

Share the outdoors with your spouse

It seems that at least twice a week, some young husband will call me at my office, waking me out of a sound sleep, asking for advice about getting his wife involved in the outdoors.



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

If you are one of those guys who do not want their wife along on outdoor trips, then stop reading here, because I can't help you out at all. The Mrs. is your life partner in everything from home, working, raising kids, running the household, bills, sickness and health. Why not include her in your passion for the outdoors?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 13.7 million people hunt, and 11 percent are women. Further, over 33 million people enjoy fishing and 27 percent of those anglers are women.

Whether your outdoor passion is fishing, hunting, camping, backpacking, hiking or anything in between, you won't find a better partner to enjoy it with, than your wife. Perhaps early on, your wife was not particularly interested in the outdoors, but keep trying, as she may change her mind later and give it a try. My wife went through a period, while we had small children, where she basically did not have any time to spend outdoors. Life got in the way.

I don't want anyone to construe this column as marital advice. I am not a marriage counselor, nor am I an expert on marital affairs. I have been around long enough to learn two things.

One is to always be alert and ever vigilant for possible marital pitfalls. By that, I mean learn when to be quiet and just move along, nothing to see here. The second is, you will never find a better outdoor buddy than your spouse.

Think how much more enjoyment you will have together, when you both share the same interest. Conversations at dinner can revolve around outdoor topics that you both understand and share a love for. It can really strengthen a marriage.

Start out by inviting her. Maybe she has just been waiting for you to ask. Pick something simple and not overly demanding. I would not invite her to sit in a pit blind, in the middle of a frozen cornfield in January, with the wind howling and the temperatures in the negative territory, waiting for a goose to land in snow-covered decoys, for a first experience outdoors.

Start easy and pick a nice day. You don't want her first experience to be a negative one. Never under estimate the importance of her comfort. You may be up to a 20-mile hike straight up the canyon wall, but is she?

As a veteran outdoorsman, you are probably overflowing with knowledge of all things outdoors. Don't spend the entire time playing teacher and giving her an information overload. She will learn along the way, same as you did. Remember that enjoyment is the key to a successful outing. Let her ask questions and answer them correctly.

Make the day about her. If you are heading off fishing, consider leaving your rod at home. You can be more involved in making it "her" day, if you are not worried about catching your limit. You can take pictures and enjoy the experience of her catching fish.

If there are other members in the group, make sure your wife is included. Nobody likes to be left out. Be sure the conversation is never crude or rude and respect her feelings. If she is your wife, you already know how she wants to be treated. If you are worried that your wife can't hang with you while the guys are just being themselves, then you have got bigger problems.

Compromise always comes into these types of situations. You should take an interest in the things she likes to do. Spend a day with her and she spends a day outdoors with you. In time, you will grow to share the same passion and enjoy it together.

The most important thing in getting your wife involved, is don't give her your hand-me-downs. For example, clothing comes to mind. Let her pick out and buy the clothing needed for her to take part. Having her clamber around in your old clothes is not the answer.

Fishing equipment is where I see the most mistakes.



I have shared over 40 years enjoying the outdoors with my wife. Here are a few ideas to help you enjoy the outdoors with yours. Happy anniversary Carol. (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/ Mark Rackay)

Husband wants a new rod and reel combo. He gives wife the old one, which is probably worn out, as an excuse for him to go buy new.

Later, wife hooks into huge fish of a lifetime, but because she has old and inferior equipment, fish is lost. Clothing, fishing tackle and just about all sporting equipment comes in all various shapes, sizes, colors and fit. Pick out as good, or better, quality equipment with her as you would use yourself. Don't send the love of your life into the great outdoors with "old and inferior," at least not if you want her to go with you again.

Don't push it. Maybe she just wants to go along and observe, but not take part. My wife loves to go deer hunting with me. She has no interest in ever shooting a deer, but she loves to go along for the hunt. That's ok by me, because she is at least along and really wants to be there. Besides, she has a great set of eyes and sees big bucks long before the rest of us.

Remember, this is not relationship advice. There will be trials, bad days, and even argument afield along the way. This is all part of growing together and sharing a common love of the outdoors. Stay with it and you both will be better off together for it.

Yesterdays date, back in 1977, my wife Carol and I tied the knot at the courthouse,, in Golden, Colorado. We were

just teenagers then, with everything in front of us. The knot we tied must have been a pretty good one, because it has lasted 41 years and is as strong as ever.

We have done it all, from scuba diving all over the Florida Keys and Caribbean, to fishing everywhere in North America. From owning businesses, raising kids, racing offshore powerboats to . . . well, that list goes on forever. Here is to spending at least another 41 years chasing our passion of everything outdoor related, together. We have big plans and will do it together.

As a side note, we spent our honeymoon in the Winemuche Wilderness Area, located near Bayfield, Colorado, fishing for trout on the upper Pine River. Three glorious days of fishing before having to return to work back in Denver. We spent those days fishing, because we had to. Our honeymoon was in May and hunting season was closed.

Thanks for being my soul mate, and always being there. I look forward to the rest of our lives together.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

CPW announces board openings

STAFF REPORT

Colorado Parks and Wildlife announces an application process for board of director positions for the newly created Colorado Nongame Conservation and Wildlife Restoration Cash Fund.

CPW is looking for board members to represent the following categories:

- Two representatives from private sector wildlife rehabilitation centers;
- One representative of the Colorado

Federation of Animal Welfare Agencies;

- One CPW employee;
- One wildlife biologist employed by Colorado higher education institution or a non-state entity;
- One representative from a wildlife conservation organization whose mission focuses on conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems and habitat protection for biodiversity;
- One member of the general public with an interest in non-consumptive uses of wildlife

or wildlife rehabilitation.

Board participation will be on a voluntary basis. Members will serve without compensation and without reimbursement for expenses incurred while fulfilling their responsibilities. The board is comprised of seven members, appointed by the CPW director, serving staggered three-year terms. No member shall serve more than six years.

Interested parties can fill out the application at cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/TrailsGrantsNM.aspx.

The Colorado nongame check-off, a voluntary contribution program through tax returns, provides critical conservation funding for approximately 750 species of wildlife that cannot be hunted, fished or trapped. Funds go to projects that manage or recover wildlife including birds of prey, lynx, river otter, black-footed ferret and others.

For more information about the nongame check off program please visit: <http://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/Tax-Checkoff.aspx>.

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