

# EPIC OUTDOORS™

WESTERN HUNTING MAGAZINE

**SPECIAL JANUARY  
EXCERPT**

**Arizona**

ELK & ANTELOPE

**Wyoming**

SHEEP, MOOSE, GOAT, ELK, & BISON

**Wolf Hunting**

**Application Strategies**

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# Wyoming SUPER TAG BULL.

SHAWN KEETON • ELK • WYOMING

**My hunt started when I received a call from Wyoming Game and Fish telling me I had won the Wyoming Elk Super Tag, leaving me standing there in disbelief.** I had never won anything in my life, and there I was being told I drew the one Super Tag for elk. “Holy sh\*t!” was my honest response – and I don’t even cuss!

I began doing a ton of research and pretty much everyone I spoke to mentioned areas 7, 55, 63, 64, and

67 for big bulls. I made the decision to go with Tre Heiner, owner of Washakie Outfitters. Not only did he hunt the areas I had pinpointed for having good quality bulls, he also offered the traditional horseback hunt I wanted. Tre built my excitement for the hunt by sending me photos and video of bulls they had seen or harvested during the early bow season.

When we arrived at the trailhead, we loaded all our



equipment on the horses and headed up the mountain. It was breathtaking – huge valleys, stone filled streams, and giant rock faces were to our left and right. We rode into camp after dark, ate, and retired to our canvas tent.

We woke to heavy snow and zero visibility. We decided to stay in camp until the snow subsided, but it never let up and we were stuck all day. The next morning dawned clear and cold, but there was so much snow we moved

to a completely a different area, which is what makes the Super Tag incredibly awesome.

The next few days we saw a few bulls but nothing I was willing to punch a Super Tag on. I had told Tre and Rory the day I arrived that I wanted an elk that would score at least 370". That is a crazy high number and I could tell from both of their reactions that they thought I was crazy. "You know that's a huge animal? Most elk never



get that size.” But, I had the Super Tag and I wanted a super elk, and if I had to go home empty handed because we didn’t find the bull I wanted that was going to be fine too. I was there for the experience and to hopefully harvest a world class animal and frankly, the experience had already been everything I had hoped it would be.

As the evening set in, we spotted several bulls coming out of the pines to feed in various locations. None of the bulls we saw met my lofty expectations, but we were encouraged that at least we were seeing bulls. Earlier that day I had also passed on a beautiful 330-class bull – everyone thought I was crazy. The ride out gave me a lot of time to think, and I couldn’t help but think that maybe

I should have taken the bull from earlier. Most hunters would love a bull that size and maybe I missed my chance. I was happy that we were seeing bulls though and even though we only had a couple of days left on the hunt, we still had a chance.

The ride off the mountain was brutal and afterward I was in pretty rough shape. You see, a month before the hunt I tore a ligament in my knee, but it was so close to my Super Tag hunt that I had no choice but to put off surgery until after the hunt. That night in the hotel was the worst. My knee swelled up, and the pain was severe. I had no idea if I could go on the next day. I loaded up on anti-inflammatory medicine and next morning I barely made it out the door.



That morning we spotted several small bulls, then moved up the mountain and glassed up a bull sitting at the edge of a clearing a few miles away. "That's the one you want," Tre said. I quickly looked through the spotting scope, confirmed that he looked good, and we decided to close the distance. On our way I took a serious tumble, landing my rifle on a rock and scuffing up my knee. As I sat pondering the situation, I couldn't help but think there was no way I could go on. I was hurting mentally and physically. I pulled myself together, and we crept over the hill. We stopped in a spot where we could see 50-75 yards in most directions. All of a sudden, I heard crashing. I thought it was a grizzly bear - branches were cracking - and then, almost magically, a bull came walking out at a slow but steady pace.

"There he is, that's him!" Tre said quickly under his breath. Then the unthinkable happened. I missed him, twice! Shot right over the top! The crazy thing was the bull acted like he never heard the shots. He simply moved on traveling at his slow and methodical pace. Then it hit me. My gun was off from the fall. I chambered my third round as he topped a small rise. He stopped and turned back giving me another broadside shot. I took a deep breath, aimed 4 inches below his belly allowing for the fact that my rifle was now shooting at least a foot high, and squeezed the trigger. At the report of the rifle I could tell the bullet had struck pay dirt. The old bull lurched forward a step or two and then turned back around and started back the way he had been going.



As if my heart hadn't had enough already, when I opened the bolt on my rifle it came out in my hand! The entire bolt just slipped right out the back of the rifle, through my hands and landed softly in the pine needles behind me. As I scrambled frantically about searching for my now missing bolt, I could hear Tre saying, "Shoot him again!" I located the bolt, dusted it off, and slid it back in my rifle along with a shell from my pocket. As I closed the bolt and threw the rifle to my shoulder for a follow up shot and the old bruiser fell. He only went about 20 yards and now I could see the side of his rack sticking up over the small knoll he had fallen on.

He was down. It was almost incredible. There were shouts of joy, hugs, handshakes, and some prayers of gratitude. As we walked up to the bull I was amazed at how big he was. I had never shot an elk, so I had nothing to compare it to. They are simply massive animals. I grasped the antlers and they were too big to reach around. The mass was incredible, but his tine length stole the show. "You have no idea what you've just shot," Tre said excitedly, "It's a monster. Way bigger than the 370 I said earlier." Rory came running over the hill and he agreed.

When we were getting the ivories out we discovered he didn't have a single tooth left in the front. All had fallen

out. A truly magnificent old bull. His face was scarred from fighting, the hair along the base of the rack was thin and the antlers showed the wear of fights long past. We had done it and here at our feet lay the reward that for so long had eluded us. We took tons of pictures from different angles and then the real work began. We quartered the animal, removed as much meat as possible, and began down the mountain.

As we rode back I started to reflect. It's not like in the TV shows. It's not easy. It's brutal riding, long days, and short nights. The hunting is hard, and it takes a toll on equipment. I tore a 3" hole in my new Kuiu rain pants, broke a speed lace buckle off my new boots, lost a pair of gloves, ran my fingers through the ends of another pair of gloves and in the end, it was all worth it. The Wyoming Super Tag is truly the hunt of a lifetime. It's an experience like no other and I could not be more thankful for the opportunity they gave me. My Kuiu gear package, another fantastic perk of the Super Tag elk hunt, kept me warm and dry, and my guides busted their butts day after day to make my hunt successful. In the end it was all worth it, every single ache, every single pain, every single shiver, every single drop of sweat, every torn article of clothing, and every bump and bruise.





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**Super Tag tickets: \$10**

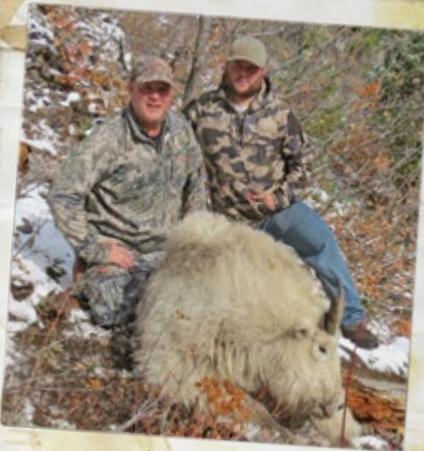
**Super Tag Trifecta: \$30**

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10 SPECIES AND 11 CHANCES TO WIN**

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2017 Super Tag  
mountain goat Winner  
James Norris

# YOUR CHANCE TO HUNT WITH THE EPIC CREW



Utah Deer



Utah Elk

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A Utah Deer hunt **GUIDED BY THE EPIC CREW**,

A Utah Elk hunt **GUIDED BY THE EPIC CREW**,

or

A **FULLY GUIDED** Alaska Dall sheep hunt with one of our Epic Approved Outfitters!

When your name gets entered into the "Referred by" box at

[epicoutdoorsmember.com/join.asp](http://epicoutdoorsmember.com/join.asp)

you get an additional entry!



Alaska Dall

**YOU CANNOT PURCHASE TICKETS FOR THIS DRAWING!**