we want to make sure everything is covered on our end, and that all you have to bring is your personal effects. The base daily rate for guided hunts includes the following:

- Parties up to six in guided and up to four in unguided camps
- One guide for every two hunters
- Hunting of mule deer & elk on same trip with combination license
- Hunting of fall black bear also on same trip with bear permit
- Best meals in the mountains
- All equipment in camp at your service
- Everything furnished except personal items, licenses, and rifle
- A saddle horse for each hunter for the duration of the trip
- Camp chores attended to by the crew
- Delivery of meat to the processor, and trophies to a local taxidermist
- All trips are inclusive of riding one day in and one day out of the mountains, which in all cases is a non-hunting day

## Reservations and Deposits

We require a 35% deposit to confirm your hunt. A hunt is not confirmed until the deposit is received. We may be able to hold your reservation for up to a week without a deposit, but we encourage deposits promptly once your decision is made. These deposits are not refundable with the following exceptions:

- Your deposit will be refunded if you do not receive a big game license in the event of a drawing, or it can be credited to a hunt for the following year.

## Transportation to the Ranch

If you choose to drive we will provide driving directions before you arrive. Commercial airlines (United, Delta, and Alaska) provide service to Great Falls (GTF) and Helena (HLN). We have shuttle service available for a nominal fee to these airports. In all cases you must arrive the day before the trip goes into the mountains as we pack up your gear that afternoon to ensure an early start the first day of your trip.