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GENERAL HUNTING INFORMATION PACKET 2018



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2018 HUNTING GENERAL INFORMATION

Includes License & Permit Information

For Detailed Hunt Descriptions and Hunt Prices Refer to Wilderness and Private Land Information Packets

With the passage of State Initiative, I161, the Outfitter Sponsored Guaranteed License for elk and deer is no longer available. **All non-resident licenses are now available through a draw system.** You can go online to MFWP, www.fwp.mt.gov, to learn more about the new changes. Do not be discouraged, your chances of drawing a combination elk/deer license are quite good. Buying preference points will improve your chances of drawing. The preference point system is explained on MFWP website. You are also allowed to apply as a "party" for the draw if there are two or more of you wanting to hunt together. We are happy to provide clarification or answer any questions you may have about licensing, preference points and party application.

Applications for the General Draw and Special Permitted areas for elk and deer can be made online through Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, www.fwp.mt.gov, (406-444-2950). **The application deadline is March 15th for both the General Draw for elk and deer and the Special Permit Draw for elk and deer.** The drawing takes place mid-April. You cannot apply for a special permit without first applying for a general draw license. You may **apply** for a special permit for elk and deer **at the same time** you apply for a general draw license. MFWP's website explains in detail about applying for elk and deer licenses. Do not hesitate to call or email us if you have any questions. Most of our elk/deer hunting can be done with a general license, but, we do have some excellent permitted areas for elk and deer. **These deadlines apply for both residents and non-residents.**

Applications for bighorn sheep, moose, mountain goat and antelope permits can be made online through Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, www.fwp.mt.gov, (406-444-2950). **The application deadline for these permits is May 1st with the exception of antelope which is June 1st.** The drawing for bighorn sheep, moose and mountain goat takes place the 3rd week in June. The drawing for antelope is in mid- July. **These deadlines apply for both residents and non-residents.**



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ARCHERY HUNTS *Season dates subject to change due to MFWP release of 2018 Hunting Information in early February.

We offer wilderness and private land archery hunts. Archery only season begins the 1st Saturday in September and runs through mid October. Archery hunters must have a "bow and arrow license" for the archery only season. If you are an archer, we can show you some excellent archery country. **FYI Archers who apply for a special permit area, must purchase a bow & arrow license at the same time.** Otherwise, your application will be removed from the special permit draw.

Archery Only Season Dates for Elk/Deer: September 1 - October 14
Archery Only Season Dates for Antelope: TBA

ABO's archery wilderness hunts are run out of our **backcountry tent camp, Independence, located up the Boulder Drainage, south of Big Timber, MT.** These are 7-day hunts (day in, 5 days hunting, day out). **(For more information about dates, prices and offerings for our wilderness archery hunts, refer to the Wilderness Hunting Information Packet.)**

ABO's private land archery hunts are on **select ranches near Big Timber, MT** and the **Lazy EL Ranch in Roscoe, MT.** These ranch hunts are 7-day hunts (arrival day, 5 days hunting, departure day). Two of the ranches we hunt require a special permit but all the rest only require a general license. Accommodations are in cabin or lodge. **(For more information about our private land hunt offerings, dates, special permit areas and antelope hunting, refer to the Private Land Hunting Information Packet.)**

EARLY SEASON WILDERNESS RIFLE ELK & DEER HUNT

We offer early season rifle wilderness hunting from our backcountry camp, Hellroaring. This is a primary target elk hunt. **However, if you have a deer license or bear permit they are fair game with no extra charge. This hunt books very early!**

Our **early season rifle elk/deer** wilderness hunt is a 7 day (1 day in, 5 days hunting, 1 day out) hunt. We hunt 1 guide to 2 hunters. Camp consists of 6-8 hunters, 4-5 guides and a cook. This is a challenging hunt in rough terrain and requires long hours in the saddle. **Early Season Begins – September 15**
(Refer to the Wilderness Hunting Packet for more information.)



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GENERAL SEASON RIFLE HUNTING *Season dates subject to change due to MFWP release of 2018 Hunting Information in early February.

During the **general season**, we offer several elk and deer hunting options on both public and private land. Our access to both wilderness hunting and local ranches enhances our hunters' chances of harvesting an elk or deer. Two of the ranches we hunt require a special permit, but the rest only require a general license.

GENERAL SEASON WILDERNESS ELK & DEER RIFLE HUNTS

The general season rifle elk and deer wilderness hunts are run out of our backcountry camp at Independence or from a lodge or private cabins in the wilderness hunting area.

Season dates are: October 20- November 25.

The Independence hunt is a 7-day (day in, 5 days hunting, day out) hunt. We hunt 1 guide to 2 hunters and take 4-6 hunters on a trip. Wilderness hunts from the backcountry camp typically take place the first week of the general season but can extend into other weeks of the general season, weather permitting. We have the use of a lodge or a cabin in the wilderness area as alternative options.

(Refer to the Wilderness Hunting Packet for hunt dates, pricing and more information.)

GENERAL SEASON PRIVATE LAND RIFLE HUNTS

Big Timber Ranch Hunts - Elk, Deer and Antelope

Thousands of acres of private ranch land with rolling hills, flowing creeks, elk, deer, and antelope describe the many local Big Timber ranches whose owners have been gracious enough to offer ABO an opportunity to hunt on their properties. Two of these ranches are a special draw area for elk but the others only require a general license to hunt elk and deer. ABO has added a trophy opportunity ranch that can be hunted with a general license. **(See more information for all of these ranches in the Private Land Hunting Packet.)**

4-8 hunters, 7 days (arrival day, 5 days hunting, departure day)

Accommodations – In town lodging

Rifle Season Dates for Elk/Deer: October 20 – November 25

Rifle Season Dates for Antelope: October 6- November 11

To apply for a special draw permit for elk and deer you must also apply for a general draw elk/deer license. Antelope licenses require a Special Permit as well.

Please check the draw area with us before applying.

Special Permit Areas: Elk Rifle – 570-20, 580-22, 580-21

Antelope Rifle – 510-20, 570-20, 340-20



Lazy E-L Ranch – Roscoe, MT – Elk and Deer

Combination elk/deer hunt on a 12,000 acre pristine private ranch, bordering the wilderness with 5 miles of river frontage and abundant with wildlife.

6 hunters – 7 day hunt (arrival day, 5 days hunting, departure day)
1 guide – 2 hunters

Accommodations: Lodge

(For hunt dates, prices and more information refer to the Private Land Hunting Packet.)

Yellowstone Ranches – Big Timber, MT – Hunt/Fish Option

This unique hunting and fishing opportunity allows you to plan your own combination hunting and fishing adventure. These two ranches are conveniently located just 5 minutes from Big Timber and offers eight miles of Yellowstone River frontage with brush & cottonwood trees, lots of water & channels, a holding place for deer, abundant turkey & waterfowl population and phenomenal fishing.

Combination Hunts Available: Deer, Turkey, Duck & Geese
Archery or Rifle
Seasonal Custom Hunts

Licenses Required: Deer – Apply in general draw online, www.fwp.mt.gov, for license.
Turkey, Ducks and Geese - Purchase licenses online through MFWP www.fwp.mt.gov

Season Dates: *2016 dates listed. MFWP will post 2018 turkey, duck and geese dates, Spring 2018.

Deer Season: Oct 20-Nov 25 Application Deadline for General Draw March 15

Turkey Season: Spring *April 12-May 18 Application Deadline March 3
Fall *Sept 1-Jan 1 Application Deadline July 28

Duck & Geese Season: *Sept 28-TBA

(For more information refer to the Private Land Hunting Packet.)



Other Species Hunts: Bighorn Sheep, Mountain Goat, Moose, Black Bear and Wolf

Our **Bighorn sheep hunts** are in an **unlimited sheep area** north of Yellowstone National Park. An unlimited sheep permit area guarantees you a license. Bighorn sheep permits can be purchased online from Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, 406-444-2950, www.fwp.mt.gov. **The deadline for purchasing a bighorn sheep permit is May 1.** You must specify a sheep area when applying for your sheep permit. If you are booking a Bighorn sheep hunt with Absaroka-Beartooth Outfitters, please contact us (406-579-3866) for information on our sheep area before you apply for your permit. The area and the expertise of our guides make it the best opportunity in the lower 48 to kill a ram.

Our bighorn sheep hunt out of Independence is a 10 day (day in, 8 days hunting, day out) hunt. **This is a progressive backpacking hunt.** We hunt 1 guide to 1 hunter and only book 1 or 2 sheep hunters a year for this area. These hunts often book 2 years out. Hunt dates are scheduled with the Outfitter at the time of booking.

2018 Bighorn Sheep Season Dates: September 15–November 25.

Mountain goat permits are by special drawing. Go online to Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks (406-444-2950, www.fwp.mt.gov) to apply for this special permit draw.

Make sure you apply for Area 323-20 or Area 329-20. These two areas have the highest probability in the state for drawing a goat permit. **The application deadline for a mountain goat permit is May 1.** Drawings are the third week in June. The permit fee is refundable if you do not draw a goat permit. Our goat hunts are a 7 day (day in, 5 days hunting, day out) hunt. We hunt 1 guide to 1 hunter. Please contact us (406-579-3866) before you apply for a mountain goat permit and we will confirm our permitted areas for you. Once you draw a mountain goat permit we will be glad to schedule your hunt. **2018 Mountain Goat Season Dates: Sept 15-Nov25.**

Black Bear licenses are available for purchase through Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, www.fwp.mt.gov. The deadline for purchasing a fall black bear license is August 31.

The fall black bear season is Sept 15-Nov 25. The deadline for purchasing a spring black bear license is April 13. **Spring black bear season begins April 15.**

Moose permits are by special drawing. The application deadline for a moose permit is May 1. Our permitted moose **area is 516.** However, there are a very limited number of moose permits available for this area so it is not easy to draw a moose permit. Our moose hunts are a 7 day (1 day in, 5 days hunting, 1 day out) hunt. We hunt 1 guide to 1 hunter. **2018 Moose Season Dates: September 15-November 25.**

Wolf permits are available for purchase through Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, www.fwp.mt.gov. The 2018 wolf season is September 15-March 15, 2019. *Season dates subject to change due to MFWP release of 2018 Hunting Information in early February.



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Fair chase hunting in the Montana wilderness is a challenging and memorable experience. We have experienced guides who know the area and very good horse and mule stock for packing and riding in the mountains. **From September to mid-October** ABO operates two **backcountry camps, Hellroaring and Independence.** Hellroaring is located in Bull Moose Meadow, 8 miles north of Yellowstone National Park. Independence is located 55 miles south of Big Timber at the head of the Boulder River. Our backcountry camps are some of the best in Montana including comfortable accommodations and a great cook. **During the general season, which begins in late October,** we day hunt in the backcountry from a tent camp at Independence or from a lodge or cabins bordering the wilderness hunting areas.

Fair chase hunting on private ranches with ABO offers our hunters a unique variety of species in distinctive settings. The opportunity to hunt elk, mule deer, white-tail deer, antelope, black bear, duck, geese and turkey is provided to a limited number of hunters. You can choose to hunt on the picturesque **Lazy E-L Ranch** (www.lazyel.com) just outside Roscoe, Montana or a variety of select **Big Timber Ranches** which include a trophy opportunity elk and deer ranch. Each of these elite locations offers rolling hills, creeks, river frontage and an abundance of game.

Whether you are looking for the challenge of a wilderness hunt or the exclusive opportunity to hunt on private land, Absaroka-Beartooth Outfitters is committed to giving you the best possible hunting experience.



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2017 OFFICIAL APPLICATION DEADLINES NON RESIDENT LICENSE AND PERMIT PRICES

Dates & Prices for 2018 are released by Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks in early February.
Check MFWP website www.fwp.mt.gov in February 2018 for date and price confirmation.

<u>ANIMAL</u>	<u>PRICE (Non Resident)</u>	<u>DEADLINE</u>
BIG GAME ELK/DEER COMBO * General Draw	\$ 1010.00	MARCH 15
ELK COMBINATION * General Draw	\$ 858.00	MARCH 15
DEER COMBINATION * General Draw	\$ 602.00	MARCH 15
ANTELOPE * Special Draw	\$ 205.00	JUNE 1
MOOSE * Special Draw	\$1250.00	MAY 1
BLACK BEAR Guaranteed permit	\$ 350.00	Spring APRIL 14 Fall AUGUST 31
WOLF Guaranteed permit	\$ 50.00	AUGUST 31
MOUNTAIN GOAT * Special Draw	\$1250.00	MAY 1
BIGHORN SHEEP Guaranteed permit	\$1250.00	MAY 1

Youth Combination License \$ 510.00 (OTC @ MFWP only)
Youths 12-17 years of age – hunt with a sponsor (natural or adoptive parent, grandparent of, adult brother or sister) who possesses a general elk or deer license.

The license/permit is not guaranteed but the license/permit price is refundable if not drawn. However, there is a \$10 non-refundable drawing fee and a \$15 base hunting license fee included in the above prices for non-resident licenses and permits.



STEPS TO RECEIVE YOUR LICENSE

For All Hunters

With the passage of State Initiative, I161, the Outfitter Sponsored Guaranteed License is no longer available. All non-resident licenses are now available through a draw system. You can go online to MFWP, www.fwp.mt.gov, to learn more about the new changes. Do not be discouraged, your chances of drawing a combination elk/deer license are quite good.

Non Resident & Resident General Draw Licenses for Elk and Deer

For elk/deer, call for an application or apply online with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, 406-444-2950, www.fwp.mt.gov. You can use a General Elk/Deer License to hunt in most of our permitted areas. However, a few of our areas require a Special Draw Permit so please check with us first before you apply. You cannot apply for a Special Elk or Special Deer Permit without first applying for the General Draw. You can apply for both the general draw licenses and the special permit licenses at the same time. Be sure to buy a preference point when applying for your license. You can find more information on preference points and bonus points on MFWP website www.fwp.mt.gov. **MARCH 15TH IS THE DEADLINE FOR APPLYING FOR THE GENERAL ELK/DEER DRAW AND FOR SPECIAL PERMITS FOR ELK AND DEER.** The general drawing takes place mid-April. The special permit drawing takes place mid-July.

If you are sure of the hunt you want to pursue you can secure your spot with a \$1000 deposit which will be fully refunded if you do not draw. We take a limited number of hunters per hunt so this is the best way to secure your spot and avoid the chaos at the time of the draw. Most hunters put in for the Big Game Combo license which allows you to hunt both elk and deer. **Please check with us before you apply for the draw to make sure this is the right license for the area you plan to hunt and for bonus and preference point update.** If you have questions about the online application process we will be glad to assist you.

Non-Resident & Resident Special Draw Permits for Other Species

For mountain goat and moose apply online for the draw with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, 406-444-2950, www.fwp.mt.gov or call for an application. **The deadline for applying for these species is May 1.** Our special permit areas for mountain goat are 323-20 and 329-20. Special permit area for moose is 516. Permit drawings for these species are announced the third week in June. If you draw a special permit, please contact us with the dates you want to hunt. Once the dates are confirmed, you book your hunt by sending us a 50% deposit.



For antelope, apply for the special permit draw after April 15th online with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, www.fwp.mt.gov or call for an application, 406-444-2950. **The deadline for applying for antelope is June 1.** The drawing takes place mid-July.

For black bear or wolf, call for an application or apply online with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, 406-444-2950, www.fwp.mt.gov to purchase a guaranteed permit. The deadline for purchasing a fall black bear license is August 31. The deadline for purchasing a spring black bear license is April 13.* (*This date is not confirmed by MFWP until early February of 2018.) Check the MFWP website for the most current information on rules and regulations, season dates and application deadlines on wolves. Currently, wolf permits can be bought over the counter and are \$50 for non-residents, \$19 for residents.

For Bighorn sheep, call for an application or apply online with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, 406-444-2950, www.fwp.mt.gov . **You must apply for a specific area. Be sure to check with Absaroka-Beartooth Outfitters (406-579-3866) before applying to verify our bighorn sheep area.**

DEPOSIT & PAYMENT POLICY

A partial deposit of \$1000 is required to book your hunt. The \$1000 partial deposit will be refunded if you do not draw a license. The drawing takes place in mid-April. The remainder of the deposit (50% of the cost of the hunt) is due when the draw is posted. The balance of the hunt is due 30 days prior to your hunt and is non-refundable. Hunts not fully paid by this date will be considered cancelled. We recommend Trip Cancellation Insurance. Travel Guard www.travelguard.com is one that has been used by several of our clients.

We accept Credit Cards (Visa/MasterCard only) and Checks
Make Checks Payable to: Absaroka-Beartooth Outfitters, Inc.

THE MOGA HUNTER/ANGLER DEFENSE FUND

In 2012 Montana Outfitters and Guides Association established the Hunter/Angler Defense Fund to ensure that non-resident sportsmen would be able to continue to have the opportunity to hunt and fish in Montana. As a board member of MOGA I believe our establishing the Hunter/Angler Defense Fund (MHADF) is the best way to support our industry in the fight for your right to hunt and fish in Montana. When you book a hunt with Absaroka Beartooth Outfitters, \$50 of the cost of your hunt goes to the MOGA Hunter/Angler Defense Fund. Thank you for your participation!



Hunter/Angler Access Defense Fund

Outfitters Defending Nationwide Right to Hunt and Fish in Montana

“In a civilized and cultivated country, wild animals only continue to exist at all when preserved by sportsmen. The excellent people who protest against all hunting and consider sportsmen as enemies of wildlife are ignorant of the fact that in reality the genuine sportsman is by all odds, the most important factor in keeping the larger and more valuable wild creatures from total extinction.” - Theodore Roosevelt

The MOGA Hunter/Angler Defense Fund (MHADF) was established to ensure that non-resident sportsmen will continue to have the opportunity to hunt and fish in Montana.

Trophy hunting and sport fishing, particularly by non-residents, is under increasing pressure in Montana from radical groups both within the state and animal rights activists outside of the state. Although these groups differ in their composition and tactics they both seek the same outcome; reduced hunting and fishing opportunity. The in-state contingent, who purport to be “sportsmen” seek to fracture the hunting and angling community along lines of residence and then significantly restrict non-resident hunting and fishing opportunity. The anti-hunting group just seeks to reduce hunting opportunity and will take what gains they can. In both cases, success is measured by a net loss in opportunity in Montana. Unfortunately they are both making gains.

The anti-hunting pressure from the “anti-everything” organizations is strong and well organized. They have unlimited resources and are using new strategies and building alliances to lobby their agendas. Their relentless efforts to prevent delisting of wolves and grizzly bears and thwart effective and professional management for these species are but one example.

Fringe groups, led by the Montana Wildlife Federation, believe that outfitting services equate to the commercialization of wildlife and profess it to be the same as the outlawed practice of market hunting of years ago. They claim that fees paid for Outfitter services, leasing of land for quality hunting and fishing access, and the purchase of outfitters services for fishing constitute a breach of the Public Trust and that jeopardizes the public’s opportunity to enjoy the natural bounty of Montana.



They see reducing the guided non-resident opportunity as a means to enhance their personal opportunity at the expense of others. They ignore the huge contribution to Montana's wildlife and fisheries management system that non-residents make and the vital economic contribution they sustain. Their tactics of misinformation and fear mongering fracture and weaken the overall hunting community; jeopardizing funding for effective management of natural resources in Montana.

Unfortunately, much of the public are misinformed or under informed. As hunters and anglers, we must be vigilant and diligent about relaying the benefits of hunting and fishing to the 70% of people who sit "in the middle". MOGA will continue to take the lead in supporting sound, scientifically based resource management, and our members will continue to serve as active stewards of Montana's natural and cultural heritage.

MOGA is the only organization within Montana that is dedicated to preserving sporting opportunities for nonresidents, including the opportunities for guided hunts, floats, and fishing trips.

If we want hunting to be around for future generations we must have our story told; that hunters and anglers, regardless of where they live, are the true conservationists because hunters pay for conservation and have willingly done so for years. It is a certainty that our opportunity to hunt and fish will be lost if we are fragmented by where we are from, the equipment we use, the species we pursue or the reasons we hunt.

About the MOGA Hunter/Angler Defense Fund

MOGA members charge their sportsmen clients a \$50.00 fee. This contribution is collected by the outfitter, held in-trust for MOGA, and remitted at year end.

In the last decade, MOGA has successfully beaten back efforts that would have:

- decreased the number of nonresident hunting licenses available by 10% a year for four years;
- increased the price of the moose, sheep, and goat licenses to over \$1,000,
- placed a cap on non-resident bird licenses
- fought to preserve the non-resident Outfitter Sponsored license
- provided a full time lobbyist during legislative sessions to maintain and extend non-resident opportunities in Montana.



In recent legislative sessions MOGA sponsored and supported legislation that will:

- protect outfitter businesses from frivolous lawsuits through the passage of legislation that recognized inherent risk and waivers of liability in Montana
- created a First Responders program that placed HIGHLY experienced legal council in my corner should my business suffer as serious accident
- allow non-residents to participate in a preference point system; useful in making hunting plans to Montana far more predictable
- split off a portion of the combination licenses for a refund should they be unsuccessful in special permit drawings
- provided greater opportunity for non-resident youth hunter
- reduced significantly the workers compensation payments required by small businesses like mine resulting in a direct savings to me
- reduced the tax burden on business equipment; another direct savings for me as a small business operator

In recent FWP Commission Action MOGA successfully argued for:

- Liberalized black bear seasons
- Extended wolf hunting opportunity
- Adoption of a hybrid (permit/quota) system in Region 2
- Increased limited archery elk permits in the Breaks and outside the Breaks