

GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR GUIDE AND OUTFITTER

TIPS FROM THE POSSE

BY MARK RACKAY



Brent Dukehardt (right), guide at Cross Mountain Outfitters, with a hunter, offered some suggestions to make your Colorado hunting experience a success.

requirements or have physical limitations, make sure the outfitter knows this ahead of time, so they can be properly prepared.

Don't hit camp with unreasonable expectations. Do your homework ahead of time to know what game, and the size, is available in the area you are booking. Your outfitter can provide you with past years results, pictures and success percentages.

Zach said, "Be honest with yourself and your outfitter about your physical abilities. Certain hunts can be physically demanding, while others are fairly easy. Some hunters show up with serious health problems, that the outfitter had no knowledge of. To ignore these health problems on a hunt can lead to serious trouble."

"If something is not right, you need to let us know right away, so we can fix it. We can't fix it if we don't know about it, or we hear about it months later. We want you to have a great time and let us know immediately if something is wrong," offered Prock.

The hunting guide is the person you

familiar with all your equipment," continued Brent.

It is a good idea to make sure you can handle your rifle and it's recoil. Having a gun that is too large, or kicks too much will only result in a miss or a wounded animal. Just don't buy too much gun.

Dukehart said, "If you are not comfortable with a shot, or distance is too far, let your guide know. We will work to get you closer, where you are comfortable. Remember, communication is the key."

"The most important thing to remember is to not guide the guide. The guide does this hunting year round and knows the animals and terrain of the area you are hunting. Let him do his job because it is just as important to the guide that you succeed as it is to you," offered Dukehart.

For most people, this hunt is the "hunt of a lifetime" and it will be more fun if you relax. If you, as the hunter, are on pins and needles, your guide will be as well. Relax and enjoy the experience and everyone will have more fun.

suggestions to make your Colorado hunting experience a success.

BEFORE you take this hunting trip, I am sure you did your homework about the outfit you will be hunting with. Checking referrals and doing your research will assure that you will get the type of experience you hope for. But let's look at it from the other side and discuss what your guides and outfitter expect from you, and what you can do to get the most from your upcoming hunt.

I spoke with Zach Prock, owner and outfitter of Kinikin Outfitters. The outfitter is the person who runs the camp and makes all the arrangements. Zach has been running several lodges and hunting camps for deer and elk for over 20 years. Zach has had hunters from all over the world and offered a few things that you can do to get the most from your hunting trip.

"Remember that it is about the experience as a whole and not just the actual kill of an animal. You are on vacation and going to spend 5 to 7 days in some of the most beautiful mountains on earth. Take it all in and enjoy it," said Prock.

"Most outfitters go through great lengths to make sure you have all the information you need, long before the trip. They should have lists of recommended equipment and clothing, and advise you as to what type of weather conditions to expect. Ask lots of questions, before time, so you know just what to expect. This way, you are prepared and there are no surprises," continued Prock.

Most of the hunting camps and lodges will go to great lengths to make sure you are comfortable and well fed. If you have special dietary

The hunting guide is the person you are going to spend the most time with. You and the guide will be companions in the field, and he is responsible for your success. I had a conversation with Brent Dukehart, of Cross Mountain Outfitters. Brent has been an elk and deer guide for nearly 20 years. "The most important thing between a guide and hunter is communication. Let the guide know if you are tired or hurting. If you need to rest, then rest. The hunts are usually 5 days, so not everything needs to be done right away," explained Brent.

"Most camps have a wound policy in place. You should be sure of all your equipment, long before you arrive in camp. Practice shooting your rifle or bow as much as possible, and try to duplicate field conditions. You won't be able to shoot your elk from a bench. Be



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Zach Prock, shown here with his son Trevor, of Kinikin Outfitters has been running hunts for over 20 years. Zach shared some tips so that you can have an excellent hunt.

Do your homework long before the big trip, and be as prepared as you can be. When the big trip comes, just remember that the most important thing is to be safe and have a good time.

Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

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 for the Montrose County Sheriff's