

March 1, 2010

My name is Doug Black. I reside at 75200 Gallatin Road, Gallatin Gateway, MT. My wife Linda and I have the privilege to own and operate the A H Black Co., a fourth generation farm/ranch operation in the southern district of the Gallatin Valley. The property is located at the mouth of the Gallatin Canyon on the east side of Highway 191, adjacent to Ted Turners property which is the Flying D Ranch. It contains several thousand acres that borders Forest Service and private property. As natives Montanans, we were taught stewardship and respect for the land and wildlife. Over several generations we have found because of soil erosion and topographical landscape, farming was not the best avenue to continue on this land. We built fences and turned it into rotational summer grazing to lease out for cow/calf pairs.

Property that has wildlife on it demands good management. We have learned how many deer and elk the property can sustain through the winter and early spring months. Observation of their habits and natural travel routes allow us to leave grass where they can graze. Also we drop down the wire on our fences in the fall for their protection and to minimize damage.

We have always had our property open to the public for hunting. In 1984 we closed our property to all vehicles because of the noxious weeds they carried. At our expense, we provided weed free transportation for the hunters on our property. In the early 1990s we had a friend that was confined to a wheelchair because of an accident. His desire to continue hunting opened up a whole new world for us. We now have two SUVs for the handicapped, and several great volunteers, that allow these people to do something that they never thought they would do again. Also we take many first time hunters, kids up to 16 years old, and hunters over 65. When these priorities are fulfilled, we try to accommodate as many community families as possible.

Unfortunately, this brings us to the problem of wolves. We pasture approximately 100 to 200 elk every year. Where there are elk, there are wolves. The time and money it takes to maintain fences has become an economic nightmare. Wolves do not follow patterns when they chase elk and deer. Pursued prey does not jump over the fence, they run through it.

I met with Brian Lloyd, game warden for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks in mid February. We discussed the problem and he informed me I could not shoot the wolves, but I might qualify for some help with fencing material. It sounded like The Fish and Game was struggling like the rest of us in these economic times. He was very pleasant and e-mailed me the laws and regulations regarding livestock protection. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of February I met with a neighbor and Mike Ross, the wolf management specialist for Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. Our question was what could be done about two deer and one elk that had been killed by the wolves on his property, adjacent to our fence line. We were told the agency's hands were tied. As we have heard before, we could shoot to kill the wolves if they were attacking livestock but not to save our personal property. It makes you sick to your stomach, when you have no recourse as you watch wolves run 100 plus elk through your fences and cause several thousand dollars in damage. Mr. Ross, did tell us we have the right to lawfully run the elk off of our property (no elk no

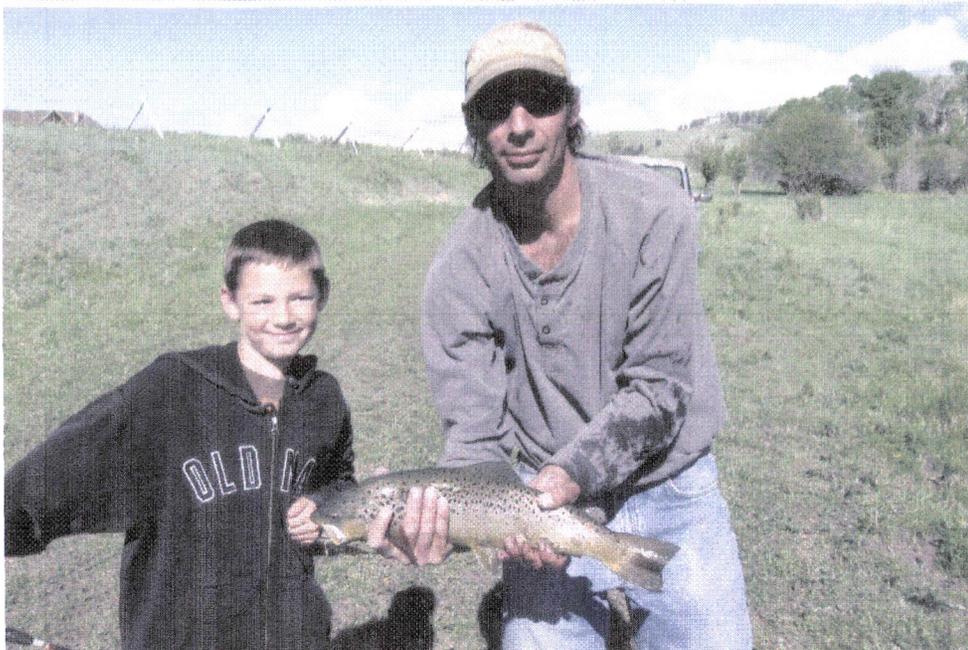
wolves). It is our fear that we would do just as much damage to neighboring property as the wolves have done to ours. There is also the issue of liability. If the elk that were chased off your property, run out onto the highway and someone hit them, who would be responsible?

One of the most difficult issues facing our farm is the loss of income for grazing value. No one wants to lease pasture where wolves are a persistent threat to their livestock. The extreme difficulty of actually shooting wolves while they are attacking or chasing livestock is unrealistic, costly and dangerous.

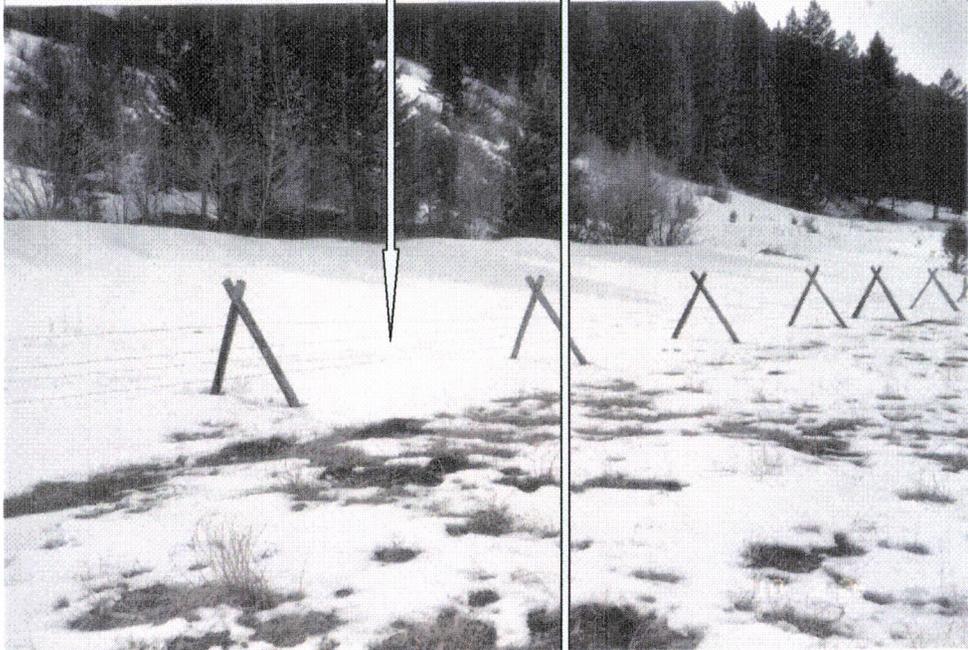
In this economy we are fighting for our survival. As we consider alternatives to stay in business, will our open and free hunting policies have to go? No longer will we be able to save winter pasture for the native elk herds. Our goal is to pass the farming legacy on to our children so that a fifth generation can continue in agriculture and hopefully maintain a sense of community through hunting. It is a shame when a vicious predator is allowed to dictate through detrimental regulation an end to a wonderful opportunity for unique public groups and challenged sportsman.

*Jay A. Black*  
*Hinda Black*

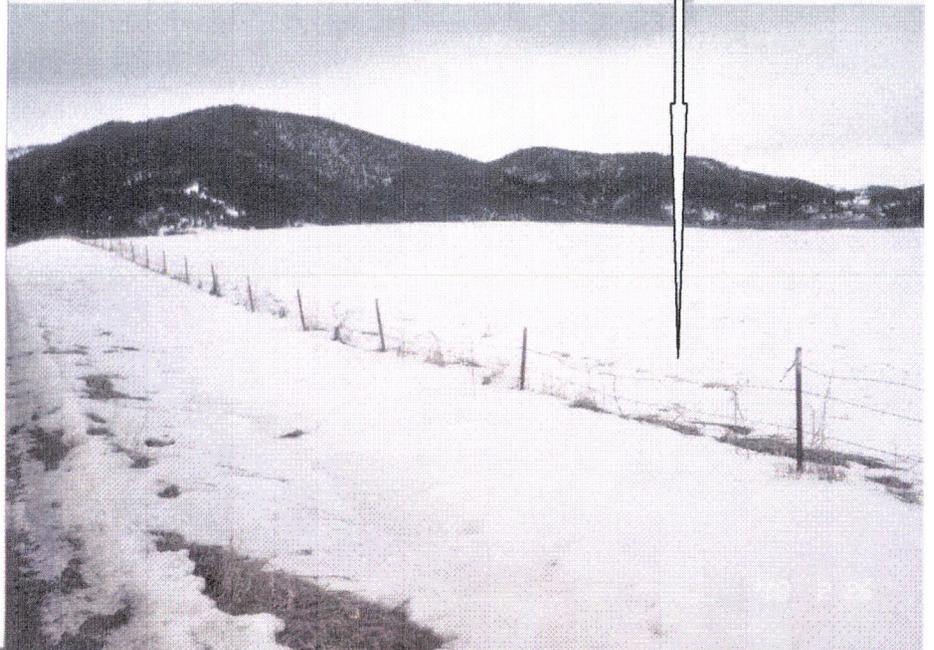
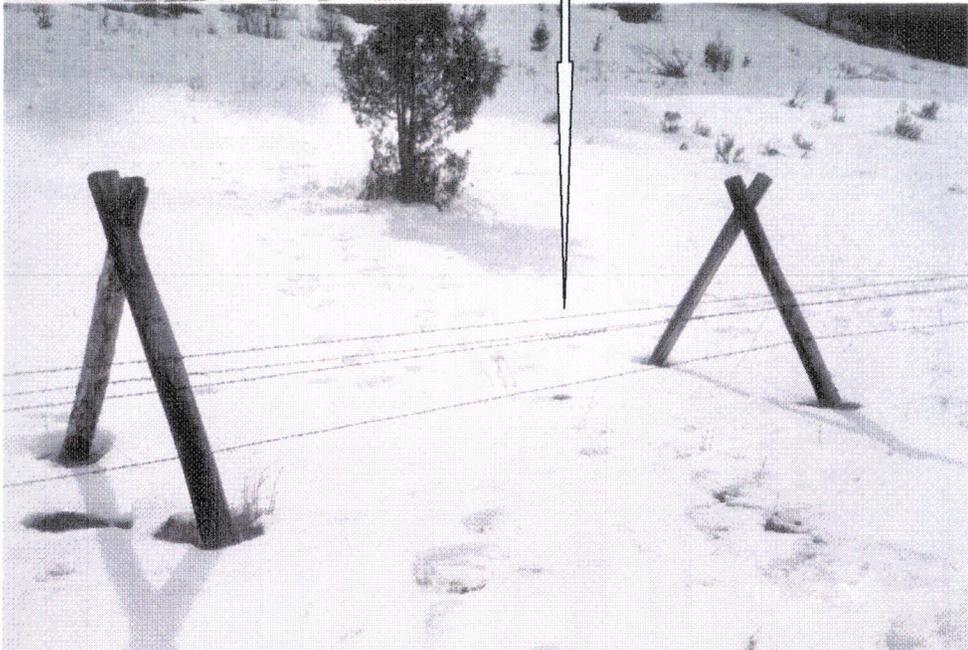
Mr. Black provides opportunities for families and disabled folks to hunt and fish on his ranch.



Rancher lowers wires every year to accommodate elk travel



Wolves run elk through fences causing 1000s of dollars in damage



Miles and miles of fences destroyed every year on Mr. Blacks ranch when wolves chase elk.  
Who pays? FWP says Mr. Black pays.

