

## JULY 2012 BEEF ROUNDUP

### JULY 22<sup>ND</sup>: 2012

With the ever changing pasture rotations set by the Forest Service it is impossible to know in advance what problems you will have on any given trip. The plan on this trip was to pick up the guests, transport them to the Rocky Bottom where Chris would do the horsemanship clinic. We would then ride up the North Slope of the Dry Fork, gather any cattle that were still in that pasture and take them with us and drop them in the Double Springs pasture on our way to the Cow Camp for the night.

Chris started the horsemanship clinic with the 9 guests we had. Like most trips the skill level was all over the board. We had a couple inexperienced people, a couple experienced guests, a few who had no idea what their skill level was and then there was Julio. Julio had only been on a horse a time or two in his life and both of those had been very short rides in a controlled environment. We could tell immediately that Julio was going to be a lot of fun and was a great guy. He was in for the shock of his life this week. We got everyone saddled and Julio mounted and ready to go. As Chris was finishing up a few last minute things before we started riding with people, Julio managed to entertain all of us. We had him mounted on Boots and Boots was a little bored with the waiting process. Boots decided a good roll in the dirt was just what he needed to make himself feel better. Of course Julio had a little different opinion. Julio became famous as all week long we would hear him utter the same thing. Every time something got a little tense you would hear Julio holler "Oh Shit! Oh Shit! Oh Shit!". Matter of fact we have renamed a few trails and now call them the OH Shit Trail because of Julio.

As Boots dropped down on the front end to start his roll we were all hollering to Julio to make him move to change Boots thought process. Julio's reaction was always the same- Oh Shit! Oh Shit! Oh Shit!. However, it seemed to work as Boots clambered back up on his feet. We always noticed the same thing on Julio's face after each of this little profanity laced episodes. Both hands had grabbed the saddle horn as hard as they could, his eyes bulged out and the white's of his eyes were very visible. Later in camp he would laugh at himself and tell us his feelings of death passing before his eyes. We of course had a great deal of enjoyment listening to him relay his fears to us. To us, the humor was the fact that he wasn't anywhere as close to death as he thought he was!

We started up the North Slope and picked up some cattle immediately upon entering the pasture. We grabbed the couple pair and headed up the trail with them. In about ¼ mile we picked up lots of cattle in the Aspen patches where the beaver ponds were. By then it was lunch time and very hot. We attempted to gather the cattle but found it was just too hot and there were way more cattle than I had anticipated. I figured the best thing to do was eat lunch, then ride on into camp. With the distance we had to travel yet to camp we weren't going to be in much before 6:00 that evening and that was without any cattle. If we continued to gather it was going to be dark before we got to camp. Starting out the first day we knew that wasn't a good plan for people.

We stopped for lunch at a little bog that had some shade for us to sit in while we ate our lunches. Once we had eaten lunch, I suggested we mount back up and start the 3 hour ride onto camp. One of our repeat guest decided thing were a little dull so she entertained us. Any cowboy knows that when you ride up to a bog you can tell how boggy it is by just looking at the grass. If the grass tops aren't eaten, it is very boggy and you better stay out of it. However, the Michigan State Swim team captain was not about to be deterred by a little old bog. There was an old log laying across the bog and she reasoned if she led her horse out there, she could stand on the log to get on. As she led her horse out into the bog he stopped as he knew better than the Michigan State Swim Team Captain. Dianne continued to pull and walk. Each step she sank lower until the tops of her pretty PINK boots were even with the surface of the bog. We all started laughing as each time Dianne would give a jerk with one foot the other one would sink a little lower. Dianne had plenty of determination and gave a mighty tug with her right leg and out of the bog came her leg with a nice white sock but the boot was still stuck deep in the mud. Since this was Dianne's 4<sup>th</sup> trip none of us were too quick to help her. We were too busy

laughing to be of any help. Her husband who was here for his first time wasn't too quick to help either. I don't know why but I had the feeling that Patrick had seen Dianne do these types of things before. Being the gallant one I went and found a log and slid it between Dianne's legs so she at least wouldn't go any farther in than her crotch. Of course many people were scrambling to get their camera's. After we were controlled enough to stop laughing two of us managed to get ahold of Dianne's arms and help tug her out. However, her pretty pink boots had a very strange earth tone to them now.

After lunch as we rode onto camp from what I had observed, the weeks plans were completely in shambles. With so many cattle on the North Slope this meant we were going to have to spend one more day in the Dry Fork gathering than I had planned. Now that really doesn't seem like a big deal except we had only planned for so many meals at that camp, assuming we would be at the next camp for so many meals. I sure hoped the cooks were flexible as we had some adjustments to make. The two extra meals we were going to need were of course already at the next camp. This meant the next day the cooks were going to have to go to the next camp and come back with the extra groceries.

### **JULY 23<sup>RD</sup>:**

On the evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup> as we sat around our make believe campfire, I explained the situation to the guests. The Forest Service had put on a burning ban due to the drought so we couldn't have a fire. The next problem was all the cattle on the North Slope and the fact that we had to get them gathered. I explained the attack plan to people. Trent was going to take most of the crew and leave at a long trot right after daylight and stay in a trot until they got to the bottom end of the North Slope. At a walk that is about a 5 hour ride. At a trot the hope was to cut that in half, so that they could still get there with some cool of the morning to hopefully gather cattle before they timbered up in the heat. I offered the trip to any guest that wanted to go and didn't mind trotting for two straight hours downhill to get to the bottom. We only had one guest who said "Ill go", the rest decided to take one of the other rides to start gathering cattle. Andy Parker who was a first time guest and had ridden a lot handled it just fine other than he was a little on the tired side when they got in that evening. Andy got a first hand look at what it is like being a real cowboy, and he loved it!

I took a group of people and headed north to start gathering. The plan was to gather the upper bench and take them down through the timber on the high bench and come out on Center Trail. As we topped out at the head of the Pass I could tell we had more cattle than I had anticipated, this of course made me change out gather plans again. We gathered the cattle we had ridden by and pushed them south, back towards the cabin. We had a pretty good gather and I guessed somewhere around 75-100 head of cattle. As we came down through the marshy country above the cabin, there are lots of little springs that your horse will jump when he comes upon them. Ann-Sophie jumped one and then she came riding over and said she had lost her camera in the tall grass when Penny had jumped that last spring. We all rode over to help her look. We looked and looked but weren't having any luck in the tall grass. From past experience I knew the chances weren't good. After about 15 minutes of all of us walking through the grass I commented to her. Any chance it could be hung up on your saddle anywhere. Sometimes a strap will hang up momentarily and you ride off and the camera falls off 100yds from where you thought you lost it. She looked around and I commented "How about under your knee"? She looked down and to her delight, there was her camera caught on the inside of her knee. We worked the herd and kicked the yearlings into the horse pasture and then headed down the trail to Center Park. We climbed to the top of Center Trail Park and stopped for lunch. The view from up there is magnificent! We ate our lunch and the Michigan State Swim Team Captain took a reading on her GPS. Looking across the canyon I was able to show them where we hoped to have the herd of cattle 4 days from now. We all took wild guesses as to the distance, but figured it would be interesting when we arrived with the cattle to take a reading at that point. As we were sitting there eating lunch we started noticing cattle in the timber above us lying in the shade. After lunch we started gathering whatever we

could find and since there really isn't a trail for the next 3 miles all you could do was keep them moving, basically east. The elk travel back and forth on this timbered bench all the time. We gathered everything we could find and I am guessing we picked up about 80 animals scattered through the timber. We started up through the timber and came to the bottom of a clay bank. The trail starts up it on grade then goes around a pine tree and gets pretty narrow for about 15 yards as you climb to the top. If it was wet I would have looked for another way around it, but since it was dry, up we went. I was in the lead and topped out and waited to make sure everyone made it to the top. I knew exactly where Julio was riding because I heard "Oh Shit, Oh Shit, Oh Shit"! He at least was never going to get lost since you could hear him from miles away. When we got to the top of the Pass we held herd and worked the yearlings out and took them on down to the horse pasture. We had picked up an additional 25 yearlings and threw them into the horse pasture with the others and went to camp.

### **Tuesday July 24<sup>th</sup>:**

We were going to do a reride of the previous day. Trent was going to take a group back as far as Double Springs and gather back to the camp. We were going to go only as far as the first two parks and then gather everything we could find coming back towards camp. The first two parks are about a 2 mile ride. We scattered out across the timbered canyon gathering everything we could find. The plan was to gather and hold herd against the horse pasture fence and kick the yearlings into the horse pasture and the pairs into the Moose Hole pasture. Since we had a big day we had breakfast at 4:30am and were in the saddle shortly there after. It was very hot and we wanted to get cattle gathered before it became real tough to work cattle. Trent and his group went to Double Springs.

Once gathered we worked the herd and threw the yearlings into the horse pasture as well as about 6 pair that had sick calves and needed to be doctored. I had to wait until the other cowboys showed up with their herd to have some help doctoring. As we were working herd I noticed the yearlings seemed very restless and were walking the fence looking for a spot to climb back in with the cows. Yearlings are like a bunch of love sick 17 year old teenage boys. Just as we finished working the herd, Trent's herd showed up. We worked the yearlings out of his herd and then decided we were going to corral the yearlings and shut them all in the corral for the night. If they escaped and got back in with the other herd our entire week was shot. Once we had them corralled we doctored the sick calves and went to the cabin for a beer and to sit in the shade for a bit before dinner.

As we were sitting there the horses all decided to hang around camp and graze. It was very pleasant sitting and watching them munch away. It was as peaceful as you could ask for. I guess that was the problem, we didn't have a problem for the moment so Six Moons created one. Six Moons was standing about 20 yards outside the cabin fence when all of a sudden he started gushing blood out of his nose. At first we all just sat and looked. There were buckets of blood flowing out of his nose. We grabbed a halter and went over to see if we could do anything. We tried pinching it off, but all it did was send the blood down his lungs and then he would cough and we were covered in blood. We absolutely had no way to stem the flow of blood. I ran for the SAT phone. I tried my brother Krayton who is a vet and when all I could get was voice mail called our local vet. At the rate he was bleeding I was sure they were going to say there wasn't anything we could do. I finally got a hold of the vet on call, explained the situation and was told exactly what I was afraid they were going to say. Without the proper tools there really wasn't anything we could do. As I ran for the SAT phone I hollered at the crew to lead him to the corral. Where Six Moons was standing was right on the main Forest Service Trail. I didn't need a dead horse lying in the trail with no way to move him. If he died right there, I couldn't drag him anywhere because you can't drive off the road. He was much too big to think you would drag him with a saddle horse anywhere, which meant either dynamite or a chainsaw were going to be needed if he died right there on the trail.

By the time the boys had lead him the 150 yards to the corral, he was swaying as he was walking. The blood, still gushing out, seemed a little slower. The vets instructions were "If he goes down, shoot him, it is a terrible death to bleed out that way". We were all in shock and feeling terrible. With Six Moons tied to the fence all we could do was stand and wait for him to go down. His head was down low and his legs braced out wide to support himself as he refused to go down. It was like he knew if he went down it was over. We were all standing there in shock hoping and praying that he would stay on his feet. We assume that he lost so much blood that the flow of blood finally became small enough that it started to clot. It kept appearing that the flow of blood was lessening and he was somehow managing to stay on his feet. Within a few minutes we were all convinced that the blood flow was certainly slowing down. He was still bleeding but at a much slower rate. Then it would stop for a brief second and then a little more would come out, but then it would stop again. We started to feel a little bit more optimistic. We went over and caught another horse and brought him over and tied him to the fence next to Six Moons. We wanted to keep Six Moons as quiet as possible. After 10 or 15 minutes of no bleeding, I suggest we lead the two of them to the back side of a little patch of pine trees and tie them out of sight of the other horses. We packed them both water, kept an eye on them until dark. Six Moons wasn't bleeding anymore and seemed a little stronger. I figured we wanted to keep him as motionless as possible. Of course at daylight the next morning that is where we all headed to see if Six Moons was still among the living. It was such a great relief to see him standing there when we walked up the next morning. We led him to the creek and let him water and then took him back to the corral where we tied him. I didn't want him thinking that he needed to be running with the rest of the horses.

After the excitement of seeing a horse just about bleed to death it was decided to have the World Championship game of SPOONS. It was a wild and wooly game with lots of hollering and screaming, however it didn't seem to faze me in the least as I had had all the excitement I could handle for one day. I went to bed and slept right through the screaming and hollering.

\*\*\*\*SIDE NOTE: We left Six Moons in the Dry Fork until October. My conversation with the vet suggested that we didn't want to change elevations with him until he had a chance to completely heal. In order to get him out of the Dry Fork by trailer we would have to lead him up country for about 2 hours, then load him in the trailer to bring him to the valley. This meant we would have to climb about 1500 feet in elevation and the vet didn't think it was a chance that needed to be taken. Six Moons seems completely fine today, and we still have no idea what caused the nose bleed. By leaving him in the horse pasture that long we of course overgrazed the horse pasture and are in major trouble with the FS over it. As far as they are concerned policy is the only thing that matters.

### **Wednesday July 25:**

We let people sleep in this morning and had breakfast at 6:30. Since the yearlings were shut in the corral we knew it wouldn't take long to gather and get the herd rolling in the morning. We checked the distance we travelled that day as we move camp today. From the Kerns Cow Camp in the Dry Fork to the Lake Creek Cow Camp it is 13.3 miles. That's a pretty good jaunt to take with a herd of cattle. Trent and Taylor and the guest took off with the herd and Craig Mead and myself helped move camp. The goal is to always get camp moved and set up so when the cowboys come riding in, they have a camp to come to. At the end of the day some of them just want to sit for a few minutes and try and forget the rocking of the horse for just a few minutes. Others want a quick sailor's shower and a clean change of clothes. Others just want a cold beer and really don't care what brand!

As the cowboys rolled in from having a very successful day I was glad to hear that Julio had only had 2 Oh Shit moments the whole day. He was actually turning into a real cowboy! I was pretty sure I could guess the two spots and I was right. One is at the very beginning of the day and the other was right at the end of the day. At least he knew he was still alive because he could feel his heart pounding!

When Craig and I arrived at Lake Creek we discovered all the horse pasture gates were open and this of course meant we didn't have any fresh horses for the next day. We did manage to get camp set up and had a few moments so I headed up country with a bucket of oats to see if I could find the rest of the horses. I can assure you everything they say about cowboys walking is true. Cowboy boots are designed to sit in the saddle all day, not do a lot of walking in. I was sure glad that I found the horses only about a half mile from camp.

#### **Thursday July 26:**

Well today is the last day of pushing cattle for the week and we had about 12 miles to go so we had breakfast at 6:00am caught our horses and headed to the bottom of Lake Creek to gather the cattle that had been left there yesterday. We rode off the old jeep road into the bottom and were all strung out in a line when the horse Craig was riding jumped and blew Craig out over the back of his saddle. Craig hit the ground sort of face first and slightly twisted to his right. He got up, wiped the dirt out of his eyes, and spit the dirt out of his teeth. He commented to me he wished he hadn't landed on his bad hip. Craig was supposed to drive home to Omaha that evening. We weren't sure if anything was broken or not. To be sure Laurel drove Craig to the hospital for x-rays. The pictures didn't show any obvious breaks so he packed his leg with ice, crawled into his vehicle and headed the 12 hours home.

The yearlings walked really well which shocked me after the trek they had put in the previous day. We managed to get to Sardine Lake where we planned on dropping the yearlings around 2:00pm. Diane took a GPS reading at that point and as the crow flies it was just over 4 miles from where we started gathering to where we had finished. By the way we had to go with the herd we had travelled over 25 miles to get there. Once back at camp every one said good by to their 4 legged rocking chairs for the week, we loaded them and took them to the Elk View Inn for a hot shower, a bed and clean clothes. This night is always a lot of fun because there is always someone who has been a little reserved all week that comes out of the woodwork and really has a good time. The only difference on this trip was that we didn't have anyone who was quiet and reserved all week. However there were about 3 guests who had a really good time last night, or it appeared they did from their bar tab and how quiet they were the next morning. I guess they had just taxed out their fun meter the evening before.

Mark Parker won the Double Rafter belt buckle and gave it to his son Andy, who really did a great job all week and was a delight to be with. Thanks all of you for making it possible for all us to be able to help preserve a piece of life that is fast vanishing.