

BACKCOUNTRY JOURNAL

THE MAGAZINE OF BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS

FALL 2019



PLUS: TO HUNT GOATS, NEW JERSEY BACKCOUNTRY, BONE BROTHS AND FAT RENDERING, SQUIRREL DUMPLINGS AND MORE!

EASY DOESN'T CARRY THE WEIGHT

PROFESSIONAL GUIDE AND OUTFITTER REMI WARREN ISN'T DETERRED BY THE TERRAIN OR ELEVATIONS OF MONTANA'S BITTERROOTS.



 **GERBER**

ANTICIPATION OF FALL

Nights are getting cooler, days are getting shorter and the heart is beginning to quicken. For many of us, the months of training both our legs and our four-legged companions are about to be put to the test. Can we ever be completely ready? I never have been. We follow in the footsteps of countless generations of hunters who came before us. Is the anticipation the same as it was way back when? I like to think so. I can feel my brain shifting ... and already have had a couple of anxiety dreams about messing up in the field. I'm not sure what that means, but I know where my subconscious has gone. Soon I will go from the dream world to reality.

My friend Millsy asked me the other day what hunt I was most looking forward to. Without hesitation I replied, THE BOB in mid-September to chase wapiti and high elevation mule deer. It's a place I know well where I am lucky to share camp with close family and an occasional friend. The memories alone call me back, but with recent fires, it's the changing landscape I'm excited to see. Who knows what lies ahead, but the solace, challenge and adventure are guaranteed.

Tule's third year as a bird dog has me chomping at the bit. First will be grouse, next waterfowl, then pheasants, and finally late season waterfowl. She has lost her winter weight and is working the dummies well. Hopefully she grows out of her hard mouth of the previous two years, as I didn't have the heart to force fetch her in the off season. People with more experience than I have told me that maturity can bring a softening of the mouth ... our dinner plates sure hope so as tenderized duck breasts get old. At 11, my daughter Cidney will go from observer to participant. Anticipation is high for her first bird. Her brother Colin will continue to follow behind, building his own anticipation for the seasons to come. My one on one time with these two afield becomes even more coveted as they grow older and are full of friends and ball sports.

A grouse and duck trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in October has me itching. I was fortunate to travel to the BWCAW a few years back in the dead of winter on sled dogs to resupply Amy and Dave Freeman, who were spending a year in the wilderness to draw attention to the threat this treasure faces. Unfortunately, this threat looms even larger today following a decision by the administration to continue development of a copper sulfide mine just a quarter mile from its border. I will be joining conservation warriors who wield pens and lead grassroots armies to continue the canoe strokes of Amy and Dave. This is a place well worth fighting for, no matter the odds.

Finally, I'm looking forward to a whitetail doe hunt on land owned by my namesake, where public access is permitted under Montana's highly successful Block Management Program. With over 8 million acres of publicly accessible private land enrolled, it is a public private partnership worth emulating. Mr. Lindbergh and the hundreds of other landowners who open their land to access by sportsmen and women deserve our praise and respect for this privilege.



The anticipation of fall is equally high for Tule.

Whether you are chasing quarry on the land or in the water, remember the importance of your role as ambassador. A few years back we established a pledge that you can find on our website:

As a North American hunter and angler,

- I pledge to speak up on behalf of conservation of the clean water, wildlife habitat, sportsman access, and public lands that belong to all of us.
- I will defend these values against those individuals, organizations and corporations who would sell or transfer our public lands and erode our habitat, opportunity and freedoms.
- I welcome new sportsmen and women, young and old, and will lead by example.
- I pledge to leave our wild public lands in better condition than I found them so that future generations can enjoy the benefits we are blessed to have today.

Join me in taking at least one new hunter or angler out this next fall. Join me in packing out trash from our public lands and waters ... we set a goal of packing out a thousand bags of trash in the month of September alone. Join me continuing to speak for those animals and wild places that cannot, we must beat back those that want to steal our heritage and take advantage of opportunities to build upon it. If not now, when? If not us, who? THIS IS OUR TIME!

Onward and upward,

Land Tawney
President and CEO

WHAT IS BHA?

BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS is a North American conservation nonprofit 501(c)(3) dedicated to the conservation of backcountry fish and wildlife habitat, sustaining and expanding access to important lands and waters, and upholding the principles of fair chase. This is our quarterly magazine. We fight to maintain and enhance the backcountry values that define our passions: challenge, solitude and beauty. Join us. Become part of the voice for our wild public lands, waters and wildlife. Sign up at www.backcountryhunters.org

GET INVOLVED

BHA HAS MEMBERS across the continent, with chapters representing 45 states, the District of Columbia, two Canadian provinces and one Canadian territory. Grassroots public lands sportsmen and women are the driving force behind BHA. Find your local chapter and get involved at backcountryhunters.org/chapters



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THE SEARCH FOR NEW JERSEY'S BACKCOUNTRY

BY MIKE ADAMS

I've been stuck in traffic for nearly an hour. The whole highway crawls at a snapping turtle's pace and, to make matters worse, there's one car tailgating me, another one trumpeting on their car horn, and a smoke-billowing truck spinning wheels at the green light ahead. It's testing my nerves. I begin to fantasize of Montana's big sky. I dream of the open road, the deep backcountry and of being sincerely and utterly all alone.

Yanking me out of my cathartic dreams of elsewhere, my phone's GPS commands a left turn and I'm reminded of the true purpose of today. I turn into an upscale neighborhood, drive for a mile and pull down an unkempt dirt road. The road carves deep into a birch and maple forest. The leaves cast a mosaic of shadow and light onto the gravel in front of me. In my rearview, a single house from the neighborhood grows small in the distance before it's swallowed up whole by the forest. The road succumbs to new growth vegetation at its end. I park and bushwhack through a thick grove of low brush saplings.

Their limbs tear at my clothing, scraping my forearms, face and the denim of my jeans as if they were trying to guard something sacred. A game trail emerges in the thicket and I follow it down a steep, wooded hillside to a stream. Silken current rolls gently over stone and I take a moment to study the flow before assembling my fly rod. The bushiest caddis fly stands out among the rest, and

with it tied to the end of my tippet, I set off upriver to fish one of New Jersey's last remaining wild trout streams.

Brook trout exist in just half of their native range in New Jersey, down to 121 streams where they naturally reproduce. In most of these streams, they're confined to just a small section. If you had an aerial view of New York City and watched time lapse from the 19th century to the modern era, you'd detect a gray swath of concrete and skyscrapers, surrounded by an even greater mass of suburban neighborhoods, spreading out from its epicenter like spilled milk on a hardwood floor. The concrete plague spilled over the Hudson and into New Jersey, swallowing wildlife and wilderness along its way and bestowing New Jersey with the ill repute of America's most densely populated state.

Somehow, those 121 bastions of serene brook trout habitat survived the gray.

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife designates 20 such streams as Wild Trout Streams. These waterways are afforded special regulations, like prohibition of bait, moratorium of brook trout harvest and the mandated use of barbless hooks. New Jersey Fish and Wildlife's website advertises the locations of these streams. To find the other 101, you need to find where people failed to leave their mark. You need to find backcountry.

Continue reading on page 52 ...

**I SET OFF UPRIVER TO
FISH ONE OF NEW JER-
SEY'S LAST REMAINING
WILD TROUT STREAMS.**



YETI BUILT FOR THE WILD.

THE LOADOUT GOBOX™
THE CARGO BOX THAT KNOWS NO BOUNDS



- 1** **Hunter:** Birdie, BHA Member (in loving memory) **Species:** Mallards **State:** Colorado **Method:** Shotgun **Distance from nearest road:** Two miles **Transportation:** Paws
- 2** **Angler:** Kinnan Rischar, BHA Member **Species:** Ladyfish **State:** Florida **Method:** Spin **Distance from nearest road:** Two miles **Transportation:** Boat
- 3** **Hunter:** Garrett Abernthy, BHA Member **Species:** Elk **State:** Idaho **Method:** Bow **Distance from nearest road:** Seven miles **Transportation:** Foot

- 4** **Angler:** Kyle Chambers, BHA Member **Species:** Hybrid Striped Bass **State:** Ohio **Method:** Fly **Distance from nearest road:** One mile **Transportation:** Foot
- 5** **Hunter:** Simon Friesen, BHA Member **Species:** Black Bear **Province:** British Columbia **Method:** Bow **Distance from nearest road:** Two miles **Transportation:** Foot
- 6** **Hunters:** Jacob Bliss, Joey Bell, BHA Members **Species:** Turkey **State:** Nebraska **Method:** Shotgun **Distance from nearest road:** Two miles **Transportation:** Foot

*Email your Backcountry Bounty submissions to williams@backcountryhunters.org
OR share your photos with us by using #backcountryhuntersandanglers on social media!*

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SEPTEMBER IS PUBLIC LANDS MONTH!

PUBLIC LAND PACK OUT

In celebration of Public Lands Month, BHA is hosting Public Land Pack Out, a chapter-to-chapter competition with a goal of picking up 1,000 bags of trash throughout the month of September. BHA members can compete through organized clean up events or individually by packing out trash while hunting or fishing. All pack-out entries recorded through BHA's website between September 1-30 will be compiled by BHA, and the chapter that packs out the most trash will be announced during the first week of October.

Join us in packing out public land trash this September and record your cleanups to help your chapter win gear from goHUNT and Mtn Ops: https://www.backcountryhunters.org/2019_public_land_pack_out



BHA EXPANDS OHV REWARD PROGRAM TO TARGET ILLEGAL DUMPING

In response to a recent inquiry from an Idaho Bureau of Land Management law enforcement officer, BHA has expanded our long-standing \$500 reward program for information leading to the conviction of illegal motorized users to also target illegal dumping. BLM Officer Jay Brown reached out to BHA staff to nominate Dale Gust of Kuna, Idaho, for a \$500 BHA reward in recognition of a report made to the BLM in April of 2019, which eventually led to a guilty plea and over \$1,000 in fines for an individual who was illegally dumping commercial trailers full of waste on public lands. As Officer Jay Brown put it, "Mr. Gust's report was instrumental in the successful prosecution of this case, and it would have likely remained unsolved had he not taken action." Our federal land management agencies have very limited enforcement budgets, and this is a great reminder of how every public land owner can help self-police and keep our public lands clean. To top it off, when BHA staff reached out to Mr. Gust to issue his \$500 reward, he asked that the money be donated back to help support the production of educational signage in the area reminding public land users that dumping is illegal. BHA will be working with the BLM on signage and other educational efforts in the area to help curtail such illegal activity in the future. Please visit https://www.backcountryhunters.org/bha_s_ohv_reward_fund for information on BHA's illegal OHV and dumping rewards.

NEW LIFE MEMBER REWARD

BHA is excited to announce a new life membership option! Become a life member at the \$1,500 gold level and receive a Traeger Pro 780 pellet grill and cover. Visit www.backcountryhunters.org/join to sign up today.



FINDING COMMON GROUND

Over the summer BHA was thrilled to collaborate with New Belgium Brewing on its Finding Common Ground campaign and film series. Created to celebrate the diverse ways people choose to enjoy our public lands and waters, the series of short films pairs unlikely allies – for example, bowhunter Allie D'Andrea of Worn and Weathered and Mikhail Martin, an urban rock climber – as they learn about each other's passions and unite over their shared love of public lands. The campaign's goal was to donate \$250,000 to groups working to conserve public lands. BHA was proud to participate in the effort and is grateful for corporate partners like New Belgium who understand the importance of our shared lands and waters and put their money where their passion lies. To learn more, visit newbelgium.com/fat-tire/finding-common-ground/



BHA ACTIVATES MEMBERS IN RECORD NUMBERS

BHA members have been vocal in opposing the appointment of William Perry Pendley, a well-known advocate of the sale of public lands, to the top policy position at the Bureau of Land Management, with an action alert spurring thousands of responses, including more than 10,000 letters sent to Congress within the first 24 hours it was launched. To put that into context we sent 53,000 in all of last year.

Pendley's long track record advocating for the sale of millions of acres of public lands is well documented. As founder and former president of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, a conservative law firm associated with land management conflicts across the West, Pendley authored several books attacking our public lands and engaged with organizations dedicated to the privatization of public lands, including the American Lands Council. Today, he is charged with leading the very agency he has spent his career trying to dismantle. Last month in an interview he said that "all lands should be developed."

The importance of the BLM director role is difficult to overstate. The appointment of Pendley is a clear threat if for nothing else the message it sends new and career employees. The BLM administers 245 million acres of America's public lands and waters in the western U.S. and is largely responsible for most development decisions on those lands. BLM lands provide unmatched fish and wildlife habitat and hunting and fishing opportunities – and drive an economy worth billions of dollars.

Raise your voice in support of our BLM lands by visiting backcountryhunters.org/take_action

NEW COLLEGIATE CLUB COORDINATOR

Kylie Schumacher, BHA's new collegiate club coordinator, grew up in a non-hunting family in central Illinois and, following her love of the outdoors and wildlife, pursued a degree in zoology from Colorado State University. Working for various agencies studying northern goshawks, elk, feral pigs and wildlife diseases led her to pick up hunting as an adult. During her time in Colorado, she also volunteered for the Colorado BHA chapter as a regional director, working underneath the board of directors leading local BHA outreach and events. She now hopes to use her wildlife background, hunting experience and passion for conservation to influence and inspire the next generation as the new collegiate club coordinator. In particular, she is looking forward to increasing diversity in hunting and fishing, assisting with R3 initiatives, cultivating more conservationists, and growing the collegiate program as a whole. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, backpacking, climbing, snowboarding, yoga, drinking a good beer, working her way through all of Hank Shaw's big game recipes, and learning anything new that involves being outdoors.



COMING SOON: BHA ARMED FORCES INITIATIVE

BHA is excited to announce a new and soon to be official Armed Forces Initiative. A huge thank you to Eric McCullars for his efforts over the past several months in laying the groundwork for the program. Following his 10 years of service and two deployments in Afghanistan, Eric moved to Montana and undertook an internship for BHA. During his 90 day internship he designed the framework for BHA's Armed Forces Initiative, a program designed to engage and recognize military service men and women. Having concluded his internship, he is eager to begin the master of business administration program at the University of Montana this fall – although he hasn't quite figured out how he is going to get any studying done during elk season.

"BHA saw a transitioning veteran eager to begin the next chapter of their life, and without hesitation offered them a life changing opportunity to do so. As that veteran, I can testify the men and women of BHA act on their beliefs. Whether it be stream access, public land access, or supporting the United States Armed Forces – BHA doesn't just talk, they act. To recycle a phrase I have used to define fellow service members, I would fight to serve with them in the future. Thank you, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers!"

– Eric G. McCullars (Captain, U.S. Army)

Stay tuned to backcountryhunters.org and future issues of *Backcountry Journal* for more information on BHA's Armed Forces Initiative.



HAPPY FALL HUNTING, BHA MEMBERS!

I will be heartbroken when the day comes that my body can no longer propel me up to places like this. But if these lands are still wild and public, I will find peace knowing that mule deer and mountain lions are still engaged in their age-old yin and yang and that a few young men and women will likely be seduced by the challenge and mystery of the steep country and the wild animals that live there.

— Josh Kuntz (BHA regional manager and Idaho chapter coordinator)



Idaho chapter board member Tyler Wicks (center), with Josh Kuntz (left) and Mike Krahn (right), deep in the Idaho backcountry.



SAVE THE DATE

RENDEZVOUS 2020 | MISSOULA, MT | JUNE 4-6

WASHINGTON, D. C. *BHA Capital Region Chair*

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO BHA? Initially, my husband and I had purely selfish motives for joining BHA – finding folks who share a similar lifestyle. We are an active-duty military family, so uprooting and moving is our reality. When we received orders to the Washington, D.C. area, we had no idea where to start looking for hunting locations, bow shops, fly shops, etc. Being very conservation minded and having ties to the West, the message of BHA resounded strongly with us and we decided to join and become active in our local chapter.

WHY ARE PUBLIC LANDS IMPORTANT TO YOU? On a superficial level: they are just freaking FUN. I love to hike, bike, hunt, fish and forage. Although, when you dig a little deeper, our public lands hold so much more: wisdom, power, healing and a connection that cannot be offered elsewhere. Our public lands have immense cultural, ecological and historical significance, but they also represent something much greater. They bring us back to who we are and where we came from. When we get to those places in far-off reaches, we become simply human.

WHAT IS YOUR PERFECT DAY IN THE OUTDOORS? My perfect day on our public lands and waters is simple; whether I'm on the water or in a forest or wetland, I hope to come home a little dirty and a bit enlightened. I hope to have a few more memories stored up for myself and my kids and maybe a few new lessons learned. I hope I encounter something magical and wild and that a little piece of that magic stays with me forever – whether it's a breathtaking brown trout or a simple swallowtail butterfly, I always want to be moved.

DO THE OUTDOORS PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN HOW YOU RAISE YOUR CHILDREN?

Having discovered the riches of our wild places for myself, I now long to present my children with the same opportunity. I want to foster a love for the common things: the dandelions, butterflies and birds, not solely to connect them to nature but to teach them how to seek joy in the everyday, the commonplace. Our public lands system provides each parent with this invaluable learning tool. It holds the power to teach a biology or geometry lesson while simultaneously using the magical capacity to heal and humble us. If there ever was a better reason to keep it public, I'd like to hear it. 🐾





APEX SYSTEM

The Apex System features three new products built to keep you quiet in the moment of truth. The Apex Hoody is a feature-rich layer combining premium merino wool with a durable nylon face. The Apex Pant helps the hunter adapt to changing conditions and varying levels of activity with a thermoregulating micro-grid interior and a weather-resistant polyester face. The Apex Pack completes the series with a quiet low-profile design and easily deployable components for capitalizing on hard-earned close encounters.



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