

2007 WHITETAIL TRIPLE SHOT

The setting could not have been much better, I have squared away 3 ½ days away from work to take my dad long range hunting for whitetails here in north Idaho. We were both shooting near identical 338 Edges (of course), stainless Rem 700's, 30" Broughton fluted barrels (a 1-10 twist and a 1-9 twist), HS Precision stocks, my cheekpieces, my brakes, Wyatt's extended box mags, NF 40 moa bases, NF LW rings, 5.5-22x NXS's with NPR1 reticules, ACI's (1 in degrees & 1 in cosine), and my standard 2800 fps 300 gr. SMK load. Both rifles just cut a hole at 100 yards, at 800 yds was cutting 2.5-3.5 inches. I had not had time to cut paper with mine at distance but had shot several drop confirmation shots out beyond 1200 yards and was quite confident in the rifles abilities. Joining us was my friend and outfitter Travis Reggear. Travis was also shooting a 338 Edge after seeing some shooting last fall. Travis's rifle is in a Brown precision thumbhole stock, a 700 stainless action, 30" Hart barrel, Vais brake, NF 40 moa base, NF LW rings and a 5.5-22x NXS NPR2. Travis was shooting a slightly hotter load with the 300 SMK at 2835 fps. For all practical purposes we are all identical in equipment setup. All of us use the NF Exbal program on a pocket PC and desk top for charts and field use. All I really needed was for the weather to be good to us and life is good.

I am excited to go hunting with my dad and wake up early on the 17th and leave to go meet him in Orofino 3 hrs away at 3:00 in the morning??? I show up and get dad loaded up, square our gear away and head to Travis's cabin for wayward hunters that he uses when guiding bear and cat hunters. We get to the cabin for wayward hunters and unload a mountain of gear. I take dad down to a rock pit that is very close to confirm our 100 yard zeros. With zeros confirmed and LRH gear loaded up, I track Travis down literally (a story for another time) and we go to the secret spot for long range confirmation (Kirby could tell you but won't). We each shoot 1081, 1167 & 1314 yards to confirm our PC's and long range dope. Did I mention that it was raining? Well remember that as you will see this info again.

Travis had guiding duties and prep to attend to, so dad and I set out for our first LRH position, lets call it P1. When we get up to P1 the weather is ...well... crappy. Rain is from slight to heavy and large patches of fog moving across our shooting area in the 2-7 mph wind. We spot several elk (no bulls), 2 deer both does and lots of fog. We end up pushing the eject button early and heading back to the cabin for a great dinner (Travis's mom hooked us up with dynamite food while we were there).

The next day we headed east to a new location that had from one vantage point, the view of an old burn and 3 selective cut logging areas within 1500 or less. At least that is what they told me the fog and rain was so bad I never saw the other side of the canyon for more than 20 seconds or more than a space of 50 feet at a time. Dad and I pull the rip cord at noon and drive back to P1 hoping to get below the fog and see something. It was the same story as the day before more fog, rain and cow elk. We saw a few does, 6 or 7 I believe. As we started to head back to the cabin the rain started to get pretty thick in the form of big white flakes.

Nov 19, dad and I wake up to 4" of fresh snow with more still snowing. We are treated to a great breakfast (did I mention the food was really good) and headed out to the east location to see if the colder weather had killed the fog any. The cooler weather helped some but still had a lot of fog. We could see in between the patches and that was better than the first two days. Dad spotted 2 cow elk and I spotted a big buck. The buck held his position for 4-5 seconds and stepped off in the brush never to be seen again, distance 836 yards. We left the east position for greener pastures or at least pastures with less fog.

We set up on P1 at 14:00 hrs. Dad spotted a doe and I set the spotting scope on it to confirm that it was in fact a doe. After confirmation I lazed it with my Swarovski LRF 806 yards and 10 degrees downhill. I looked back through the spotting scope and the doe had been replaced by an average size 4x5 buck. I told dad to get behind his rifle the first one was all his. Dad quickly settled in on the buck and positioned his lightweight rear bag for a solid position. I called out his dope 17.50 moa up and zero wind. Dad dialed in and said he was "on it"; I did a last second wind check and told him to "send it". I watched

the trace heading for the deer but a little further back than I have liked. On impact the buck was pounded to the ground and rolled down the hill. I congratulated dad on a fine shot and made some notes.



It was cold and we had lots of shooting light left so we went back into observation mode looking for another buck. We glassed for an hour or two and right at last light dad spotted what he thought was a doe, with the spotting scope I could just barely, in the fading light tell it was a small buck. While watching the small buck another buck joined him. The second buck was much larger well within my shooting criteria. I lazied him at 953 yards with the Swarovski and noted that it was a level shot. I pulled up the drop chart on my PC and determined that I would need 22.50 minutes for the shot and no windage. I got on the buck and told dad I was ready. He said he was “on it” and to “send it”. I fired the shot and recovered in a cloud of snow! I was setup between two rocks covered in 4-5 inches of snow. These rocks were of course right beside the muzzlebrake and the snow caps on them at exactly the same height. Well I am covered the rifle is covered. I blow the snow out of my face and look at my dad who is about to

wet his pants laughing at me. I ask was it a good hit? (I had heard the bullet hit). While wiping the tears from his eyes he said, "Yea, you dropped him right where he stood. It was just like you dropped a log on him". I got up and finished cleaning snow off me and the gear I had lying around (PC's are not fond of snow). We loaded up and hiked out to the Toyota. Travis and my dad dropped me off on the other side to drop down in the canyon with pack frame in hand. The ground is snow covered it is 30 degrees, steep and rocky, yes it was quite a ride. I dropped down 500-600 yards from the old road they dropped me when I spotted a huge blood spot in the snow. I walked to the blood spot and noticed a handful of jacket pieces in the center of the blood spot. I recovered 3 of the larger pieces including the boat tail cup. I notice a small 3-4 inch crater in the dirt 4 feet or so behind the blood spot where the core of the bullet penetrated the ground after passing through the buck. I curiously stick a small stick down the hole about 13-14 inches before it stopped. Unfortunately I was not able to recover the core from the rocky semi frozen ground. At the blood spot there is a 3 foot wide slide mark in the snow with an 8 inch wide blood smear off centered in it. About 50 feet below the blood spot I see the buck hung up in some low brush at the end of the slide mark. He never had a clue. I was very lucky that he was not 15 feet further up the canyon or it would have added at least 300 yards to my steep uphill pack. I got the normal trophy photos out of the way and got him packed up to the road. I still had not had any contact from Travis and my dad. I got my buck up to the truck and loaded up, then called Travis on the radio. They were having trouble locating dad's buck in the dark. Dad and Travis made the decision to come back at first light to take up the trail. They had good blood at the site of the hit followed it a short way and it disappeared. They ran out of tracking snow shortly after that and pulled the plug. I was confident from watching the hit in the spotting scope we would find it in the light.

Nov 20, we wolf down some breakfast and go out to locate dad's deer. We are also blessed with good weather, overcast, little fog, cold temps and light winds. We located dad's deer in 10 minutes only 55-60 yards from the hit. Travis and Dad load the deer whole on the 6 wheeler and drive back (some guys have all the luck).

Later In the afternoon dad, Travis and I go back to P1 for the afternoon. We setup dial in conditions and prepare to spot the “big one”. We spot several deer mostly does, 3 coyotes at 1390 that don’t stick around long enough for a shot (bummer), and 3 smaller bucks. I spotter an absolute toad of a buck about an hour before dark, we get a brief look at it and it is a dandy. It was a very heavy horned 5x5 maybe in the 150-160 class if I had to make a quick guess. I also believe it was the same buck that Kirby passed on last year when it had a 5x2 rack with a deformed right side antler. Unfortunately we didn’t even see him long enough for Travis to get behind the rifle, that is life hunting LRH in the rut. Right at last light I spot a buck in nearly the same spot as where my dad shot his the evening before. I ranged it at 802 yards and 10 degrees downhill. Travis pulled up his drop info and dialed in. I gave him a no wind call and told him to send it. On the impact of the bullet the buck lunged forward and fell to the ground, thrashed around for just a second and came to rest just 20-25 feet from the bullet impact site. Travis and I hop on the ATV’s and zoom down to recover the buck. Again loaded on the 6 wheeler whole, I just must have not lived my previous life correctly or something.



That concludes this years LRH whitetail hunt for me. Three shots, three hits, three bucks, total distance 2561 yards. That is nearly 1.5 miles of buck hunting. It was an absolute blast sharing my dads first long range whitetail hunt with him and my friend. Good friends, good hunting, good food, and good long range opportunities, what more could a guy want?