



# Mendocino County Blacktail Deer Association's *Blacktail News* Magazine

April 2024



## **In This Issue:**

- Introducing Biologist David Casady
- Lake County Banquet
- Ukiah Banquet 2023
- Humboldt Banquet
- Mind If I Hunt?
- Mountain Lion Attack
- MCBA's Agenda 23

16th Annual Ukiah Banquet April 20, 2024



# Jere Melo Foundation

PO Box 118, Fort Bragg, CA 95437 | Phone: 707 813-6928



Printed by:  
**The UPS Store**  
916-714-8000

Experience the Difference



**RAINBOW** America's Country Store™

**UKIAH** - 707 462 2404  
235 E. Perkins St, Ukiah

**LAKEPORT** - 707 279 0550  
1975 Argonaut Rd, Lakeport



1600 5TH STREET, EUREKA, CA 95501 (707) 443-6328  
955 N STATE STREET, UKIAH, CA 95482 (707) 468-6474



**R-WILD HORSE RANCH**  
Platina, California Phone 530-352-4222

6700 Highway 36 West, Platina, CA 96076



**TRAILER & RV** PARTS

707.459.2423 - 1471 South Main St - Willits - Toll Free 1.877.444.4101

**Auto Mart Auto Repair**

Bill Carter  
Owner  
707.459.1344  
101 N. Lenore Ave.  
Willits, CA 95490

AutoCare Center ASE APPROVED AUTO REPAIR

Special Financing Available OAC



**MAX'S SEM**

**Keith's Family Food Center**



76201 Covelo Rd, Covelo, CA 95428  
(707) 983-6633 [www.keithsmarket.iga.com](http://www.keithsmarket.iga.com)

**KITTLE'S**  
EST. 1999  
**Outdoor & Sport Co.**

888 Market Street, Colusa, CA 95932  
(530) 458-4868 (HUNT)



707-462-1492  
[www.farm-supply.com](http://www.farm-supply.com)  
300 Talmage Rd. Ukiah, CA 95482



**The Bottle Shop Deli**



152 Talmage Road, Ukiah, CA 95482 (707) 462-8849

**Grundman's Sporting Goods**

Hunting, Fishing, Archery, Gunsmithing



75 Wildwood Ave Rio Dell, CA 95562 (707) 764-5744



**WESTSIDE OUTDOORSMAN**

# President's Message

BY PAUL J. TROUETTE

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

Dear MCBA friends and supporters

The Mendocino County Blacktail Deer Association (MCBA) could not exist without you. Your support in all aspects of our mission has never been more vital and we appreciate you and all your efforts.

First, as you may recall from our profile in 2023's **Blacktail News**, our resident wildlife biologist and MCBA mainstay, Jack Booth, has moved on to be closer to his family and relocated out of state. As we say farewell to Jack, MCBA is pleased to introduce David Casady, recently retired from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), who is an expert on black-tailed deer and welcome him to the MCBA fold. David also previously worked with Jack and he considered Jack a mentor.

Many of you recognize David from his work on the [Mendocino Black-tailed Deer Population Assessment Project](#), sponsored in part by MCBA, or possibly as the supervisor of the Big Game Unit with CDFW before he retired (see pages 4-6 for more information on David). As a wildlife biologist, David is very familiar with our mission and is one of the reasons we continue to learn and improve our knowledge base in managing deer and wildlife management as a whole. I personally want to thank David and owe him a huge debt for sharing his knowledge, passion, and for his tireless efforts over the years.

Second and more importantly, David and I have worked diligently to develop a long-term black-tailed deer monitoring project (see pages 16-17) that will provide us with an estimated population of predator/prey species in the Mendocino National Forest system. The data will help inform regulatory recommendations that can improve our deer herds. MCBA's project is supported by Region 1 at CDFW and we secured the necessary approvals from the Mendocino National Forest service headquarters to begin this vital project for the next three years.

As we have done for many years, our goal is to bring products and results that make a real difference to all of you who spend your hard-earned dollars blacktail hunting, which brings me to this request; MCBA is seeking 500 stakeholders to each donate \$400 to fully fund this massive effort. This project will provide an essential link of information to sportsman groups recreating in public lands. MCBA believes that if you spend dollars on blacktail efforts, we should deliver those dollars to on-the-ground projects to support our blacktail herds.

MCBA continues to enjoy support from our state and federal partners because we are focused on our mission, and we produce results! This project will provide benefits to our beloved black-tailed deer, and our partners are extremely happy for the support you have all provided with your generous gifts. This is our brand folks, and we believe in local dollars supporting local blacktail projects.

Please help us fund this monumental project and stay tuned for the results. In addition, if you are a donor/funder for this project, your name will be acknowledged in our project report.

Sincerely,  
*Paul Trouette*

*Paul is a longtime resident of Mendocino County and lifelong hunter. He can be reached at (707) 489-9663 or at [mendodeer@yahoo.com](mailto:mendodeer@yahoo.com)*





## Longtime CDFW Scientist Joins MCBA as Advisor

### David Casady is a Respected California Deer and Big Game Expert

David Casady is a recent retiree of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), serving the people of California for 26 years. Before leaving the department, David worked as the supervisor of the Big Game Unit providing oversight and coordination of the Large Mammal Conservation Programs including the deer, elk, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, wild pig, black bear, and the Private Lands Habitat Enhancement (PLM) programs. David's primary focus as the Big Game Supervisor was to update the species management plans and to implement long-term monitoring efforts that would directly support informed management and objectives identified in the species' management plans.

Prior to working as the Big Game Unit Supervisor, David worked as the statewide big game assessment coordinator focusing mainly on deer and elk populations. In this capacity, David determined which science-based methodologies could be used to assess populations and he enacted long-term monitoring plans for deer and other big game. Long-term monitoring efforts included the B Zone and South A Zone monitoring projects that demonstrated that scientifically robust methods like GPS radio collars, helicopter surveys, camera-trapping, and fecal DNA analysis could be used to assess populations. David also heavily collaborated on developing the South and Central Deer Monitoring Plans that are being carried out today.

The early part of David's career was spent as the Central Coast Region's deer and elk field biologist working to implement the herd management plans and functioning as the Regional PLM program coordinator. To enact the directives in the herd management plans, David gained extensive experience with the capture and handling of deer, elk, and mountain lions using a



*Monitoring the vitals of a black-tailed doe captured during study.*

variety of methods including chemical immobilization, helicopter net-gunning, and clover and corral trapping. As the PLM program coordinator, David collaborated with landowners and the local biologists to develop highly-beneficial habitat enhancement practices to benefit deer, elk, and other species. It was during this time that David met and began working with Jack Booth and Paul Trouette on deer issues in and around the Mendocino National Forest (MNF).

In fact, David considers one of his greatest achievements to be the completion of the [Mendocino Black-tailed Deer Population Assessment Project](#). This project was a five-year cooperative investigation between CDFW and researchers at the University of California at Davis. The project came about due to serious concerns about the black-tailed deer population with reports, that began several decades ago, of a sharp decline in hunter harvest. The public,

including the newly-formed [Mendocino County Blacktail Deer Association \(MCBA\)](#), requested a field investigation to determine the extent and the causes of the decline, along with recommendations to reverse the trend and restore the populations. This study followed a previous study by David that was focused on habitat use by black-tailed deer in the MNF, which was used to direct habitat enhancement projects. Results from the population assessment project indicated that the deer in the forest during the study period were experiencing issues caused mainly by poor habitat, which caused the deer to take greater risks to find food and led to a greater chance of being killed by a predator. The higher likelihood of predation, compounded with abnormally high doe and fawn mortality rates, caused a decline in deer numbers.

Recommendations from the project included tracking the population change annually, mapping and enhancing fawning areas along with winter and summer ranges, determining mountain lion and black bear population dynamics and their effect on the deer population, investigating the differences in fawn survival among habitat areas due to coyote predation, and quantifying the relationship between fawn survival and summer habitat use. This information can be compared to other areas to determine if they are experiencing the same issues.

David's philosophy is that wildlife is a public resource and that public employees of government agencies entrusted with the management and conservation of these resources should act responsibly to uphold

their mission. Further, David believes that government work and the expenditure of public money associated with resource management should be readily transparent and there should be a positive relationship between those serving and those being served.

As a contributor to the mission of the MCBA, David's goals are to work toward improving the conditions and populations of California black-tailed deer and other wildlife through a science-based approach across large-scale landscapes, and to work with the resource management agencies to implement on-the-ground species management actions that will benefit entire ecosystems. David believes that thoughtful planning, monitoring, and focused efforts will create the most benefit to the wildlife, and the public.

David earned his Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife management from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. It was here that he was inspired by leaders in the field of deer management to focus on ungulates as a career path. After earning his B.S., David continued his



*Helicopter darting Tule elk bull on the eastside.*



formal education at New Mexico State University where he earned a Master of Science degree in wildlife science and statistics. His graduate work focused on mule deer and elk habitat use and habitat enhancements in the Gila National Forest.

Some selected, peer-reviewed scientific publications coauthored by David include the following:

Casady, D.S., J.K. Garcia, and K.E. Mayer. 2023. California Woodland and Chaparral Ecoregion. Chapter 13 in J.R. Heffelfinger and P.R. Krausman, editors. *Ecology and Management of Black-tailed and Mule Deer of North America*, CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL.

Jackson, D.H., K.R. McCoy, S.M. McCorquodale, S.J. Hanson, S.R. Pendergast, and D.S. Casady. 2023. Coastal Rainforest Ecoregion. Chapter 10 in J.R. Heffelfinger and P.R. Krausman, editors. *Ecology and Management of Black-tailed and Mule Deer of North America*, CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL.

Bose, S., T.D. Forrester, D.S. Casady, and H.U. Wittmer. 2018. Effect of activity states on habitat selection by black-tailed deer. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 82:1711-1724.

Langner, C.O. and D.S. Casady. 2018. Field method for estimating the weight of tule elk from chest circumference. *California Fish and Game* 104:28-33.

Bose, S., T.D. Forrester, J.L. Brazeal, B.N. Sacks, D.S. Casady, and H.U. Wittmer. 2017. Implications of fidelity and philopatry for the population structure of female black-tailed deer. *Behavioral Ecology* 28:983-990.

Marescot, L., T.D. Forrester, D.S. Casady, and

H.U. Wittmer. 2015. Using multistate capture-mark-recapture models to quantify effects of predation on age-specific survival and population growth in black-tailed deer. *Population Ecology* 57:185-197.

Allen, M.L., L.M. Elbroch, D.S. Casady, and H.U. Wittmer. 2015. Feeding and spatial ecology of mountain lions in the Mendocino National Forest. *California Fish and Game* 101:51-65.

Forrester, T.D., D.S. Casady, and H.U. Wittmer. 2014. Home sweet home: fitness consequences of site familiarity in female black-tailed deer. 2014. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* 69:603-612.

Allen, M.L., L.M. Elbroch, D.S. Casady, and H.U. Wittmer. 2014. Season variation in the feeding ecology of pumas (*Puma concolor*) in northern California. *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 92:397-403.

Casady, D.S. and M.L. Allen. 2013. Handling adjustments to reduce chemical capture-related mortality in black-tailed deer. 2013. *California Fish and Game* 99:104-109.



David Casady with MCBA President Paul Trouette

# *6th Annual Lake County Banquet*

March 23, 2024 at the Lake County Fairgrounds





# Lake County Annual Banquet - 2024





# Mind If I Hunt?

*By John Wagenet*

**M**y Dad, Gordon Morrison Wagenet, was an outdoorsman and an avid hunter. In 1947 he convinced Mom, a city girl from Nebraska, that moving to Willits, California, was a terrific plan. My grandfather, Russell Gordon Wagenet, worked for the federal government and knew business men across the United States. Russel Ells owned a sawmill in Willits and that was Dad's ticket to a new life in northern California.

There was no shortage of hunting stories, tall and real, told at any meal and especially flowing freely at cocktail time. I was the second son of four boys and one girl. Dad was an excellent storyteller and had us captivated, even at the hundredth telling of bringing home a big buck.

Inspired by Dad, I literally lived for the outdoors. The townsfolk questioned Dad's wisdom of building a house "Way out there," when he



*Author John Wagenet with a beautiful 4x4 blacktail taken in the Mendocino National Forest in 1997.  
All story pictures courtesy of John Wagenet.*



acquired three acres of brush .6 of a mile from Willits, up a dirt road (Sherwood Road). It was heaven for me and still is as I now occupy the family home with my wife, Anita.



Every year there were numerous hunting trips both local, to Modoc County, and the Mendocino National Forest. My first buck was taken in Mendocino National Forest on a backpacking trip to Hammerhorn Mountain.

Hunting is a passion. It is primal and an all consuming urge to bring home sustenance. To be successful one must immerse himself in nature and learn the ways of the woods. Attention to every sound, every breath of wind, a deer bed, a rubbed willow or madrone, browsed poison oak or a partial spore on a muddy hillside, all are clues to success.

With Dad as my mentor and guide, I began my deer hunting at age 12 and have hunted every year since. Countless hours camping, hunting, and living in nature have led me to write of my adventures and how I was able to bring home, to date, six Boone and Crockett bucks, all from Mendocino County! There is a cosmic glue that

binds us to Mother Earth and her bounty. Learning to move with the current and letting Mother Nature reveal her bounty has led me to a wealth of venison and a reasonably healthy lifestyle.

As the second weekend of July approaches, and bow and then rifle season in Mendocino County opens, dreams of the big buck and the hunt rise from their winter hibernation and the yearly challenge begins anew.

My good friend, Paul Trouette, and I share a deep love of the hunt and a desire to preserve the habitat that affords great hunting in Northern California.



*Author John Wagenet is currently writing his memoirs, **Mind If I Hunt?** This book, which details the hunts and methods, both successful and unsuccessful, of those used in hunting and taking blacktails and other game in Mendocino County.*



# First Annual Humboldt County Blacktail Deer Event A Rousing Success!

Fortuna River Lodge was the setting for more than 200 attendees that came out to support blacktail deer in California.



**MCBA would like to recognize:**

- Aaron Ostrom - Pacific Outfitters
- Fred Grundman - Grundman's Sporting Goods
- Jenny Milsap Family (antler display)
- Mike Cameron
- Jack Foster family
- Rex Bohn, Humboldt County Supervisor
- Michelle Bushnell, Humboldt County Supervisor
- Fortuna FFA (Hanna)
- Native Sons - open bar
- Brett Schuler and staff - Catering
- Fortuna River lodge staff
  - ◆ Jennifer
  - ◆ Mikey

**Antler Donations**

- Jeannie Fulton - Redwood Region Logging
- Leonard Ward
- Johanna Radoni

**Additional recognition to:**

- Tim Nickols
- Jenny Milsap
- Jack Foster
- Dutch Kovffeld

**Gun Table Sponsors:**

- Brandon Burnwell
- All 12
- MagBags
- C Manzi
- Humboldt GC Gas
- Victorine Brothers

- Watering Hole Meats
- Kelly Victorine
- 7 11 Cattle Company
- Burgess Electric
- Cook Timber Falling & Logging
- Dirty Dogs
- Chris Freeman
- Swanson
- Springville Meats
- Jarod Dericco
- Kyle Lance
- Grizzly Mountain Cutting
- Morss Excavation
- Foster Farms
- Dan Shoemaker
- Willis & Friends

**Table Sponsor**

- Fortuna Ace Hardware



# *Humboldt County Annual Banquet - 2024*





# Humboldt County Annual Banquet - 2024



Jack Booth







## Benbow Historic Inn

445 Lake Benbow Drive  
Garberville, CA 95542  
(707) 923-2124



**BARRA of Mendocino Winery**  
7051 North State Street  
PO Box 196 (Mailing address)  
Redwood Valley, CA 95470  
**Winery Phone: (707) 485-0322**

### Welcome To Anchor Charter Boats And The Trek II

# Anchor Charter Boats

- Salmon Fishing
- Rockfishing
- Crabbing
- Tuna Fishing
- Whale Watching
- Bird Watching
- Eco Tours



**FORT BRAGG, CA**

**707-964-4550**

## Black Butte River Ranch— RV Park, Camping and Country Store

34985 Etsel Ridge Road  
Covelo, CA 95428

707-983-9438 [tom@blackbutteriverranch.com](mailto:tom@blackbutteriverranch.com)

## FREY VINEYARDS

**America's first organic and Biodynamic winery**

14000 Tomki Rd, Redwood Valley, CA 95470

**707-485-5177**

*Biodynamic  
Field Blend,  
Mendocino,  
California, 2014*



## Mendocino Redwood Company and Humboldt Redwood Company

32600 Holquist Ln, Fort Bragg, CA 95437  
(707) 962-2800



**Humboldt  
Redwood™**  
NATURALLY STRONG. NATURALLY BEAUTIFUL.

*Managing the Forest*





## Little River Inn

7901 N. Highway One  
Little River, CA 95456  
(Two miles south of Mendocino village)

Info@LittleRiverInn.com

1-707-937-5942

1-888-INN-LOVE (Toll Free)

1-707-937-5667 (Pro Shop/Golf Course)

1-707-962-2240 (Spa)

1-707-937-3944 (Fax)

**Lodging**

**Dining**

**Golf**

**Weddings**

**Meetings**



## Parducci Vineyards



Deep Roots, Legendary Wines

501 Parducci Rd, Ukiah, CA 95482

(800) 362-9463

CRAFTING SMALL LOT ARTISAN WINES FOR OVER 80 YEARS.

## Silver's at the Wharf



Silver's at The Wharf Restaurant, Lounge and Lodging. Located in on the scenic Noyo Harbor Fishing Village in beautiful Fort Bragg California.

For Reservations call (707) 964-4283.



Come visit MCBA on [Facebook!](#)







## MENDOCINO COUNTY BLACKTAIL DEER ASSOCIATION

### Announces New Stakeholder Initiative

*FOREST AND WILDLIFE HEALTH INITIATIVE AGENDA 23*

The Mendocino County Blacktail Deer Association (MCBA) is pleased to announce the launch of the ***Forest and Wildlife Health Initiative Agenda 23***, with the mission of fostering a collaborative effort between land managers, wildlife managers, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders, to create a balanced agronomic approach to the maintenance of our public lands in northwestern California that restores and maintains healthy forest ecosystems and wildlife populations. To accomplish this mission, the MCBA is taking a comprehensive balanced view of our public lands and wildlife resources and then launching cooperative projects to tackle specific conservation challenges as they arise. We believe that for far too long, non-profit groups and the public have been polarized and not working together to effectively address pressing conservation challenges. We will accomplish our projects through grassroot stakeholder meetings, town halls, securing funding, and building workforces.

Our strategy is to inventory the current conditions of the wildlife and habitat, that is, collect immediate data in order to directly inform decisions about where to focus conservation efforts, including habitat enhancements and monitoring. Once areas of need are identified, we will develop strategies and implement collaborative projects based on an ecosystem management approach to tackle the problems. Finally, we will evaluate the outcomes of our projects to measure success and guide refinements moving forward. We believe that a program that addresses all of these aspects is the best approach and represents the entire public interest.

The Mendocino Blacktail Deer Association was formed in 2008 as a 501(c)(3), non-profit California Public Benefit Corporation, with the specific purposes of improving the conditions of black-tailed deer populations and other wildlife through financial support for habitat improvement, education, and research projects. In order to fulfill its mission, the MCBA works cooperatively with Federal and State natural resource management agencies, non-profit conservation organizations, and other stakeholders to support and conduct projects to directly enhance black-tailed deer populations, their habitats, the vital relationships of their predators, and the greater ecological community.

We are asking for your support on this critical mission to restore and maintain our public lands and wildlife in northwestern California. Together with commitment we can achieve this mission.

For more information on current projects and to get involved please contact:

***Paul Trouette, President, Mendocino County Blacktail Deer Association***

1 (707)-489-9663 or [mendodeer@yahoo.com](mailto:mendodeer@yahoo.com).



## MENDOCINO COUNTY BLACKTAIL DEER ASSOCIATION - NEW PROJECT *LONG TERM MONITORING PROJECT 2024*

---

### **THE PROBLEM**

With the increasing decline of deer on northern California public lands, MCBA has developed a new project that follows the commonsense approach to problem solving. First, figure out where we are, then figure out why we are there, and then fix it. As a crucial first step to address the declining black-tailed deer populations in northwestern California, the MCBA and other deer conservation non-profit organizations requested that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) conduct a scientific field investigation to determine the rate and causes of the decline and provide recommendations to reverse the trend. As a result, CDFW made the investigation a priority and partnered with researchers from the University of California Davis to conduct the field study. The final report, "Black-tailed Deer Population Assessment in the Mendocino National Forest," was completed in December 2014. Results indicated that deer were indeed declining at a high rate, primarily due to predation and poor habitat conditions. Recommendations from the study included continued monitoring of the deer population annually and enhancing habitat conditions on seasonal ranges and fawning areas.

Based on these findings and recommendations, the current challenge is to determine how to best use our limited resources to effectively reverse the downward trend and maintain healthy black-tailed deer populations on our public lands over the long term. This new project will build off the previous work to evaluate the current conditions in order to guide effective habitat enhancement work and inform regulatory changes.

### **THE SOLUTION**

The "LONG TERM MONITORING" project is designed to initially estimate the abundance and distribution of black-tailed deer, black bears, mountain lions, and coyotes in the Mendocino National Forest first, and then move to the Trinity, Six Rivers, Shasta-Trinity, and Klamath Forests, covering the B-Deer Hunt Zones. The information gained from this project will provide us with the current conditions and relationships between habitats and predator and prey, in very specific geographical areas, which, in turn, give us specific change goals. This project, once implemented, will produce information that will tell us what is going on in our lands and peer reviewed scientific documents that will be key to introducing regulatory recommendations to the CDFW and US Forest Service.

### **THE CHALLENGE**

We believe that most of the public will get behind a broader message of a balanced approach to National Forest and wildlife conservation that is not species specific but public use specific. If we address all negative impacts that affect all wildlife and forest challenges, the public will benefit in all multiple use applications.

Please join our cause to restore and maintain our public lands and wildlife by donating your time or funding to the project.



# A King Family Affair

By Oscar Ramirez

Lanny King has been hunting blacktails as long as he can remember and Lanny has been around



Lanny, his buck, and other bucks at Kings Camp.

a long time—he was born in Fort Bragg more than a couple of years ago and is one of 13 children, 9 boys and 4 girls. Everyone hunted, although back then it was mostly for sustenance. Lanny went on his first hunt with his dad in the Lost Coast area in northern California (the old A Zone), but his dad did not hunt—something about not enjoying the taste of venison it seems. However, the elder Mr. King still appreciated the hunt and the outdoors as he enjoyed camping and spending time with his family.

Recalling his first buck, Lanny was with his older brother, Lawrence, when they came upon a 3x3.

Although Lawrence had spotted the buck first, Lanny promptly killed it with his .22 Remington, which he bought for about \$20 at Racine’s in Fort Bragg. As it turns out, Lawrence allowed Lanny to shoot it because he was a better shot, even earning the moniker “One-shot Pete” from his dad. There was a lot to be grateful for on that first kill as Lanny recalls how wonderful he felt about the buck because as he put it, “We’re gonna eat tonight.” As it was, the buck rolled down the hill and could have almost landed in the trunk of the 1950 Plymouth.

Lanny started his hunting in the Ruth Lake area of Trinity County, but also the Van Duzen River, as well as Zenia. It’s a great love he shared with his wife of nearly 61 years, Pat. While she didn’t join the hunting trips until their youngest daughter was 7, the outdoors was a family affair. Camping would include the Kings’ four daughters, Denise, Carrie, Wendy, and Jenny.

Eventually, Lanny hunted his way into the



Pat King, Lanny’s wife and King Camp mainstay.



Mendocino National Forest to hunt. Back then (almost 50 years ago), it was truly a special hunting experience, and he shared it with his brothers: Binky, Randy, Kenneth, and Billy. Beyond the hunt and bringing home plenty of venison, hunting was almost a family reunion, and it was a function that continued for many years. Lanny thought so highly of the area, he never felt the draw to hunt out of state as everything he needed and wanted was in the Mendocino.

One of his fondest hunting memories was about 40 years ago, when his younger brother Randy killed his first “Booner” (a buck meeting qualification for inclusion in the Boone and Crockett record book). Randy and Binky had just finished their hunt and they looked across the way and spotted a big, beautiful blacktail. Randy tattooed that buck at about 95 yards—a 4x5 that was about 21” wide and

*Photo Oscar Ramirez*



*Randy King and nephew, Wayne Johnson.*

Possibly Lanny’s favorite hunting memory was during a hunting trip when the group was enduring a particularly hot stretch of weather. Lanny went hunting to several of his favorite haunts when he finally seen a nice four-point buck. He took aim, fired, and at the shot, the buck disappeared. As he went to inspect, the buck came headed right towards him! Lanny did not miss his second shot and he had a nice buck down—however it was a 4x5. As it turns out, Lanny did hit the first buck, the aforementioned 4x4, and now had a 4x5 to go with it. A two-fer!

Lanny finally made his way back to camp in the miserable California heat to solicit help. However, when he told the family he needed help because he had two good bucks down—the group was skeptical and proceeded to give Lanny the business, as only family can. Suffice it to say, they were sufficiently impressed with the two dandy blacktails.

During his hunting years, Lanny has bagged four “Booners,” including a 5x6 buck that was about 20” wide but was really heavy-horned and had a cheater off one side. Lanny shared that he was



*Photo Oscar Ramirez*

scored 136 on the B&C system. The buck was brought into camp and everyone was high-fivin’ and proud as heck. While everyone was very happy for him, the whole family felt proud of his kill as it was accomplished in the family camp.



also keeping an eye out for this bucks partner, a 26" wide buck that he was never able to get a chance at, but boy he went looking for him!

Lanny nailed another Booner, recalling that he was following a brush line deep into a canyon, further into the forest when he heard a deer running above him. He raised his rifle and fired. At the shot, he dropped a symmetrical 4x4, about 23-24" wide that scored 144 Boone and Crockett. Returning to camp with blood on his arms and hands, his wife Pat proudly exclaimed to the camp, "Lanny's got a buck!" Good times.



Photo Oscar Ramirez

brushy ridge and caught a big buck just as he bedded down. He took off after it and eventually could still spy his horns, but not his body. Creeping up to about 90 yards of Mr. Big-Boy, Lanny laid down his rifle, but the swivel on the strap squeaked, giving the massive buck the alarm he needed to make tracks into the next county. Lanny took a shot, however he missed. He also shared that he was hunting with his trusty 25-06 at the time and he felt he needed more power, since upgrading to the powerful .300 Weatherby Magnum cartridge. When I asked Lanny how the .300 Weatherby performs, he replied, "Oscar, I don't need to hit them—I just put it in the general area and the deer fall down."

The next year, Lanny went looking for the bucks' sheds and found one while brother Binky found the other. The buck would have been about 24"



Photo Oscar Ramirez

Randy and Billy King

As with all hunters, there are many tales of what could have been or simply, the one that got away. One tale of a particular big buck that got away occurred as Lanny was glassing a long



The Booners

Courtesy Pat and Lanny King



wide, 22" high, was symmetrical and the brothers estimated the buck at 154 Boone and Crockett. A huge blacktail buck by anyone's standards.

Lanny hunted every year, making multiple trips into "God's Country" because he loves hunting with his family and enjoys venison. Lanny shares that his experience has shown that the higher you go for deer, the better they taste. Food for thought, pun intended.

For a long time, the Mendocino provided Lanny, the King family, and many extended family members (author included) with a bounty of food, nature, family fun, and the experiences that only nature can provide while enjoying God's great outdoors.

At 81 years young, Lanny is no longer able to attack the mountain as he had before, but not for lack of desire. In recent years, a combination of many factors, including age, has ended Lanny's hunting career. He shares that the lack of predator control (mountain lions, bears, etc.) and



Photo Oscar Ramirez

Binky King with another great Mendocino blacktail.

historically poor forest management practices have devastated the deer population.

This is a sad reality on many fronts as Lanny (and family) have killed many great bucks. However, the area no longer produces prodigiously, and Lanny did not want to kill smaller bucks during his last years of hunting.

When asked how he was able to kill so many fine bucks, he replied, "Know your area and stick to it."



Photo Oscar Ramirez

Randy King, nephew Wayne Johnson, Lanny King, Binky King.



# Tragedy in Northern California

## Unprovoked Attack by Mountain Lion Devastates Family

By Oscar Ramirez

On March 23, 2024, brothers Taylen and Wyatt Brooks went shed hunting in El Dorado County, near Kelsey, something they have done several times before. Instead of having a fun day outdoors, both were viciously attacked by a mountain lion that severely injured 18-year-old Wyatt and tragically, ended the young life of his heroic older brother, 21-year-old Taylen Brooks.

According to a statement released by the family via the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, the brothers made their way to a dirt road to begin their stated activities. They began by scanning the edges of the road and wooded areas to look for sheds. However, very quickly they saw the mountain lion walking up the road towards them. Being informed outdoorsman, Taylen and Wyatt, both raised their hands (to appear larger) and yelled at the lion in an effort to get it to retreat. In addition, Wyatt threw his backpack at the animal as an additional measure to dissuade the lion from approaching the young men.

Their efforts were ineffective, and in quick measure, the 90-pound ball of muscle, fangs, and claws pounced on 18-year-old Wyatt with a bite to the face, taking him to the ground. While Wyatt was fighting for his life wrestling with the lion, Taylen beat on and yelled at the lion as Wyatt was able to gain top position. However, the lion

clawed at Wyatt's midsection, causing him to release his grip. The lion then released him and took the opportunity to now charge at Taylen, biting him in the throat and taking him to the ground.



Taylen and Wyatt Brooks

Severely injured, Wyatt attempted to beat and grab the lion that had his brother by the throat in order to get the lion off of him, but his efforts were futile. Wyatt then tried to call for help but was out of cell phone range. He then ran to his car where he eventually got service and called 911 for assistance. Wyatt then jumped in the vehicle and headed back to where the attack occurred, hoping the vehicle's presence would help end the merciless attack. However, upon his return, the lion and his brother were gone, a truly frightening situation.

Wyatt went back and met the deputies at the road where they provided medical aid to the severely injured young man. They continued until relieved by emergency medical personnel. Using the information provided by Wyatt, the deputies proceeded to the area of the attack where they were able to locate the lion hovering over the stricken Taylen. The deputies did not shoot due to the lion's proximity to Taylen, but shot in a safer direction, which ultimately had the desired effect, and the lion ran off. Unfortunately, Taylen suffered mortal wounds and was deceased by the time deputies reached him.





## How does this happen?

According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), [attacks on humans](#) are rare, with fatalities even more so. Per CDFW, the last fatal attack occurred in Orange County in January 2004. However, it should be noted that in 1994, jogger Barbara Schoener was attacked and killed by a mountain lion while jogging in the Auburn State Recreation Area close to the Brooks fatality, and close to where I live. Ms. Schoener’s partially consumed body was located the next day after her reported disappearance, partially hidden under leaves and branches, typical of a carnivore kill cache.

CDFW officials acknowledge that the men behaved as recommended by CDFW’s [safety tips if you should encounter a mountain lion](#). However, in this instance, the most negative outcome occurred—an innocent man lost his life.

The CDFW [website](#) has noted, “...human-wildlife interactions have substantially increased, requiring a greater staff investment in time, research, and response in the field when interactions do occur.”

[Data](#) available on the CDFW website shows that from 2001 through 2010, there were an average of 188 yearly depredation permits issued statewide, with an average of 98 lions killed per year. Further, from 2011 through 2020, an average of 209 depredation permits were issued yearly statewide with an average of 85 lions killed every year. However, in [2021](#), the number fell to 16 lethal permits issued (statewide) and only 3 were killed. [2022](#), the last year cited on the website, shows 18 lethal permits were issued and only 10 lions were killed.

Since 1990, mountain lions have been classified as a specially protected species due to the

passage of Proposition 117, which basically removes hunting as a viable tool in the control of the species.

When the wildlife managers are removed from having the ability to make conservation decisions based on science and not emotion, an imbalance can occur. As a wildlife biologist told me several years ago, you cannot manage a prey species (deer/elk, etc.) solely, stating, “We (state biologists) have to manage all segments of the equation, you can’t manage prey without predators. (It) can’t be done.”

## Epilogue

The lion responsible for the death of Taylen and the severe injuries to Wyatt was tracked down and killed the same day by a skilled trapper with trained hounds. CDFW [confirmed](#) that the animal killed was responsible for the attacks on the

Brooks brothers and was apparently a healthy, 90 pound male.

It should be noted that the brothers decided to shed hunt that day, without a firearm, as the opener of the junior turkey hunting season began that day as well. While it is legal to carry

a firearm in the forest or BLM land, the two chose not to, so they wouldn’t create a semblance of impropriety, should they run across any wildlife official. Both were hunters and outdoorsman.

Lastly, this should not be interpreted as an anti-mountain lion article—it is not. Mountain lions have a role in our ecosystem and I’ve had the pleasure of seeing them in the wild, but I am also a father and this incident bothers me greatly, for many reasons.

If you are able to, feel free to donate to the Brooks family by [clicking here](#).

*“We would like to express our sincere thanks for the outpouring of support and prayers from family, friends and the community. We are all devastated by the tragic loss of Taylen yet thankful Wyatt is still with us and are well-aware the outcome could have been even worse.”*

**- Brooks Family**



# Ukiah 2023 — 15th Annual MCBA Banquet





# MCBA — UKIAH 2023





# MCBA — UKIAH 2023









# GOLDEN STATE OUTFITTERS

- Premier Hunting in the State of California -

CONAN EGAN  
119 NORTH JEFFERSON ST.  
CLOVERDALE, CA 95425  
707.695.8880



For Reservations call  
1 707-964-6371

100 W Laurel St  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437-3410

## Ross Ranch

### Beach & Redwood Forest Horseback Tours

16401 South Highway One, Manchester, CA 95459  
(707) 877 1834 or cells (707) 489-8579, (707) 489-7303



1870 North State Street, Ukiah, CA 95482 – Phone (707) 462-8806



## Geiger's Long Valley Meat Market

44951 U.S. 101, Laytonville, CA 95454  
(707) 984-6912



## Arrow Five Outfitters

98% SUCCESS ON ARCHERY BLACKTAIL HUNTS!!  
99% SUCCESS ON RIFLE BLACKTAIL HUNTS!!

Jim and TinaMarie Schaafsma, HC 62, Box 64A Zenia, California 95595, (707) 923-9633 phone (707) 923-7863 fax

Specializing in Guided Hunts for California's Trophy Class Columbian Blacktail