

2005 Doug Kerr Memorial Youth Leadership Hunt - October 27-31, 2005

Written by Terry Receveur



Back Row: John Vasos, Greg Szalewski, Yote Robertson, Billy Lewis, Larry O. Fischer, Bo Slaughter, Steve Anderson, Terry Receveur, Kevin Bahr

Front Row: Natalie Vasos, Chase Bahr, Chad Anderson, Jeff Receveur, Bryan Szalewski

“Leadership is the sacrificing of your time for others.” This statement by Larry O. Fischer proved to be the prevailing theme of the 2005 Doug Kerr Memorial Youth Leadership Hunt (Youth Hunt) held October 27-31 on the Fischer/Robertson ranch in Forest Grove, Montana. The practicing of what one preaches was also very evident. The PBS leadership went above and beyond the expectations of everyone involved. The giving of time to the cause was impressive. A few examples include: Bo Slaughter, Larry O. Fischer, and Joseph Myers giving up well over a week of the best hunting time of the year. As we all know, vacation time for hunting is a very rare commodity; Yote Robertson giving up four or five days of bow building to direct the youth to good hunting. This is particularly compelling in that if Yote doesn’t make bows, Yote doesn’t make money; Billy Lewis taking time away from hunting and work to set stands, escort youth to their hunting sites, and generally just making sure everyone had an enjoyable hunt; Ray Alt and Doug Campbell driving several hours one way just to give a two hour demonstration on knapping arrowheads. These two master rock breakers had the youth making their own arrowheads in short order; Mark Baker also drove several hours one way and gave up precious hunting time, with an unpunched elk, antelope, and deer tag still in his pocket, just to talk to the youth about leadership; Dick and Vicki Robertson cutting short a tremendous pheasant hunt so they could present on the past, present, and future of traditional archery. Last, but certainly not least, is the sacrifice of Jake and Samantha Fischer. These two spent their honeymoon catering to the youth on this hunt! These are just a few of the scenarios of leading by example. The immersion of the youth in such an environment had to leave a lasting impression.

The youth participating in the hunt were top notch all the way around. This is a testament to the selection process. Attending the hunt were the father and son combinations of Chad and Steve Anderson from Minnesota, Chase and Kevin Bahr from Illinois, Jeff and Terry Receveur from

Indiana, Bryan and Greg Szalewski from Wisconsin, and the daughter and father combination of Natalie and John Vasos from Michigan.

Following is a day to day account of the activities:

Thursday October 27th



Four of the five youth had arrived by 2:00 PM and were taken to the hunt headquarters in Forest Grove. Natalie and her father would arrive on a later flight. Home sweet home would be the local community center of Forest Grove. The accommodations were first rate for a hunting camp. There was no running water so restroom facilities consisted of a couple of port-o-potties. A portable solar shower was erected for those who chose to eliminate a bit of their human

odor. Three of the youth decided to not brave the elements and cold water. Their justification was that they wanted to smell au naturale. It is probably safe to say that after four days without a shower the three boys were smelling more like something decomposing in the wild than a pine scented forest!

After the stowing of gear and unrolling of sleeping bags, the crew was rounded up for a wood cutting soiree'. A short trip up the mountain to the Fischer/Robertson ranch to gather wood cutting gear and the expedition was launched. Yote served as the coordinator and chief chainsaw operator. Within minutes several trees were felled and loaded onto a trailer for processing back at the ranch. After cutting and splitting the youth stocked the wood bin of the bow building shop and loaded enough into the back of the truck to last the weekend. Within a couple of short hours the youth had cut over two cords of wood.

What seemed to be a simple task of gathering wood was actually used to teach the youth about carrying your own weight in camp. Bo and Larry expressed the sentiments that those who carry their weight in camp are those that are asked to return. This was also emphasized repeatedly in other activities. The core leadership skill of "doing what needs done, without being asked" was demonstrated over and over by the leadership team and the mentors.

The camp chef Joseph Myers prepared a tremendous dinner and the group milled around until Yote arrived for the "broadhead check". Yote, Bo, Larry, and Kevin all rehashed the critical importance of sharp broadheads. A detailed demonstration on how to sharpen two blade and three blade heads was held by Larry and Yote. The mentors seemed to be as interested in this session as the youth.

After the sharpening session Larry and Bo pulled out the gift bag to the delight of the young hunters. Thanks to the generosity of several fine vendors the youth were able to take home some pretty impressive gifts. A brief list is as follows:

- Columbia Custom Knife with Laser Engraving of the Youth Hunt by Columbia River Knife & Tool
- Hiking Pack by Bison Gear
- Safety Harness from Diane Kinney
- T-Shirt from Eclipse Broadheads
- Front License Plate from Three Rivers Archery

- Art Laha Bowhunting Legend Book from Three Rivers Archery
- Knife Sharpener from Three Rivers Archery
- Traditional Archery Handbook from TJ Conrads
- Double A Battery Pack from Kevin Bahr
- Custom Ball Cap Hats with Youth Hunt Info and the Youth's Name from Golden Specialties
- Stykbow Hat, Arrowhead, and Chase T D Belt from Robertson Stykbow

The last bit of business involved stand selection for the next morning. The only equitable method was pulling numbers from a hat. Each youth pulled a number and their location was set. Yote gave some specific instructions for where to shoot the skittish whitetails of the ranch. His most memorable quote was to “miss low”. This proved to be prophetic for a couple of the youth. He was later convinced to change his instruction to “hit low”!

The group had a very eventful day and sleep came easy. The night was fairly short with a planned 5:00 AM rousing. The snoring chorus was fairly robust and if it weren't for the group being so wore out would have disrupted some sleep.

Friday October 28th

During the early morning hours Natalie and John Vasos arrived in camp and set up their gear in the motorhome parked out front. The PBS arranged for the only young lady of the group to have some private quarters.

The group woke up to the smells of a tremendous breakfast and the sound of rain drops on the roof. Joseph woke at 4:00 AM to prepare a breakfast fit for kings! The group finished eating and prepared their gear for the morning hunt. The routine involved traveling to the ranch and separating into a few different vehicles for transportation to their stands in the field. Given the unfamiliar surroundings and the fear of spooking game out of the area, Yote gave specific instructions for everyone to stay in their stand until they were picked up.



The morning was wet and cold and those who were in Double Bull blinds fared better than those in tree stands. Chase and Chad drew the tree stands and Bryan and Jeff were in the blinds. Natalie didn't hunt and chose to sleep in due to the early morning arrival. After rallying back at the ranch the youth described their morning hunt. Jeff and Chase had an uneventful morning with no deer sightings. Chad saw several deer and had a close encounter but no shot. The morning excitement was had by Bryan who chose to follow Yote's instructions literally and “miss low”. Two does snuck up on the blind with Kevin and Bryan inside and at Kevin's nod, Bryan released the arrow. It was a clean miss just under the chest. Chase and Chad were soaked through pretty well as were several of the mentors. Chad was particularly soaked and later earned the nickname bestowed on him by Larry of “Drippy”. The firewood cutting was paying dividends with a nice warm stove to stand by and warm up. After warming up the youth grabbed their bows and headed to the field next to camp and enjoyed a spirited stump (empty water bottle) shooting session. All the youth proved to be good shots and rather competitive.

After another fine meal by Joseph the group packed up and headed to the Ranch for a tour of the shop of Robertson Stykbow. Yote gave a quick presentation on bow building and the equipment

used. Several beautiful bows were handled and coveted by the group. The Stykbows are definitely works of art.

The evening hunt was tremendous with lots of deer sightings but no shots. Jeff had a nice 3X3 milling around under his stand for several minutes. Whitetail does were the only target of the hunt so the buck was safe. What a great way to learn control under a live hunting situation.

The evening ended back at camp with another fantastic meal. The dinner table discussion involved talking about their favorite chapter of Longbow Country by E. Don Thomas. What made the book special was that many of the hunting stories took place within a few miles of where they were hunting. The favorite chapter of each youth varied and the description of why was enlightening. Larry also took this time to bestow nicknames on the rest of the youth. Natalie (aka Nat) was dubbed “Pesky” due to her insect shortened name. Jeff was ordained as the “Earle of Sandwich” due to the fact that he does not eat sandwiches. Chase was now to be known as “Chastity” simply because it was an extenuation of Chase and because Larry loved to tease him. Bryan was christened as “Ernie” due to his resemblance to the youngest son on My Three Sons. From this point forward the crew would no longer be known by their given names.

Saturday October 29th

The morning was a repeat of the previous day with lots of deer sightings but no shots. The morning was beautiful and crisp and several of the hunters had close encounters, but the difficulty of traditional archery kept the deer safe.



The mid-day lessons involved a lengthy “rock breaking” demonstration by master knappers Ray Alt and Doug Campbell. Ray described the art of knapping and skillfully demonstrated the incredible sharpness of obsidian by drawing blood on his little finger! Safety was emphasized with the use of safety glasses, leather swathes, and gloves. In a matter of a few minutes Ray had chipped out a serviceable example of a hunting arrowhead. The crew was excited to give it a try and quickly learned that it

wasn't nearly as easy as Ray and Doug made it look. After nearly an hour of the youth plying their hand at the trade, Ray and Doug wrapped up the session by presenting each of them with an arrowhead.

Prior to the evening hunt Yote organized a target shoot with the winner being assigned to the “super secret gonna have to kill ya if you tell stand”. The boys all chose to be gentlemen and pulled their shots just to the left allowing Natalie to bull’s-eye the porcupine target. Ok, so the only girl of the group put a whooping on the boys!

The evening hunt proved to be eventful and the “super secret stand” paid big dividends for Natalie. She was able to spill 1st blood by harvesting a nice button buck at about 5 PM with a perfect shot to the heart. What a great day for Natalie and John who was able to watch Natalie kill her first deer with a bow. Following is a first hand account as described by Pesky.

“I was about to fall asleep and then I heard some noise. I looked over and it was a mother and fawn and they were so cute. I chose to shoot the baby because I thought the mother could have another baby. I shot the first time and I missed. The little deer looked back because I was

making some noise getting out another arrow. I then shot again and it was right in the heart. I knew it was in the heart because it was bleeding a lot. It only went about 70 yards and then fell down.”



When relaying the story to Larry, who was amazed at how calm Natalie was and how rattled John was, she mentioned that there were two deer that came out. She said, “I hated having to choose, because I knew one of them had to die”. After everyone settled down, the deer was loaded and transported back to the ranch house, where Larry gave a field dressing demonstration.

The dinner conversation was certainly energetic and the other youth were very happy for Natalie’s success. Also discussed was the challenge and satisfaction of hunting with traditional equipment. Larry went on to explain that the feeling is even more special when you take an animal with a bow or arrow of your own making. He also mentioned that this hunt would most likely be the last on the Fischer/Robertson ranch where aluminum arrows would be allowed. He felt it was simply a line in the sand that he needed to draw for hunting in a manner he loved. The only acceptable hunting weapons would now be longbows, recurves, or selfbows with wood arrows. Part of the impetus for the change is in his

and Dick’s belief that people need to slow down and smell the roses. Today’s era of instant gratification is a bane to the sport we all love.

Following dinner Mark Baker gave a talk on leadership qualities and the need for new leaders to step forward. The talk evolved into a general roundtable discussion with contributions from the



PBS leadership and the mentors as well. The gist of the talk involved leading by example, taking initiative, having the courage to stand for what’s right, and to simply “jump in and do what needs doing”. After the talk Mark handed out copies of his CDs to all the youth. The final session of the day was a presentation and demonstration of emergency first aid by Joseph Myers. Joseph used his training as a nurse to instruct the youth in how to deal with fractures, lacerations, contusions, when and how to use a tourniquet, compression bandages, etc.

Sunday October 30th

The morning hunt was a repeat of the two previous days with lots of sightings but no shots by the youth. Greg followed in son Bryan's foot steps and managed to "miss low" on a fat doe.

After the morning hunt everyone met back at the headquarters for lunch and a blanket shoot. The wind was really howling making the shooting a bit difficult. The shoot had two objectives: 1) to determine selection order for the blanket items; and 2) to assign stand sites for the afternoon hunt. Bryan took 1st place and earned the right to hunt the "super secret stand" for the afternoon. Chad finished second and was placed in an equally good stand. Chase and Jeff also were placed in stands where Yote expected good action. The blanket selection order was determined by the number in the bottle the youth shot. Natalie won 1st pick and selected the deer hoof bow rack made by Jeff. Other hand crafted items included a beautiful arrow and felt bow case by Chad, custom arrows by Chase and Natalie, and a hand made Styrofoam beaver target by Bryan.



During lunch Larry asked the youth to describe their dream hunt. The responses were as follows:

- Bryan (Ernie) – Pig hunt with his dad in Texas. Not sure about whether spot and stalk or stand hunting. He does not want to shoot a pig over a bait pile;
- Jeff (Earle) – Bow hunt spot and stalk brown bear in Alaska with his dad;
- Chase (Chastity) – Caribou hunting in Alaska with his dad;
- Chad (Drippy) – Kodiak brown bear with his dad. He was enthralled with the prospect of the adrenaline rush it would entail;
- Natalie (Pesky) – Alligator hunting in Texas with her Uncle.

Prior to the evening hunt Terry gave the youth a deer skinning lesson on Natalie's deer. Within minutes the entire group had their hands in the activity. The youth did a great job and Natalie will have a great memento of her 1st deer.



The evening hunt proved to be the best of the trip. Chad, Chase, and Bryan all had shots at deer. Bryan connected on his second shot and killed a delicious button buck from the same "super secret stand" that Natalie killed her deer from. His father was also able to watch his son harvest his first deer with a bow. What made the event even more special was the fact that Bryan was shooting a recurve that he made himself. Bryan might have experienced a bit of buck fever as he missed his first shot at

the big doe. He calmed down a bit and made a good hit on the button buck with his second arrow.

Chase also had a shot opportunity when several deer worked their way into range. Chase having heard all the stories of others shooting under the deer, made a concerted effort to aim a bit higher. You guessed it! He shot over its back and unfortunately hit a second deer in the lower leg. Yote assessed the situation and based on the description of the hit and the lack of blood determined that the deer was not fatally hit. In fact, Chase was able to watch the deer feed and mill about for quite some time.

Chad was also fortunate to have a shot and managed to shoot over a mature doe. The only youth who didn't have a shot opportunity and seemed to have bad "Karma" was Jeff. It might have also had something to do with the fact that he hadn't showered since he arrived in camp.

When everyone met back at the ranch, Greg, Bo, Kevin, Larry, Yote, and others joined in the instruction of Bryan on how to field dress a deer. Talk about too many cooks in the kitchen. Bryan barely had room to work! What a great example of everyone wanting to pitch in and help where ever they could.

After Bryan field dressed his deer and hung it up for cooling overnight, everyone traveled back to the hunt headquarters. Dick and Vicki Robertson returned home from a pheasant hunt and joined the group for dinner. After dinner Dick gave a presentation on the past, present, and future of traditional archery. Dick emphasized the importance of getting involved and to not accept things that are detrimental to the future of our sport. He gave a brief history of the modern day era of traditional archery and the impact of the compound bow. He also mentioned the many challenges faced by his generation and the even greater challenges they should expect. Some of the threats to bowhunting include: habitat loss, land leasing, outfitters, technology, antler competition, and hunter apathy. A good discussion ensued with the mentors, youth, and PBS leadership.

After all formal activities wrapped up Yote and Billy organized a much anticipated porcupine hunt. Several of the youth and a few mentors were very excited about the possibility of taking a porcupine. The animal is quite unique to the Midwestern attendees who don't often see a porcupine. The hunt was planned and the participants specifically informed that if they shoot an animal it is expected that they use it, whether to eat or as a trophy. The excursion proved to be very exciting and just what the youth needed to burn up energy left over after sitting in stands for three consecutive days. The process involved cruising the county roads and shining a high powered spotlight in search of a porcupine. Yote and Billy proved to be excellent porcupine guides and their ability to spot distant porkys was phenomenal. After less than a half an hour on the hunt the first sticky pig was spotted. Jeff was the designated shooter as he was the only youth without a shot opportunity at a deer. After spotting the porcupine, Billy, Kevin, Jeff, Chad, and Chase all bailed out of the vehicle and sprinted toward the distant prey. This proved to be tougher than expected as the path was filled with obstacles like ditches, thick alder patches, and very steep inclines. The chase had to be fast to prevent the prickly prey from reaching the safety of the brush. The young archers and Billy converged on the porky at about the same time. After getting the animal bayed up Jeff released a couple of well placed shots for a quick and humane kill. The ecstatic group returned with a Boone and Crockett sized prickler! It was then off again after the next animal. Chad was next up and he and Jeff were the only ones with enough energy left to make the chase up a long steep hillside. They were successful and reached the porcupine before it escaped into the brush. Again a few well placed shots by Chad dispatched the porker and another trophy was collected. The next shooter was Chase and his sticky pig was quite an experience. His porky was able to get into a swamp thicket of about knee deep water. The alders were nearly impenetrable and Chase had a few arrows deflect. The porcupine was even able to climb up into a tree before Kevin could pull him back down. When it was all said and done Chase was wet from the waist down and his dad Kevin didn't fair much better. Out of his full quiver he came back to the truck with one full arrow, one half arrow, and one very big and heavy sticky pig. After this hunt the group was getting wore out and was hoping for a porcupine on flat ground and close to the road. It wasn't ten minutes before two porkers were located and our only female pig sticker was on the deck. Natalie again proved her archery prowess with a well placed shot and a quick kill on a nice porcupine. Bryan was the last archer and he decided, after smelling the critters that he didn't want to have to skin one and passed on his porker. The group



then proceeded back to camp where Joseph gave porcupine skinning instructions to the group. Three of the youth were going to have full body mounts made and Chad was going to have his made into a rug similar to a round beaver pelt. After the skinning was complete the bushed group retired for the evening well after midnight.

Monday October 31st

The hunt came to an end with another great breakfast prepared by Joseph and a lengthy discussion regarding the ethics of varmint hunting by Terry, Kevin, Bo, and Larry.

The group all pitched in to leave the camp headquarters in better condition than it was when they arrived. After cleaning, the group was loaded into vehicles for the trip to the airport. Some great discussions took place on the two hour ride and goodbyes were said. The entire group left with the anticipation of meeting in March 2006 at the Banquet in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Summary

Overall it was a terrific learning opportunity and trip for all involved. The mentors, PBS leadership, volunteers, and youth all trumpeted the success of the event. The hunting was fantastic with two youth taking their 1st deer with a bow and two others with legitimate opportunities.

Be on the lookout for Chad, Chase, Natalie, Bryan, or Jeff at your local archery club. These youth will be working for archery in the near future and are fantastic examples of what our sport needs. These five youth should definitely make you feel happy about the future of our sport. However, there were only five of them. Please take the time to mentor youth in your area and lead by example in assuring the future of our beloved sport.

A special thank you goes to Larry, Bo, Joseph, Yote, Dick, Billy, Ray, Doug, Mark and the PBS for making this a successful and fun experience.

Also, please support the following vendors as recognition for their support of this worthy event.

Donated: Books (Traditional Bowhunters Handbook & Longbow Country) and Use of the Fischer/Robertson Ranch

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