

North Dakota Bison Hunts

Käthe's Bison Hunt

I took the new number 1 SCI North American Bison with a crossbow last year. As usual, it was a really tough hunt, in North Dakota. In January, 2004, it was bitterly cold, lots of crusted snow and wind. I basically earned a college degree trying to figure out the anatomy of a 2,400 pound prehistoric animal. I found out that you can hit bison lots of times with an arrow and have no noticeable effect on him! Unfortunately, my guide (Dad) was not much help on the anatomy lesson, other than to count my hits in five hours as we stalked through the snow and brush after the animal. After we dressed out the critter, we both could see that the backbone/hump creates an optical illusion and that the heart is extremely low and tucked in behind the front leg bones, which no arrow can penetrate. I also learned the origin of the phrase "buffaloed": Basically if you are sneaking up behind sagebrush trying to get close enough for a shot with a bow, and if the Buffalo sees you, they will come straight at you. If you do not move, they will stomp you into the ground, into hamburger sized pieces. Unfortunately, we had not brought our Webster's dictionary with us, so we did not understand the concept. We learned fast, but too late to do us any good; we were stuck in the middle of no man's land, with the nearest tree 50 feet away. So, we did a reverse "buffaloed". When the bulls were coming straight at us, at 30 feet away, we stood up; the two big bulls (5,000 pounds of wild animal) kept coming, snorting hot breath out of their enormous heads into the icy air. At 25 feet, we started waving our hands, trying to look bigger than we were (supposed to work with bears!); the bulls never wavered but kept on coming. At 20 feet, we started shouting (you do not want to know what), the bulls kept coming but they were starting to wonder. After all, the lead bull already had two good arrows in him - maybe he wanted some retribution! We knew that a head-on shot would be useless, especially since the Bison had their heads down ready to charge. Finally, at 15 feet away, they turned and ran a semi-circle past us at 35 yards. (Two points for dad and Käthe, zero for the Buffalo). Dad was screaming to "shoot", so I did and hit the lagging bull again in what we thought was the chest cavity, but which was actually bone muscle. The arrows were slowing him down and we were able to harvest him shortly after that. That was good, because my knees were awful shaky after that. WE had Weller Wildlife Studio do a beautiful ½ mount on him. He takes up most of my personal trophy room.

Leon's Bison Hunt

The good news is that I took my Bison the day after Käthe. I had gone to school on her experience, and took mine with one lucky arrow that went completely through the animal and cut off the top the heart on the way through! He expired within 200 yards. As usual, whenever the girls hunt with me, they get the larger trophy. Hers ranked #1 SCI and mine ranked #3. Hers was aged at 8 years and mine was 10 years, so he had worn down his horns, but, he was 300 pounds heavier.