

BLACKTAIL NEWS

Official Publication of the Mendocino County Blacktail Association — March 2018

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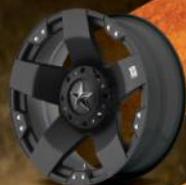
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY PAUL J. TROUETTE



About Us

Established in 2005, the **Mendocino County Blacktail Association (MCBA)** consists of hard-working, conservation-minded hunters and other community members that share a common goal of restoring black-tailed deer numbers and improving their habitat.

Mission Statement

The mission of the organization is to focus on improving the condition of the Columbian black-tailed deer herds in the California's designated B-Zones of Northern California.

The B-Zones are a large geographic area that includes the mountains of the Mendocino, Trinity, Shasta, Klamath, and Six Rivers National Forests. These forests also encompass several primitive or Wilderness designated areas that include the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel, Marble Mountains, Russian, Trinity Alps, and Yuki Wildernesses, among others, that are prime targets for this focused effort.

Our membership consists of representatives throughout counties within the B-zones, including counties outside of the geographical boundaries. Preserving our hunting heritage while improving our deer habitat is a goal of many concerned hunters in California.

CONTACT US

Paul Trouette
(707) 489-9663

e-mail:
mendodeer@yahoo.com
www.mcbadeer.com



For the Love of the Resource

The Columbian black-tailed deer; elusive, smart, beautiful, majestic, and...disappearing! Over the last 50 years, the fascinating traits of this true trophy animal continue to amaze me. No other animal in the forested mountains of the B-Zones has captivated me more in my lifetime. With all the negative changes in the management of this majestic creature, which has adversely impacted its survival, it would seem the love for this resource has seemed to wane. But not with me and those who support the Mendocino County Blacktail Association.

Game management circles are unfortunately beset by politics and these truly unique deer continue to disappear. Yet, these deer that are still prized by many never change their wary behavior or let up on their sneakiness and craftiness. It is amazing to see how the truly old monarchs show themselves only during the breeding season.

As a boy hunting with my dad and uncles, I remember the excitement of opening weekend with the smell of the tarweed in the air and the rolling grasslands. I recall the crickets at night and the anticipation of the hunt. Every hunt included my best friend; the very old and very beloved Marlin model 1893, lever-action carbine in 30-30 Winchester.

This family heirloom was given to me by my dad, who had it bequeathed to him by his father, who had originally received it from

my great-grandfather.

I remember with anticipation of heading out the day before the hunt. We'd go to the store to buy provisions and we would run into many like-minded outdoorsmen preparing for their hunt as well. As with all hunters, we had to swap hunt stories before we headed out to our cabin.

After getting the supplies put away, we'd finally getting to bed, but I could not sleep because of the excitement of the upcoming hunt. There were too many images in my head of big bucks standing in the field while in my mind I was readying to take the trophy black-tailed deer of my lifetime. Sleeping under the stars with my dad, brother and other family recalls great and special times.

The anticipation grows intense for the love of the resource, the thrill of the hunt and hunting with my family using the family heirloom — the Marlin 1893. I kept thinking of all of the game this rifle had taken and I could not wait for the morning to come so I can try and add to the tally of this legacy rifle.

I also cannot help but to reminisce

of my families' hunting heritage and the time spent in the woods; a father and his sons sitting in the wild, talking about life while waiting for that big buck to appear.

Yes, the resource is important and we fight to preserve the availability of the resource. It is important that when our grandchildren come of age, we may continue the time-honored tradition of pursuing big game with family, enjoying the outdoors in some of the best family times I can recall.

I also hope that while changes abound in our government circles, both positive and negative, we will continue the fight to protect more than just our hunting rights. It is imperative that we all remember the unchanging resource beloved by us all — the majestic Columbian black-tailed deer. It is still unchanging in its commitment to survival even in the face of mans' politics. Are you still committed to its survival as it is to its own survival? Do your part and voice your concerns to your government. Do it for the love of the resource.

Illegal Marijuana Grows on Public Land

As you know, MCBA is fully involved in the removal of illegal marijuana grows within our public lands. These unregulated and illegal grows continue to create biohazards for more than just wildlife, they create public safety issues with users of our public lands and the local watersheds. In general, people who work and tend to illegal grows are not good people. Oftentimes, they are illegal aliens who are provided with meager rations, outfitted with illegal weapons and pesticides to kill wildlife in order to protect their illegal grow.

Workers at illegal sites kill animals for food or to protect the maximum amount of harvest. Needless to say, this is done without regard for any laws that govern the highly-regulated take of wildlife in California. Affected species include black-tailed deer, bear, lions, squirrels, and a

myriad of other wildlife. As we all know, the effect of poison doesn't end with an intended animal and will affect raptors or other predators that consume poisoned animals. Poisons, fertilizers and other toxins will punish the immediate areas and eventually, the local watersheds. Nothing good comes from illegal grows.

Even though medical marijuana has been around for some time, this new large-scale and valuable crop is still finding its way in California. With the recent approval of recreational marijuana, we hope that with regulation, illegal grows will be significantly reduced or eliminated altogether. But until the regulation and enforcement catch up with reality, there will be growers circumventing the law and devastating our public lands.

Make no mistake, the passage of recreational weed will not magically remove illegal grows. Until it does, MCBA will work with our partners (Jere Melo Foundation, LEAR, etc.) to continue to help fight this fight and help clean up the aftermath where it occurs — in our backyards a.k.a. our public hunting lands.

October Fires

Lastly, this past October many of our friends and neighbors lost everything they owned in the horrible fires that hit many of our local counties. The outcome and final tally was not pretty as lives were lost and thousands lost their homes and livelihoods.

To those affected families who have lost loved ones, have been displaced or are struggling to recover from this devastation, we offer our deepest condolences.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Trouette

Death in the High Country

Famed Deer Herds Suffer Losses, Highlighting Nature — Unfiltered

By Oscar Ramirez

California Department of Fish and Wildlife



While this scene may be difficult to view, the battered bodies of these mule deer who slipped down an icy slope on Bishop Pass and suffered fatal injuries are part of the unseen cruelty — and reality of nature.

These deer are part of the highly-regarded Round Valley herd. This is considered a natural occurrence and there are no plans to interfere with, or manipulate their traditional migration route.

All pictures by Oscar Ramirez unless otherwise noted.

Nature is cruel — that is a fact. Natural events affecting wildlife go largely unnoticed by the general public and are usually accepted for what they are — natural occurrences.

Scientists, biologists, forest service workers and many others who work in our parks, forests and public lands are lucky enough to enjoy the wonderment of our fauna on a regular basis. But, they also keenly aware of the natural harshness that can afflict animals during the course of their lifetimes. Not all of nature is a photo opportunity.

With the beauty and wonderment derived from observing human-tolerant deer and photogenic black bears in Yosemite National Park, to the miracle of birth; nature is indeed amazing and dynamic. However, the other end of the spectrum is unforgiving and can involve watching scores of deer and other animals suffering through the extreme conditions.

Tough winters in any given year can cause a slow decline and ultimate death of deer in their winter range. There is also the death of young and healthy animals by stealthy and cunning predators. Or, as with black bears, opportunistic omnivores who



The beauty of wildlife in a natural setting. Left, a fawn in an open meadow in the famed Yosemite National Park. At right, a trail camera picture of a black bear carrying off a black-tailed deer fawn.

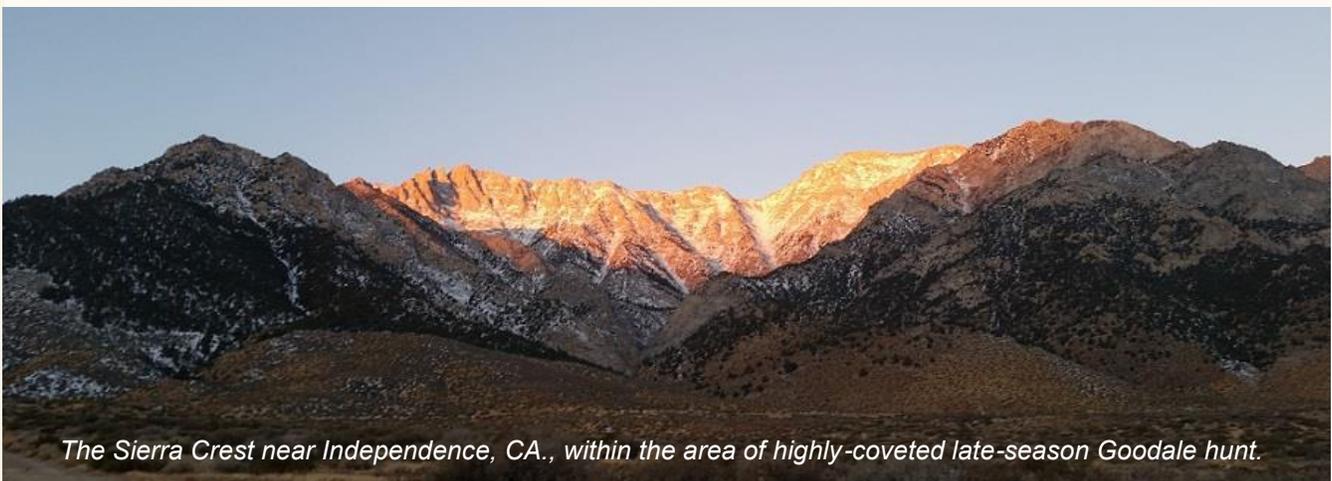
will infringe on the kills of other predators and devastate local fawn populations on their own. Not pretty pictures to think about.

These occurrences generally are unseen, unheard and barely a footnote to the casual outdoor visitor. But due to social media, a mass casualty event with accompanying gory pictures, went "viral" and smacked many hunters and non-hunters alike with the harshness that nature can bring.

In November 2017, persons using a variety of social media posted pictures of the slip-and-fall deaths of about 120 deer that occurred in late October through early November in Inyo and Mono Counties. Weather conditions came together to create a special set of

circumstances on the Sierra Crest in two critical, historical migration corridors for mule deer on Bishop and Shepard Passes. Late condition snowfields, followed by icy conditions, created a unique but not unheard of dynamic that caused migrating deer to lose their footing and slide down into boulder fields below, causing them grievous injuries that led their demise.

The pictures helped create a frenzy on many websites, which led to wild speculation among keyboard cowboys. These digital sleuths and other online "professionals" batted about the authenticity, location, causes, and even shared their outright speculations of a ruse. But sadly, these events did occur and will again in the natural world.



The Sierra Crest near Independence, CA., within the area of highly-coveted late-season Goodale hunt.

The mass casualty events consisted of animals from the famous Round Valley and Goodale herds and the devastating carnage was directly observed by multiple persons. Unfortunately, many were traumatized by the sight of scores of badly broken deer, including many large-antlered bucks, laying stacked about in a large rock field. Not all deer suffered quick deaths, and some were observed alive and suffering.

Local California Department of Fish and Wildlife personnel and other local entities received multiple reports on these events. However, as ugly as these events were, they are part of the natural cycle and had been [documented](#) previously (*Bleich, 780- = |Vernon C. and Pierce, Becky M. (2001) "Accidental mass mortality of migrating mule deer," Western North American Naturalist: Vol. 61 : No. 1 , Article 17).*

I recall a conversation I had many years ago with retired longtime Fish and Wildlife biologist and MCBA member, Jack Booth. He told me a particularly ironic story about deer in the Mendocino National Forest (MNF) that had died of malnutrition. He relayed his observation of black-tailed deer who he found to be in less-than-ideal body conditions and would eventually perish.

The painful and ironic aspect of this story directly relates to the cruelty of nature as these deer died with full stomachs, yet they suffered from malnutrition. How you ask? It was due to the poor quality of the feed and their intake of the substandard, low-quality browse. While these deer had bellies full of food, their body conditions deteriorated as their caloric needs could not be met by the decadent feed, leading to slow, painful deaths. Malnutrition on full stomachs — nature is unforgiving.

Jack's story stuck with me and was a catalyst to volunteer on habitat improvement projects in the MNF. As a member of another conservation group, our chapter donated funding that helped Jack purchase specialized equipment; a high-tech metal detector. This allowed him to locate long-lost markers from previous habitat projects to help document, study and compare results from this previous work with the goal of preventing circumstances such as these.

This is nature, in all its grandeur, rawness and gory detail for all those unfortunate and unprepared to understand it. It's not always pretty and it's not always fair but the fact is it is nature indeed.



A cruel death and a wistful summer evening.

Lake County Is Representing! Lakeport Citizens Turn Out in Force Again

Not even a week into the new year (2018) and MCBA's newest chapter, Lake County, has already successfully hosted their Second Annual Fundraising Banquet.

Held once again at the Lake County Fairgrounds on January 6, 2018, the fun and lively crowd, which topped 170, did what all committed, hard-working folks who represent a good cause do—they came out and supported MCBA enjoying food, fun and camaraderie.



Photos courtesy of Hal & Rosie Wagenet

Mendocino County Blacktail Association



The heavy-hitting trio of **Rick Bulloch**, **Richard Hinchcliff** and **Roland LeDoux**, led the fundraising efforts, which of course offered up some prime-time grub, prizes, auction items, games, gifts for all youth in attendance, and fun galore! Some highlights of the event included an outstanding selection of prizes and auction items, such as: firearms, hunts, fishing trips, artwork, sports memorabilia, outdoor products, jewelry, and more.



Photos courtesy of Hal & Rosie Wagenet

Lake County Banquet

January 6, 2018



Photos courtesy of Hal & Rosie Wagenet



Increasing MCBA's footprint in Lake County establishes bigger gains for deer and MCBA's conservation efforts while celebrating and recognizing the role of Lake County citizens. Lake County—you rock! Your continued and generous support is a key reason this chapter continues to grow and thrive because you put your money where your mouth is; back into deer conservation.

As if the pattern has not already been established, please **mark your calendar for January 5, 2019**. It will be here before you know it and the third incarnation of this successful event will have occurred. Will you be there too? Enjoy more pictures from this event, including some very LARGE black-tailed deer.



Photos courtesy of Hal & Rosie Wagenet

In the last two years, *Mendocino County Blacktail Association* has continued fulfilling it's mission, securing and contributing more than **\$300,000** towards habitat improvement projects in *Lake*,

B-Zone Habitat Projects Updates

Work Conducted in 2017 Has Increased Wildlife Activity

Paradise Ridge — King Range



Humboldt, Glenn and Mendocino counties. Together, we will continue to improve our lands and preserve the resource — our beautiful *Columbian black-tailed deer* and other wildlife.

CHAMISE KNOB PROJECT MENDOCINO COUNTY



Baseball Project — Mendocino National Forest Before Thinning After Thinning



Bear Hunting Benefits Deer Herds

Bear Management Assists in Predator/Prey Relationship

By Oscar Ramirez

Bears, bears, bears! California has more bears than you can shake a stick at. From an estimated bear population of 10,000-15,000 animals in 1982, to a current conservative estimate of about 35,000+/- today, bears continue to increase in numbers and range.

With a few exceptions, such as the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys and Southern California deserts, bears occupy the majority of California's habitat and are well-adapted to surviving in a multitude of terrains and elevations. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) estimates that bears inhabit approximately 52,000 square miles of California.



Bears are omnivores — subsisting on both the flesh of mammals, birds, bugs, carcasses and eating a variety of vegetation, such as fresh grasses, forbs, mast crops, berries and whatever agriculture they can find.

Many hunters believe mountain lions are huge

consumers of deer in California — and they are, but most lions predate on adult deer and we can't hunt lions in California. Unfortunately, hunters have had no role in lion management for quite a long time. However, bears do consume deer and we have a role managing this predator.

In some counties in the Sierra's, biologists share that up to 70 percent of fawn mortality is attributed to the opportunistic bears. Fawns, who are taught to lay low and remain motionless when danger lurks, are easy prey for those bears who learned this practice. Smart mama bears teach their offspring and the cycle persists. See the picture shared by Ron Christensen on page 6? That is a black-tailed deer fawn in the mouth of a black bear. That happens a lot more than we catch on film.

If you recall in the ***2015 Blacktail News***, a five-year study in the Mendocino National Forest on black-tailed deer highlighted that in many instances, mountain lions were pushed off their deer kills by black bears. This caused mountain lions to kill a higher number of deer to sustain themselves as they are carnivores — no nuts and berries for them. But then again, nature is survival of the fittest and if a fat ol' bear wants to claim a half-eaten, buried slab of deer, a mountain lion is better off leaving the kill and preserving its own hide. It will leave the leftovers and make a new kill.

So let's talk hunting — since bear are huntable in about 87 percent of deer zones, but also occupy areas beyond that, opportunities are plentiful. Tags are over-the-counter and unlimited, with a

cap for take of 1,700 reported bears, or until the last Sunday in December.

The most recent CDFW black bear take report indicates that in 2015, the third season in which bears were no longer allowed to be pursued with dogs, marked the fifth time since 2010 that the bear season did not close early as the quota did not fill by the end of the hunting season.

Previously, use of dogs accounted for roughly 45-50 percent of the yearly take. In the first year after hound-hunting was outlawed, there was a huge drop off in take (1,962 vs. 1,087).

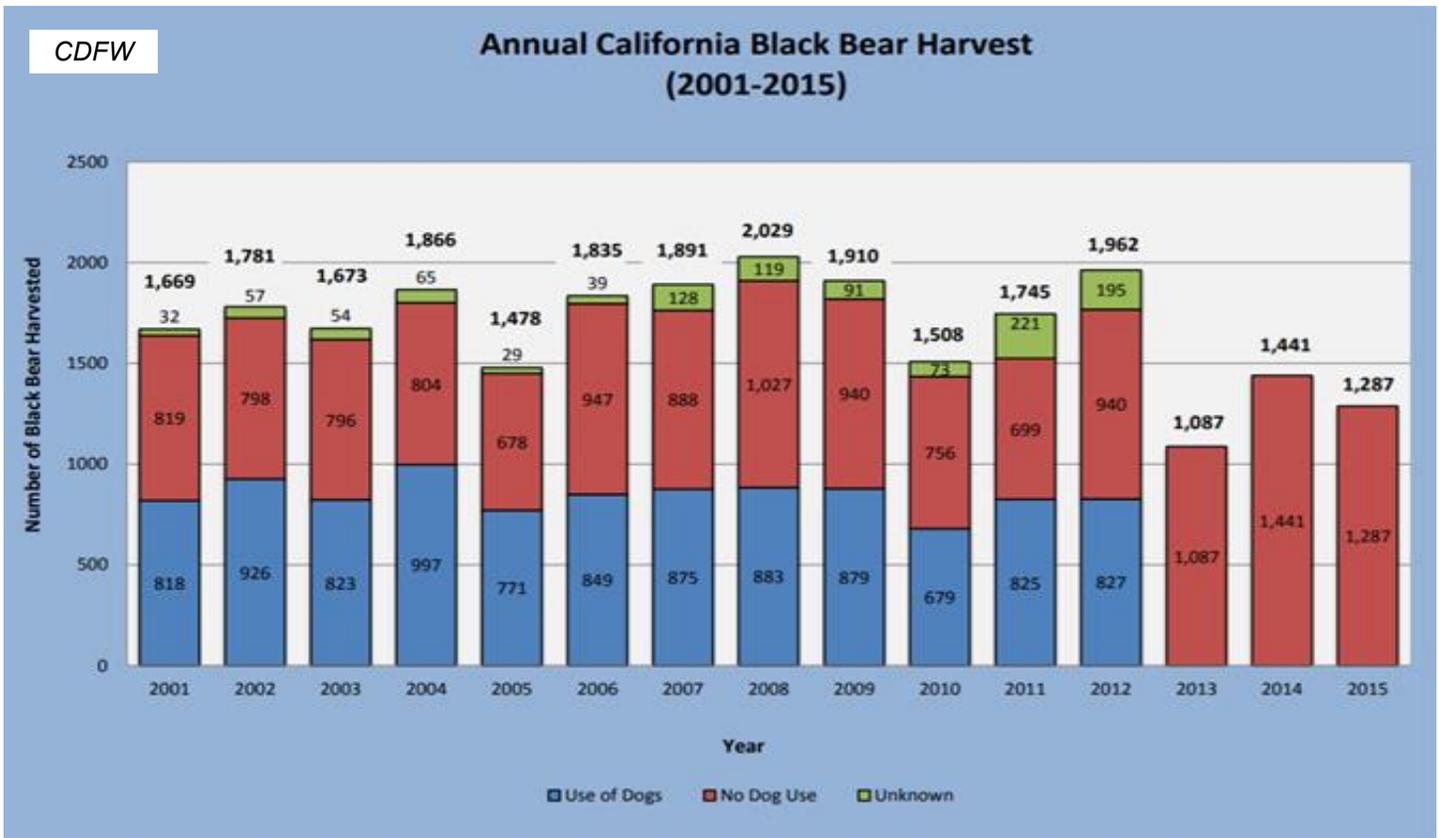
Hunters have since started to take more bears during deer season, but in 2016, there were only 1,069 bears taken. 2017 saw an uptick in take with 1,409 total bears taken. While this is a big jump in take, it undoubtedly reflected the benefits from a wet winter after several years of drought and coincided with the first year in

Up to 70 percent of fawn mortality is attributed to the opportunistic bears.

which the imposition of fiscal penalties for non-reporting hunters occurred.

California is full of black bears and we can take these hunting opportunities to keep their populations in check, help out our black-tailed and mule deer herds, and enjoy an extended hunting season. So, buy a tag, grab your favorite deer-hunting rifle and enjoy the pursuit of hunting another big game animal this year. Apparently, bear chili, chorizo and sausage are "the bomb."

For more information on bear hunting, visit the CDFW website or click [here](#).



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Two Hunters Bring Home *Monster* Bears

Mendocino Bruins Fall to Opportunistic Hunters

By Oscar Ramirez

During the 2017 hunting season, two California hunters, Jason Aston and Bubba Hunt (yup, that's his name), killed tremendous bears in the wilds of Mendocino County. Both hunted in the heart of big black-tailed deer country: the Mendocino National Forest (MNF).

As most hunters know, black bears are plentiful in California and specifically in B-Zones. Mendocino County is no exception and is regularly in the top 5 for counties in which black bear are taken and is also in the top 5 in number of depredation bear permits.

Jason Aston

Jason is primarily a deer hunter, but in California, he always carries a bear tag as he normally sees plenty of bear action in the MNF. Not surprisingly, Jason almost always fills his bear tag. "I do enjoy hunting bears. There is something very primal being in the presence of animals that have massive jaws, large canines and really big claws," he said, adding, "It is a rush getting on bears because sometimes it's a close-quarters affair."

This past season, Jason was glassing for deer over a familiar ravine on a cool, overcast October morning. Since it was slow going this day, Jason was getting a little sleepy due to the lack of action. In between glassing and the monotony of scanning the landscape all around him for what seemed like the 100th time, he finally dozed off. Soon thereafter though, he was awakened by a doe walking not

too far behind him.

"You know how tough it is to keep your eyes open when it is slow and when your eyelids feel heavy, it's hard to stay awake. But I realized that doe could have been a big buck or bear," he said. "Finally, the sun's rays finally broke through the cloud cover and I could see the sun shining over a particular knob. I re-engaged and was enjoying the outdoors — it was awesome."

Soon, Jason then caught movement about 200 yards away on a jet-black bear and since all his prior bear kills have been color-phase bears, he quickly decided to drop the hammer on this particular animal. Having the luxury of time, Jason got into a prone position and put his trusty .270 Weatherby Magnum into action. Lining up his cross-hairs high on the bears shoulder, he touched one off, anchoring the bruin.



Jason Aston

"I radioed my brother that I had a bear down. The bear was down in the chamise, so I directed him to where he should be. After he found the bear, I made my way down to him and thought that this was a good-sized bear," he said. "But then I realized how big he was when I went to lift his head and it slipped out of my hands because it was a hell of a lot heavier than I anticipated. No ground shrinkage."

Between Jason, his brother Billy and two other friends, they were able to finally retrieve the bear and load him up using a myriad of recovery gear, including ropes, winches and atvs.

The final numbers are this bear were on the high end as the bear measured just over 7 feet. At the butcher shop, he was told that this bear was "easily over 400 lbs." live weight.

Although not yet measured for Boone and Crockett, it was rough scored at 21" — that's one big, pumpkin-headed bear. "My family loves bear chili," added Jason.

It seems Jason and his family will have plenty to share.

Dwain "Bubba" Hunt

Although his last name is Hunt, it's not something he has been doing a long time. Bubba came into hunting late, but being a resident in nearby Glenn County, the MNF is basically his backyard. He has put a couple of deer under his belt and now a couple of bear to go with it, including the monstrous bear he killed this year in the same vicinity of Jason Aston's bear.

Bubba relates how he came to kill his beautiful chocolate-colored boar, "My friend and I had been glassing one of our regular go-to areas and saw 6 or 7 bears this weekend. But because they were too far or moving through, I didn't get on them. But then my buddy spotted this monster about 1 mile away."

Bubba, who had previously killed a bear at amazing 1,074 yards using a friend's custom-built rig in .300 Remington Ultra-Mag, would not even consider shooting that far. Although he is now an

accomplished long-range shooter, Bubba knew of a road that would bring him fairly close to the massive bruin and raced towards its location.

Using agreed-upon hand signals, Bubba glassed back down to his buddy, who indicated the bear was still close by and giving him the "thumbs-up" indicating he should make his stalk.

With the wind in his favor, Bubba picked his way down the side of the mountain in a slow and deliberate manner. In short order, he was able to locate the bear feeding. At about 75 yards, the bear was preoccupied stuffing his face with acorns. This gave Bubba time to catch his breath, collect his thoughts and focus on the task at hand. He shouldered his .300

Weatherby Magnum and launched a 200 grain bullet into the bears neck, ending the stalk in a sudden and jolting manner. The bruin collapsed. Bubba 1, big bear 0.

After hearing the shot, his buddy raced to meet up with him and together they were able to retrieve the massive black bear, which was fortunately close to a road. It pays to know your hunting area.

The bear will surely be a Boone and Crockett contender. However, at this time, the bear is still frozen at the taxidermist. Bubba did share, "Man, I weighed everything and the bear weighed 440 lbs. and was 7' 2" long. I'm not sure I'll ever kill one this big again, but I'll keep trying."

Congratulations to these hunters for taking two tremendous black bears.



Dwain "Bubba" Hunt

Double-Dippers

Brothers-In-Law Double Up On Wilderness B-Zone Bucks

By Oscar Ramirez

Scott Murray and Ruben Lorta did something great this last fall; they both killed their first deer. This accomplishment is substantial because these two were still novice big game hunters and just a couple years into the big game field. Their experiences into hunting were previously limited to waterfowl, where they have excelled. However, both had a desire to pursue game bigger than Canadian geese, which led them to deer, bear and wild pig.

Both attacked big game hunting with ferocity, applying themselves by talking with other experienced hunters and reading up on deer

hunting. Their first two hunts were difficult, do-it-yourself backpack hunts into wilderness areas on consecutive years. Despite not shooting deer, their enthusiasm had not diminished.

This year, with young families and busy schedules, their hunt plans derailed quickly. They could not leave during the work week and had to make new a new plan. Having to toss Plan A out the window was disappointing and their newly-limited time frame forced them to create a Plan B. This meant hunting a lot closer than their intended destination, but it would still allow them to hunt the opening weekend.

Scott and Ruben conducted quite of bit of internet scouting and in short order, they had formulated Plan B. They gathered maps, packed their gear and headed out to hunt a Northern California B-Zone wilderness area.

However, getting to their Plan B destination

was disrupted by multiple fires in the area, which affected road access. Eventually, they made it to their new hunting spot, excited for the next morning and the deer opener.

They arose early and headed into the wilderness in the dark, but as all public land

hunters are clearly aware, they found out they were not alone in the woods. While they sat at their chosen hunt location in the dark positioned to glass at first light, they heard the unmistakable voices of other hunters. The other hunters were unaware that Scott and Ruben were there and eventually ended up setting up real close.

Without alerting the other hunters, they sat and glassed for an hour or so, but the other hunters did no one any favors by yapping loud enough for all the mountain to hear. As much as they hated to do it, they pivoted yet again and made a Plan C. They began carefully making their way to another spot that looked promising, but more importantly would not have the sights, sounds and scents of neighboring hunters.

Slowly making their way through a recent burn and blowdown, things got interesting real quick as Scott heard a rustle and caught the

movement of a couple of deer, including a definite buck.

Hunting in tandem, they were walking about 20 feet from each other when Scott motioned to Ruben to stop and be silent. Scott drew down as he maneuvered into a better position and view of the animals' vitals. Trying not to focus on the antlers, he verified it was a legal buck and at about 100 yards, he fired, launching an off-hand, .270 caliber missile at the buck, resulting in the unmistakable leg kick of a mortally-wounded deer.

At the report of the rifle, Ruben who had also shouldered his rifle and was ready to shoot, let one fly at the buck as well. The buck ran towards thick timber and they both were certain the buck collapsed nearby. As they were approaching where they shot at the deer, they followed a good blood trail, but still separated in case follow-up shots were needed. However, that proved unnecessary as

Scott Murray and Ruben Lorta pose with their well-earned trophies. All photos courtesy of hunters.

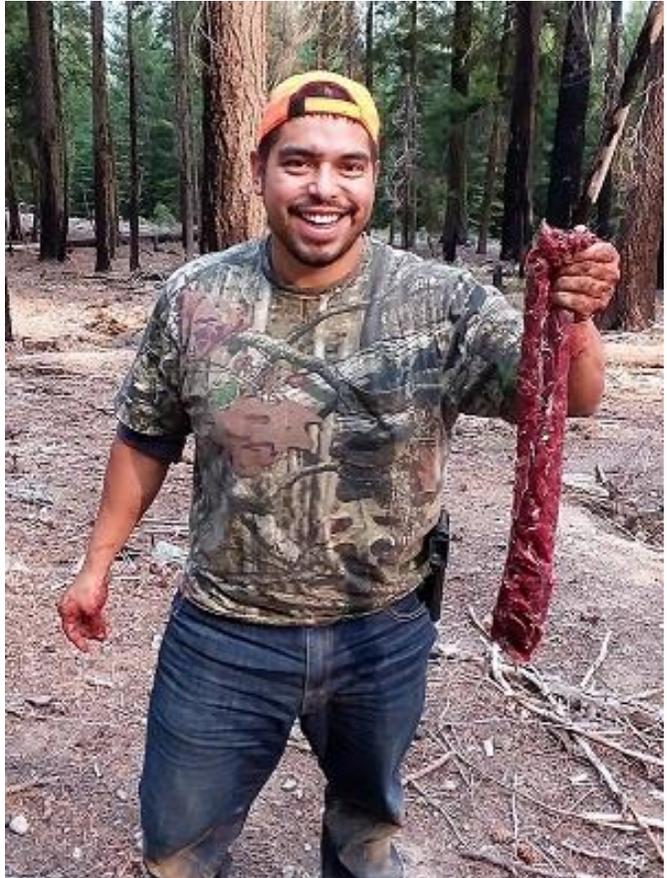


they quickly found a big-bodied three-point buck at what ended up being of a fairly short blood trail. A great first blacktail buck!

Ruben then turned to Scott and said, "Now let's go check on my buck." Scott, puzzled, looked at him and said, "The other deer was a buck — I thought you shot at this one?"

Ruben shared that when Scott motioned to him, he waited for Scott to shoot first since he saw the bucks first. Unbeknownst to Scott, since they were several feet apart, Ruben had a different line of sight and clearly had the second deer, a buck, in his sights. Once Scott fired, Ruben engaged the second buck.

Now that it was clear they had shot at two separate deer, Ruben walked Scott back about 60 yards, where they quickly located Ruben's very own three-point buck. Ruben fired his .270 Winchester and the round did its job. The brothers-in-law (and best friends) both



had two, three-point blacktails down. Pretty good opening day.

With the ups and downs of this particular hunting adventure, both hunters were on quite the high after taking their first deer together, on opening day — on public land.

They enjoyed their hard-earned bucks and celebrated, but knew they had a lot of work ahead of them. All the effort needed to get their deer meat back to their truck could not diminish what they achieved on this wilderness B-Zone hunt.

A Conversation With: California Department of Fish and Wildlife Release of New Deer Plan and Upcoming Research

By Oscar Ramirez

Recently, I spoke with **Brad Burkholder**, the new Game Program Manager with the Wildlife Branch. Brad is new to the position, but not to CDFW, where he worked in the Wildlife Areas and Wildlife Restoration Program as a Senior Environmental Scientist. With a current vacancy in the Deer Program Coordinator position, Brad is currently wearing a few hats. We covered a few topics on deer, including topics that are near and “deer” to our readers: black-tailed deer news.

Deer Plan Update

As covered in the ***2016 Blacktail News***, the draft deer management plan was released in 2016 and when the final plan is adopted, it will become the first official deer plan since 1976. Brad advised that the final plan is targeted for release, review and comment later this year. I for one, am very anxious to see the final proposals for this updated plan as it will affect the way deer are managed from now into the immediate future. Exciting times.

It is important to point out that all hunters should try to provide input on the final plan when it is released because when it’s adopted — it’s adopted. Let me say right now that I was one of those individuals who did NOT provide my two cents on the draft plan. There is no one to blame but myself as I knew the plan was out but did not make the time. It was inexcusable.

It appears I had plenty of company as the number of comments for the new proposed plan was pathetic, to be honest. For the first proposed deer plan in 40 years, only 26 individuals and 3 organizations provided input.

Now, I will go a little further and be brutally honest because in comparison to the wolf plan, which had a very organized group leading the charge, we were blown out of the water as the draft Wolf Conservation Plan received a total of 36,541 comments! I won’t get into it beyond the fact we must do better



Oscar Ramirez

when presented with the opportunity to provide input. While we may not always get what we want, we will at least have input.

And folks, the department cannot open a season for pursuit of mountain lions. That ship sailed back in 1990 with the passage of Proposition 117. CDFW has no authority to use hunting, a science-based management tool, for managing mountain lions — it is precluded by law. It will take a miracle to overturn Proposition 117 in my lifetime.

New B-Zone Research

Now that everyone has been properly reprimanded, let us move on to the good news, the B-Zones are subject to additional long-term study throughout the range, including wilderness areas. After the 5-year Mendocino National Forest black-tailed deer study was released in 2014, I was very pleased to hear of the new work conducted and the attention bestowed upon our B-Zone deer herds.

“This year, we’ll be starting our research, in concert with respected researchers from U.C. Davis, where we will among other things, get a baseline on deer populations using new and updated methods,” said Brad. “Along with using DNA fecal deer transects, we will be incorporating improved technologies using remotely programmable GPS collars, telemetry collars, and camera stations.”

Brad adds that these methods will complement existing aerial and ground surveys, along with information gleaned from deer tag reporting, which unfortunately declined in 2017. However, all these methods will be utilized to gather herd information and will be used to incorporate a better, updated computer modeling of deer populations and characteristics.

Tag Reporting Declines

A very important component used to measure deer populations is mandatory deer tag reporting. Unfortunately, deer tag reporting declined by 10,010 reported tags in 2017.

Mandatory reporting not only provides direct numbers, but it also provides information on level of effort (days afield) when pursuing deer.

For hunters who did not report, they will have to pony up an additional \$21.60 this year as a non-reporting fee. This fee is easily avoidable and reporting is satisfied quickly via online submission.

There will undoubtedly be a predator component as this study is long-term (4-6 years). And despite the modest goal for this first year, there are 30-50 transects proposed. Overall, the goal is to improve population assessments, define distribution, and update and monitor migration corridors as well as home ranges, which is where old school telemetry collars will be helpful.

The B-Zones contain some rugged country and Brad shares that this year will be a good test of the staff, equipment and time. Adjustments will inevitably be made to the study parameters, but with huge Federally-designated wilderness areas in “Big Green” receiving attention, along with other areas throughout the B-Zones, I am happy and hopeful that we will see good information derived from the many components of this study.

This research is significant because this is the

very reason MCBA was founded and why MCBA President **Paul Trouette** fought so hard to get the department to pay attention to the decline in blacktails in the B-Zones. As he puts it, this is why he fights "for the love of the resource."

Tag Quotas and Changes to Tags

As of February 26, 2018, there have been no significant weather events to endanger deer beyond the normal weather patterns expected during the fall and winter months, yet things can and do change. However, Brad shares that there will be no changes to the recommendations on deer tag quotas for 2018.

Despite the fact there is no change to the recommended deer tag quota, B-Zone deer hunters need to take note that B-Zone tags are defined as "restricted" for this year. The 2017 Big Game Booklet explains it the following way, "**Restricted Deer Hunts** are any hunt that filled on or before the first business day after August 1 of the previous year," as the B-Zones did in 2017. So, in 2018, B-Zone tag are restricted. This is not a permanent designation but can continue if the B-Zones sell out in the same time frames.



Oscar Ramirez

What does that mean to you? Basically, you can still buy a B-Zone tag, over-the-counter, at any time with your first deer tag application. However, if you intend to purchase a B-Zone tag as a second deer tag, you will have to wait until the first business day after August 1 to purchase a tag, if they are still available. Here is a [link](#) to the deer tag classification page.

We'll see you in the field this year and don't forget your bear tag!



Conservation Loses a Great Champion

Tom Homen, a longtime conservationist and friend, passed away after a brief battle with cancer late in 2017. He hunted everything from big game to waterfowl. He also belonged to, and supported, countless organizations, such

as MCBA, CDA, MDF, RMEF, and recently CWA, where he worked for the last several years. He was loved and respected by all in this field.

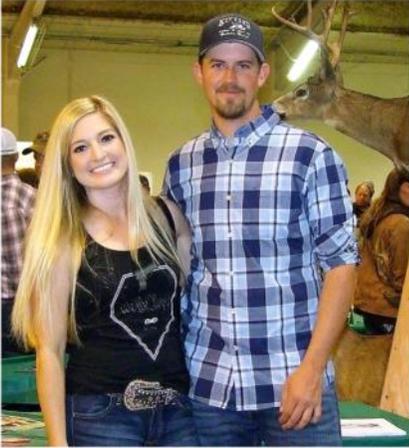
As a true sportsman, he leaves this wisdom, "*Whatever your passion, please support and finance their existence.*"

Tom is survived by his wife, **Marilyn**, and two daughters.



MCBA's 2017 Annual Ukiah Banquet

Mendocino Event Sells Out Again — Were You There?

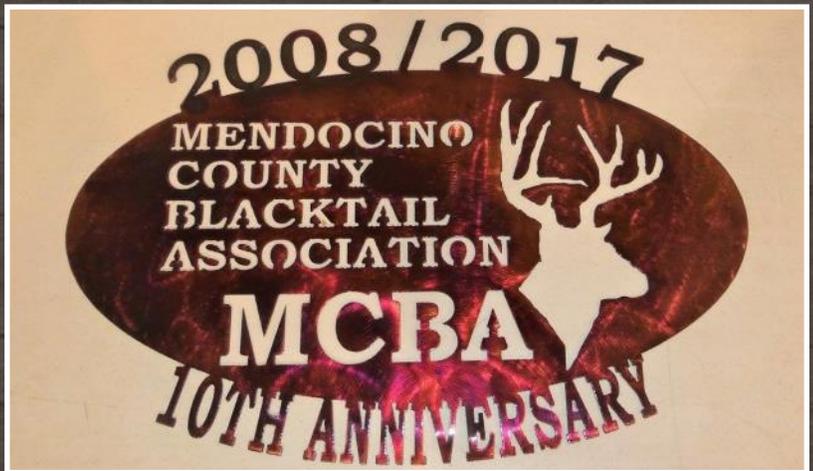


MCBA Members Survive Fire

MCBA Member **Ray Geimer** shared that he and his family were some of the unfortunate victims of the devastating wildfires from this past year.

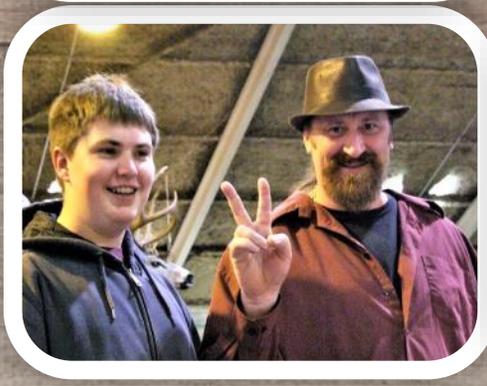
Ray was out hunting when this occurred, but explained that his wife **Dana** awoke at 1:15 a.m. due to the refrigerator beeping. There was a power surge and she then smelled smoke. Immediately, she looked out of her window and she saw a wall of flames behind their house. She wasted no time rousing the kids and got everyone out safely. Sadly, within 15 minutes, the house was up in flames. Physically, the family escaped unscathed.

At right is the sign that survived the fire and beyond a few concrete footings, a stove and this sign; basically everything else was reduced to ashes.



Ray & Dana Geimer

Photos courtesy of Hal & Rosie Wagenet



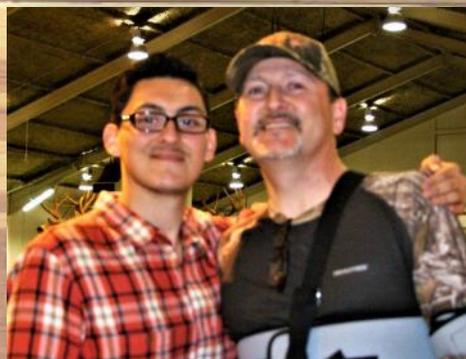
Photos courtesy of Hal & Rosie Wagenet

MCBA Banquet - Ukiah 2017



Photos courtesy of Hal & Rosie Wagenet

MCBA's 2017 Banquet – Great friends, good fun and a great cause. Carl Purdy Hall, Ukiah, CA.



Photos courtesy of Hal & Rosie Wagenet

Days Gone Past...

Paul Trouette and Steve Watson share their "Days Gone Past."



Trouette family, Vichy Springs, circa 1956.



Three great blacktails. Steve Watson family archives.



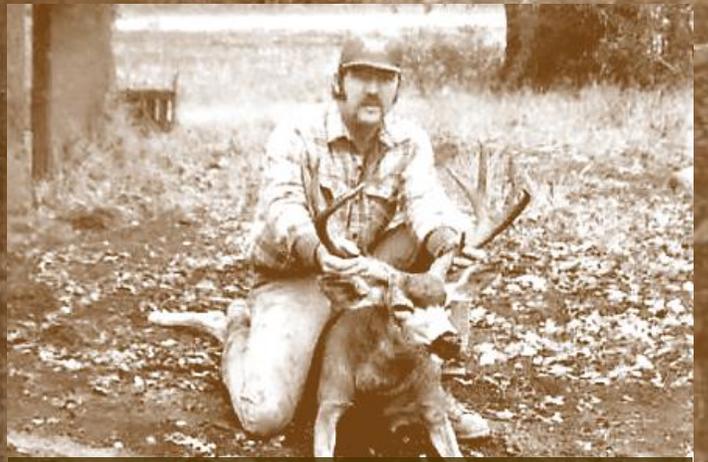
Paul Trouette, Sr. & Bob Benz, Laytonville, circa 1963.



Steve with huge blacktail. Watson family archives.



Paul Sr., Keith & Paul Jr., Trouette Ranch, circa 1961.



Yet another big blackie. Steve Watson family archives.

2018 Banquet Prices and Registration

When: *April 21, 2017* Where: Carl Purdy Hall,
1055 North State Street, Ukiah, CA

Time: 5:00, Dinner 6:30, Auction 7:30 – *OPEN BAR* – Come join us!

\$1100 Gun Table - Ruger American Standard or Compact Rifle (blued finish) - listed calibers - 223, 22-250, 243, 270, 7mm-08, 30-06 and 308



\$1250 Gun Table - Weatherby S2 (blued) - listed calibers - 223, 22-250, 240 Wby, 243, 25-06, 270, 7mm-08, 308, 30-06, 257 Wby, 7mm Rem Mag, 300 Win Mag, 300 Wby Mag



\$1350 Gun Table - Tikka T3X Lite (blued finish) - listed calibers 204 Ruger, 223, 22-250, 243, 7mm-08, 308, 25-06, 270, 30-06, 7mm Rem Mag, 300 Win Mag, 270 WSM, 300 WSM



Early Bird Gun Tables \$100 less if paid by March 12!

() \$75 SINGLE () \$110 MARRIED COUPLE () \$35 YOUTH DINNER

- () \$650 Friends Table - Eight people sit together at reserved spot
 - () \$1100 Gun Table - Sign at your table, someone wins a Ruger American (*1 in 8 odds*).
 - () \$1250 Gun Table - Sign at your table, someone wins a Weatherby S2 (*1 in 8 odds*).
 - () \$1350 Gun Table - Sign at your table, someone wins a Tikka T3X Lite (*1 in 8 odds*).
- Gun Table Rifle Caliber (pick from available): _____

() \$100 TICKET PACKAGE () \$300 TICKET PACKAGE () \$500 TICKET PACKAGE

Name: _____

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Total Enclosed: _____ Check #: _____

Credit Card Type: *Circle One* [Visa - Master Card - American Express]

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To pay online, register at www.mcbadeer.com/dinner. All online sales end on **April 16, Sunday**. Also, all items *except* Raffle Packs can be paid for online. You may mail this registration with payment to: **MCBA, P.O. Box 1357, Willits, CA. 95490**

2018 UKIAH

BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS

The MCBA Committee has a great selection of prizes and auction items including: firearms, hunts, fishing trips, artwork, sports memorabilia, outdoor products, jewelry and much more!

- Autographed Sports Memorabilia – Golden State Warriors, SF Giants Catcher **Buster Posey**
- African hunts in **South Africa** or **Namibia**
- HIGH BIDDERS CHOICE of **Belize, St Thomas, or Costa Rica** trip staying in a 4-Bedroom/4-Bath Villa for 6 days and 6 nights - donated by **Sporting Adventures International, LLC**
- HIGH BIDDERS CHOICE of **Hawaii** or **Mexico** trip staying in a nice lodging
- Local hunts and trips
- Dove Hunt in **Argentina** for 2 -donated by **Sporting Adventures International, LLC**
- Goose hunt for 6 with **Blake's Guide Service**
- Quigley Custom Ballistic Rifle Scope
- **Sitka** Clothing

Free youth giveaways, ladies prizes, fun games, an open bar, delicious food, and some great blacktail deer mounts on display.



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