

Disabled Hunters in Nevada NOW Have Help

By John McKay

Life for anyone who has a severe disability is full of questions. Can I do that, can I go there, can I... Questions that often concern the simple, mundane tasks in daily life that most of us take for granted, let alone the fun things that give our lives quality, meaning and happiness. Until recently, the question for disabled hunters in Nevada was whether they could get into the field and enjoy their sport. N.O.W. they have an answer.

Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs (N.O.W.) is the work of Virginia City residents Rob & Darcy McMillin. A life-long outdoorsman and avid hunter, Rob never gave much thought to having the ability to do the things he loved. But after Rob was involved in a serious motorcycle accident and lost his right leg below the knee, he struggled mightily for three years to get himself back to where he could hunt again. "After suffering my own disability, I was blessed with a new understanding of the value of my hunting experiences not only to my physical recovery, but to my emotional and spiritual healing as well," Rob said.

The drive to get outdoors and go hunting was one of Rob's strongest motivations during his recovery. It was then that Rob realized how

fortunate he was in comparison to hunters with more severe disabilities; knowing that a wheelchair, a temporary part of his recovery, was a constant consideration for others. After recovering from the accident he began looking for a way to help others with physical challenges.

The idea for N.O.W. came after Ron watched a television show highlighting a program that provides hunting experiences to severely disabled people. Ron searched Nevada for a similar program and finding none, N.O.W. was born.

Ron chose pronghorn antelope for the inaugural hunt and early this summer signed up the first participant. With their hunter on board, Ron and Darcy immediately got to work to make the hunt happen. A wall tent and cots were donated by two area businesses and word of N.O.W. quickly spread throughout northern Nevada and donations and pledges of support started to pour in. The puzzle was coming together, but one big piece still remained to be put in place; securing an antelope tag.

The vast majority of Nevada big game tags are allotted through a computerized draw conducted in the spring and the draw had already passed so Ron would have to find a tag by some



The Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs (NOW) provides hunting experiences for severely disabled sportsmen.

other means. After a couple of early dead ends, Ron was able to secure not one, but two landowner compensation tags with the help of Chad Bliss, chairman of the Eureka County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife.

After adding another hunter for the second antelope tag, the hunt was officially on.

Ron, Darcy, Chad, hunters, friends and family headed into the field in late August elated that the dream of N.O.W. had so quickly become a reality. The hunt was a huge success with both disabled hunters successfully harvesting their antelope and as a final bit of icing on the cake, Rob McMillin, owner of Captured Moments Taxidermy is donating the mounts.

While N.O.W. is off to a great start, lessons were learned and much work remains to build off of this year's success and secure the program's future. Gaining non-profit status, purchasing an off-road wheelchair and securing sources of long-term, stable funding and big game tags are just a few of the challenges facing Ron and Darcy. But if their accomplishments thus far are any indication



N.O.W. members after a successful antelope hunt.

of what the future holds, disabled hunters in Nevada have every reason to believe N.O.W. will be around to lend them a hand.

You can make a donation, read the full story and view a video of this year's antelope hunt or find out more about Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs by visiting their website at www.nvoutdoorsmen.com.

67 Years of Hunting...and Counting

By Aaron Meier

When Nevada Department of Wildlife game biologist Mike Dobel first met Roger Iveson, the then 70-year-old hunter was cleaning his ducks after a successful day of waterfowl hunting in Northern Nevada.

"I had seen him around several times before, so I went up and introduced myself. When he said his name was Iveson, I mentioned that I knew several Ivesons in the area. He smiled and half joking-half serious replied 'Well, I'm the Iveson that hunts.' Even though anyone who knows the Ivesons knows that they are all avid hunters, he wanted to make sure I knew who the serious hunter was," said Dobel.

The now 75-year-old native Nevadan got his chance to prove that

fact like never before this season as he defied the odds and drew antelope, deer, elk and bighorn sheep tags all in the same year. Dobel estimates the odds of drawing all four hunts at more than 2,000 to one.

"I started scouting in July, since then, I've only been home a couple of times to stock up



Roger Iveson after a successful elk hunt. The 75-year-old sportsman drew antelope, elk, deer, and bighorn sheep tags this year.