











Hunt ID: CO-ElkMDeerBBear-MME2RONCI-E9L-O1NYT

Welcome to the West Elk Wilderness hunting which has a well-earned name for what we have, Wilderness full of elk.

This outfitter offers a full array of customized hunting services that include guiding and packing, drop camps, and guided camps from archery through 4th rifle season, and even cabins and bunkhouse.

Guiding & Packing Service

Guides

If you want a guide for a day or a week, give us a call. We will only book guides on a day basis starting a week or two before the season starts. Guiding service can be with or without horses. Call to discuss your needs. Guide rate: \$300/1 day, \$200/day for 2+ days. Guide with horses add \$100/client horse. Depending on the season and whatever else may be going on, we may be able to flex on price. Call to discuss.

Packing Service

We offer packing service on a limited basis if we are not busy with drop or guided camps. We only pack hunters in to areas where we do not have camps; however that includes some great hunting areas. Our packing service rate is \$200/horse per trip, with a \$300 minimum. For example if you are 2 people who want to ride in and have 2 pack horse loads of camp gear and food, that would require 4

horses for a cost of \$800. If you want to hike out a week later, but have the gear packed out requiring 1 horse that will be \$300. We will also pack harvested game from any reasonably accessible location at the same per horse rate.

Pack load size per horse varies depending on weight, bulk, and awkwardness of the load and trail conditions. On average a pack animal can carry about 150 pounds, though often bulk is more of a limitation.

Guided hunts include: one guide per 2 hunters, cook and meals provided, horses to access hunting areas, game retrieval and packing to trailhead. In addition to the base camp, spike camps may be used. If desired we can change guide/client ratio to meet your needs and budget. Our preference is for a guided hunt camp to include 4 hunters, but we can flex either way to accommodate your group. We welcome individuals as well as groups. Talk to us if you want to arrange and customize an 'exclusive group' hunt.

We can also customize a guided 1:1 "do-whatever-it-takes" trophy buck or bull hunt. Call to discuss your needs and a price.

Guided hunts can also be based out of our trailhead cabin, which is a particularly nice option for the 3rd and 4th rifle seasons in November.

Due to the steep, rocky trails, we can't accommodate hunters who weigh more than about 250 pounds. We strongly recommend that hunters should be relatively fit to increase their chances of success.

Preference Points for elk for licenses

Archery Over the counter

Muzzleloader Elk 86 % w/2 points

1st Season 100 % w/0 Points

2nd Season Over the counter

3rd Season Over the counter

4th Season 20% with w/8 points

Preference Points for Deer

Archery Over the counter 27% w/0 points

Muzzleloader 70 % w/4 points

2st Season 96 % w/3 Points

3th Season 68% w/9 points Non-Reside w/0%

4th Season 100% w/18 points

This is a reminder to always put in for at least a deer point even if you aren't hunting deer. In this way you will have the points available when the opportunity presents itself to get a deer license to take home a big buck here or elsewhere in Colorado. Mule deer numbers are lower than they were 20 years ago but they are higher than they were 5 years ago. With the herds increasing the

future for big Muley buck hunter looks very promising. In time you will be seeing the deer preference point's requirements lowering and many deer hunting opportunities show themselves.

Cabins for DIY Hunts

Both the main cabin and the small cabin are located together down by the ranch base location.



Small Cabin



Main Cabin



Trailhead Tack buildings & Corral

Cabin Options

We offer rustic cabins and a horse corral on the HN Ranch. The Ranch is surrounded by National Forest and provides short cut access to the Wilderness trails. **Bring your own horses** and keep them safely in one of our pipe corrals, or **rent ours**. **Or consider booking a guided hunt based out of the cabin, especially in the 3rd or 4th rifle seasons.** From the ranch you can access several excellent backcountry hunting areas with a ride of as little as one mile. In

the early seasons you'll go in a little farther, by 3rd and 4th rifle seasons the elk could be migrating through the foothills immediately surrounding the property. The private land is a relatively small acreage so most hunting is found on the National Forest.

The main cabin has a kitchen/dining room, bedroom with 3 beds, and a bathroom. The cabin is rustic and simple, but comfortable and warm. It has hot shower, sink, kitchen stove/oven, refrigerator and a propane heater.

A second small **log cabin can provide private sleeping for a couple**, or a cot can be set up to provide 2 beds. There is a nearby outhouse and rustic shower house, but no bathroom. **One or two people can use the small cabin independently**, cooking on a camp stove and storing food in a cooler. An electric heater provides warmth. Truck/trailer parking is immediately adjacent.

Some hunters have used the cabin as a base, then set up a spike camp 3 or 4 miles on up the trails. You can access 3 main basin areas in the wilderness above the ranch, or go a couple different directions beyond the ranch on 4wd roads to access a wide range of high and low elevation hunting areas. The ranch gate is locked, but you will be given the combo and have free access to come and go as you please.

We use the ranch as a pack station base, and the owners also have friends and family who stay in the main ranch house. Sometimes the ranch is very quiet, at other times there will be a handful of people around. We will not have more than one rental group staying in the cabins at any given time.

Cabin Rates

Main cabin: (sleeps 3), \$2395/week (\$ 800 per week per person if 3 occupants)

Small cabin: (sleeps 2), \$ 595/week (\$ 300 per week per person if 2 occupants)

Must pay the max occupant price per week even if less that Max number of occupants)

From the Cabins there is Horse or ATV or 4 WD trails/roads that branch out through the national forest. The Wilderness designated areas are foot or horseback only, no motorized vehicles.

Horse Rental, Corral

Horse Rental: \$595/week-only available to those staying at the cabin. Horse experience required.

Corral: \$295/week- bring your own horses and we'll provide a safe corral, hay and clean water.

Day guiding: Summer trail guide \$195/day Hunting guide \$295/1 day, \$200/day for 2+ days

Guided Hunt Rates

Archery: 7 days, 5 hunting Solo hunter – \$3795
2-3 hunters – \$3295/each
4 or more – \$2995/ each

Black Powder: 5 hunting days \$3695/ each
1st Rifle: 4.5 hunting days \$3695/ each
2nd Rifle: 5 hunting days \$3595/ each
3rd Rifle: 5 hunting days \$3395/ each
4th Rifle: 5 hunting days \$2495/ each

(Cabin based, you provide your own food and cooking)

Non-hunters are welcome in our camps if space is available. Rate is \$1495/each

Backcountry Hunting

We are a backcountry hunting guide and outfitter in the West Elk Wilderness of Colorado, game management unit GMU053. Our Gunnison National Forest special use permit allows us exclusive right to guide and outfit hunters in the western side of the West Elk Mountains above the towns of Crawford and Paonia.

Fair chase hunting in wild country is our passion. Sharing the camaraderie of friends and family, basking in the pristine beauty of wild nature, testing oneself against the challenges of mountain weather, wily animals and unforgiving terrain, unplugging and slowing way down... these are all essential elements of our hunts. Heading home with a cooler of sweet red meat, and maybe even a trophy rack, is a bonus that drives the pursuit.

Hunting in our mountains is tough! There is plenty of game, but the landscape is vast, the terrain steep, the forests and brush nearly impenetrable and the animals can be wily beyond belief. No matter how much we might help you, the success of your hunt relies very much on what you bring to it – your skills, your luck, your attitude, your toughness, determination and preparation. We can show you game most days, but we can't boast about high success rates. Only you can earn that! We can't offer a 'canned hunt'. We do offer an intense hunting experience, and the rewards can be very sweet.

Given the challenges you face, our job is to provide you with key advantages. Our sturdy horses and mules will pack you and your gear deep into the high country where few other hunters can get. And they can pack all that meat back out too! Our camps are simple but provide the shelter and comfort you need to recharge. And we can go further by providing you with a guide, a cook, and horses to access a larger hunting area from camp. Most importantly, our local knowledge of the terrain and game habits is key to a successful hunt. You focus on hunting, let us handle the logistics.

New to backcountry hunting? First time pursuing elk or mule deer? Or maybe you've been trying but have yet to taste the sweetness of success. There is a lot to learn, so save you a few years of mistakes and let us help! Learn to hunt

Hunting Seasons & Tags

We hunt trophy mule deer bucks, elk and bear in archery, muzzleloader and 4 rifle seasons. Over the counter and limited draw tags available for elk and bear, buck tags obtained by draw or purchase of 'landowner tags'. Hunting seasons run from late August through mid-November.

*Applications for draw tags due in early April.

Leftover elk tags typically available after the draw. Most of these are for cows, no preference points required. Often 4th rifle bull tags are left over after the draw.

At times we have Mule Deer, 'landowner tags (vouchers)' for bucks. You'll pay more but don't need any preference points. These can be used on public lands.

Find Colorado Division of Wildlife info on game licenses here:

<http://wildlife.state.co.us/hunting/Pages/Hunting.aspx>

Approximate Hunting Season Dates

Archery:	August 27 – September 25
Black powder:	September 10 – 18
1st rifle:	October 15 – 19
2nd rifle:	October 22 – 30
3rd rifle:	November 5 – 13
4th rifle:	November 16 – 20

Species Info

Mule Deer: GMU053 has trophy bucks. They live on the high ridges until snow pushes them down in November. More preference points required to draw in later seasons.

Elk: GMU053 has healthy elk populations and plenty of bulls, but over-the-counter tags mean that fewer bulls make it to a mature age. So 250 – 300+ class bulls can be encountered, but don't count on getting one. In September and October elk are found from low to high mountain elevations. Snow usually gets them moving out of the higher country in late October and early November.

*If you are new to elk hunting, we encourage you to start with a cow elk hunt. Increase your chances of success due to there being more cows than bulls, while still enjoying a challenging and exciting hunt. The meat is often better and the tags are cheaper.

Bear: GMU053 has a healthy bear population. After good feed years they can get big. A 600+ lb. bear was killed in the '90s. They feed voraciously on berry patches and gut piles through September into mid-October, which is the best time to hunt them. By late October they are denning up, but are still occasionally encountered.

You can get an over-the-counter bear tag for the same season as your elk or deer tag. There is also a draw only rifle bear season through September, no preference points required. In Colorado bear hunting is done "Free Ranging", no bait and no dogs.

Season Info

Archery: Bull and Cow tags are available over the counter. Buck tags available by draw, 0-1 preference points required.

Black powder: Elk and Deer tags available by draw. Preference points required for Bulls and Bucks, none needed for Cow.

During the Black powder season there will be a few more hunters in the hills. Bulls will be bugling as they gather cows for the rut.

In early September the elk are relatively undisturbed in lush summer vegetation. Bulls are rubbing velvet off their antlers. Thunderstorms are common, snow is not, daytime temperatures are typically warm. There are few hunters in the hills.

Late September is spectacular as leaves flame red and gold. Often snow blankets the high peaks and you might get some in camp too.

1st rifle: Elk only, tags available by draw. 0-1 preference points required for Bulls, none for cows.

With the elk coming off their mating season and a limited number of hunters this season has some of the highest success rates.

2nd rifle: Bull tags available over the counter, cows by draw. Buck tags by draw, preference points required.

The most popular season, but in our remote backcountry camps you'll be leaving the crowds behind. Autumn leaves have mostly fallen improving visibility in the woods. Be prepared for snowstorms and below freezing temperatures. Meat hangs and keeps well.

3rd rifle: Bull tags available over the counter, cows by draw. Buck tags by draw, preference points required.

As elk move down towards their winter range we move our guided camp down to a lower elevation along their migration corridor. Hunting success is more weather dependent than earlier seasons, but it can be great. Snow cover is common.

4th rifle: All elk and deer tags available by draw only. No preference points required for bull or cow, and leftover tags are often available after the draw.

This season is overlooked by many out of state hunters, but is popular with locals. Many bulls have already been harvested, but increasingly wintry weather shakes the remaining big bulls out of their mountain haunts. Snow cover makes it easier to spot and track animals, and they are often down in the foothills that are easier to access. It is also a great season to harvest a cow for meat.

Hunting Grounds

Game Management Unit 53

Our permitted hunting area extends over several major drainages and mountains ranging from the foothills up to timberline at 11,500'. This large area allows us to spread our hunting pressure and follow the herds as they move from summer to winter range. We offer excellent hunting opportunities ranging from the early archery season in the high country down through the migration corridors to foothills winter range in the snowiest late rifle season.

We take advantage of the highly varied topography to offer a remote, high altitude camp in terrain so rugged you will hardly see other hunters, as well as more accessible lower elevation camps surrounded by less challenging terrain.

We hunt from above Crawford across the Chain Mountains to Mt Guero and Tater Heap.

Learn to Hunt

If you are interested in becoming a hunter but not sure how to start? Or maybe you want to take your elk hunting skills to the next level. The range of skills a backcountry hunter needs can be daunting, from accurate field shooting, to how to bring home quality meat to learning the habits of the game, tracking, and even the woodsman ship of how to navigate in trackless wilderness and camp in stormy, freezing weather. Or maybe you've finally gotten a couple of horses and want to learn how to pack them and keep them safe, well fed and healthy out in a wilderness camp.

It can be expensive and distracting trying to learn many of these skills while on a hunt. Let us help you in the off seasons, before you head in to the hills with a tag to fill. Or we could customize a guided hunt towards an extra emphasis on 'learning by doing'. We have years of experience with all of these skills, and have also worked as outdoor educators with plenty of hands on teaching experience.

Since we specialize in customized hunts for individuals or small groups, we can also tailor a hunting experience to meet the unique needs of youth or women who want to learn to hunt in a safe, focused setting.