

Don Webb's Bull Stories: The Wheeler Pond Bull

By Don Webb

Editors Note: During the recent Vernonia Sportsman's Banquet, local hunter, fisherman and all-around nice guy, Don Webb won an award for his Mule Deer in the Horn Show. Don was also recognized for his taxidermy work on a number of the other winners. Don, who is eighty-four years old, and I got to talking later and he told me that he had shot thirty-eight bull elk in his lifetime. Recently Don began writing down some of the more interesting stories, and that got me to thinking—maybe I should go hear some of these stories; it might make a good article for the paper.

Well, I went over to visit with Don and listen to some of his stories, and it turns out he has a bunch of them. And they aren't just about hunting. He has some good logging stories, some firefighting stories (he was the fire chief in Vernonia for many years), probably some good fish stories and more. I thought, there's enough material to keep us going for at least a year or two!

So here you go, the first installment in what will be a regular column—Don Webb's Bull Stories.

"Back about thirty years ago elk season was just about to start when my brother in law Bud got sick and went into the hospital. I had to go and help my sister get in her potato crop for about a week so I missed a few days of the season. I got home on a Wednesday and it snowed about ten inches

that night. I headed out early the next morning, drove over Rocky Point. and through Clear Creek and came out on the Sunset Highway and never saw a track; with a good tracking snow like this if they were moving I should have seen tracks. The snow was still hanging on the trees and the elk were holding tight. I thought, maybe I should run over the Wheeler Pond Road and check for tracks.

I had a good foot of snow up there and one rig ahead of me. I went up and over the top, and as I got part way down the other side I saw some tracks crossing the road heading down the hill, so I stopped before I ran over the tracks and sure enough one had stepped in the tire tracks of the rig ahead of me. I walked in the tracks a little and drove down to the bottom of the hill to see if any more had crossed the road, didn't see any so figured that must be a lone bull. Just what I was looking for.

By now the snow was starting to drop off the trees; when this happens

it's a good time to track a bull. The snow makes a lot of noise as it falls and you can get up close in this jack fir and brush. I parked at the elk track, put on my rain gear and old red felt hat because I knew it was going to be wet out there. Grabbed my 270 and started down the hill on the tracks. I could tell he was a fair size bull because he would walk around low hanging limbs and brush, and could see where he knocked snow off some of the higher limbs with his horns.

I was about fifteen minutes on his track and the snow was falling off the trees making a lot of noise. I was looking down at the tracks coming around a jack fir and looked up right into the bulls eyes the same time he looked at me, only about six feet away! Now I like to get close, but this was a little too close for comfort. The bull moved a lot faster than I did, he blew air at me and took

off and I blew air and took off in the other direction.

As soon as I got my wits back together, It only took a few seconds, I snapped my scope cover and safety off, but the bull was moving down hill in thick jack fir. I ran about twenty feet and into a 150 foot clearing that I didn't know was there. I could here the bull moving in the jack fir and thought that would be the last I would see of him. But some times they are not too smart; this bull would have had it made if he would have stayed in the jack fir, but maybe he wondered what it was that had scared the hell out of him.

He ran out in that small clearing; I pulled up my gun but I couldn't see a thing through my scope--my cover was hanging in front. I pushed it off and by then the bull had stopped and was looking at me about one hundred feet away. I pulled the trigger and put him down; a nice five point. By rights that bull should still be running.

Well the hunt is over, and this time I didn't mind being alone. It was a good hunt and I had a lot of luck on my side.

I rolled the bull over on his back and shoved snow up on his sides to hold him, got him gutted and skinned back. I headed to the pickup, moved it down the hill so I would have a level side hill pack, had a bite to eat, grabbed my pack board and had him out in about two hours. I was even home in time for supper.

This was a good hunt. I wish we had snow like this every year."



Don Webb and his prize winning Mule Deer at the 2011 Vernonia Sportsman's Banquet.

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