

BACK AT THE RANCH

Block Management and the TRM Ranch



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It's December 30th and the winds are blowing gusts of about 40-60 miles per hour as a Chinook warms up the East Front for the first time in quite a spell. In the period of an hour, the temperature rose from -15 degrees to 34 degrees above zero, around midnight on December 29th. Daytime highs have been fluctuating between -10 and -30 degrees below zero for several weeks.

The last storm gave us about 24 inches of new snow on top of 6-8 inches of old stuff, needless to say, we're feeding the cows and have been since the end of November. Despite this early feeding - the TRM ranch has plenty of hay stored. The new heifers that the Boone and Crockett Club purchased arrived before Christmas and are experiencing some tough weather - but look good just the same. The new cattle were unloaded at a neighboring ranch and trailed to the TRM Ranch - weather and snow conditions were too severe at the TRM Ranch for a semi-truck.

The 1996 Hunting Season concluded on December

1st, and as usual proceeded quite smoothly; any side effects of being involved in the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Block Management Program were negligible. The Block Management Program offers the TRM Ranch a nominal stipend for each sportsman/day of recreation it provides during the rifle season. While currently not a great deal of money (\$8-\$10/sportsman day), there is the prospect of future increases. It was designed to offset fee hunting in Montana, in addition to increasing accessibility for

Montana. The profitability of many agricultural operations along the East Front, as well as other parts of Montana, has also diminished. The current financial lows in the cattle industry are adding to this problem. Incongruently - land prices are beginning to soar. How to best balance recreation and human development, resource development, conservation and traditional uses is of paramount importance. The Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch and Research Center addresses these issues on a daily basis in order to analyze,

innovate and influence future trends in conservation.

In an attempt to further sport hunting for future generations, I allowed young hunters (17 years and under) to make reservations to hunt the TRMR one day in advance of the general public. This was done on a trial basis and almost the entire first half of the hunting season for mule deer was reserved by youth hunters. Age required many of these hunters to be accompanied by adults. The combination of exclusive hunting areas, abundant wildlife and beautiful scenery,

SPORTSMAN SUMMARY FOR 1996

Activity	Number of Days Provided/Harvest
Spring Bear	6 days (1 harvest)
Fishing	75 days
Up. Game Birds	2
Archery*: deer, elk, & bear	28 days (0 harvest)

1996 RIFLE SEASON SUMMARY

October 27th through December 1st

Animal	Quota Numbers	Harvest Numbers
Early season		
Mule Deer Bucks	12	7
Late Season		
Mule Deer Bucks	8	4
Mule Deer Does	30	17
Whitetail Bucks	5	2
Whitetail Does	5	3
Cow Elk	10	4
Bull Elk	5	1

Total Permission Slips (excluding fishing)	86
Total Number of Sportsman	199
Total Sporting Days Provided	298
Sporting Days Provided during Rifle Season	190

*The TRM Ranch has not yet recorded any archery kills.

KEN BEAN WITH HIS DAUGHTER, JAMIE, PROUDLY POSING WITH HER MULE DEER BUCK TAKEN DURING THE 1996 HUNTING SEASON ON THE TRM RANCH.



sportsman to hunt both public and private lands. Many Montanans are very supportive of doing everything they can to see that hunting remains a recreation to be enjoyed by all. During the past 25 years - reduced oil and gas leasing and production, reduced timber harvest and stricter resource controls on both public and private land have placed a financial strain on many of the rural communities in

makes hunting the TRM Ranch an experience these young people and their parents won't soon forget.

A quick note on mule deer - while total population numbers seem to be down, buck number/100 does seems to be increasing and I have spotted several trophy mule deer which have made it through the hunting season. Aerial counts this winter will help set quotas for next year.