



# **Trip Information Packet - Hunting**

Logistics, Itinerary, Hunting info, Map Info, Additional Resources, Covid-19 Policy and Gear List

## **Hello from Dropstone Outfitting -**

Thank you for joining us on a hunt. Included in this document is a general itinerary, logistics information, hunting information, map recommendations, additional resources, a gear list, and our Covid - 19 policy.

Contact us if you have any questions, and we look forward to our hunt.

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## **Daily Itinerary**

**The day before the trip begins:** Please arrive in Great Falls, Montana (if flying) no later than 3 PM where we will pick you up in our van. We provide a free airport shuttle service, so please email us your flight info as soon as you know it. If driving, please arrive at our headquarters in Choteau no later than 4 PM. We will sort gear, make lunches for the following day, and have a brief orientation.

**Keep all necessary medications and personal items with you. We will be weighing and packing your 30 lbs. of gear the night before the trip – you won't see it again until the afternoon of the following day.**

During the trip, you are welcome to park your vehicles at our headquarters as we will be taking our van to the trailhead.

If you are staying in Choteau the night before the trip leaves, we have reserved rooms at the **Stage Stop Inn**. Their number is (406) 466-5900. Tell the front desk that you're with Dropstone Outfitting-- we have blocked the rooms out but you will need to call with your credit card information to finalize booking. We encourage you to make your hotel reservations soon. We also have several camp grounds we can recommend if you'd like to camp the night before your trip.

**First Day:** We will leave Choteau around 7:30 AM. The Stage Stop Inn has a breakfast or the Outpost Deli just down the road opens at 6 AM. We will start hiking between 9 - 10 AM and arrive at camp in the late afternoon. If you are archery hunting, you will be carrying your bow on the hike in. Bows will be transported to trailhead in hard-sided cases. Please bring your case if you own one.

**Daily Schedule:** Coffee and breakfast is ready between 5 - 5:30 AM depending on the plan for the day. Lunches will be made after breakfast or the evening before. The following day's itinerary will be discussed each evening so you will have an idea of what we will encounter including the timeline, how much water and food to pack, and any other details. Dinner is served between 7:30 and 8 PM. The schedule can also vary quite a bit depending on the day's hunt.

**Final Day:** Breakfast and coffee will be served between 6 - 6:30 AM and we will leave camp between 8 - 8:30 AM. We will reach the trailhead in the early afternoon and then drive back to Choteau to unpack and sort gear before going our separate directions. We will have a shuttle that goes to Great Falls that evening for those who need it.

Recommended Hotels in Great Falls: *Be sure to mention you are with us when you book*

**Comfort Inn and Suites** - They have a complimentary breakfast as well as an airport shuttle service that begins at 4:30 am. The hotel is minutes from the airport. There are a few restaurants within walking distance as well as a 24hour grocery store. The number to the Comfort Inn is (406) 455-1000 or visit them at [Comfort Inn - Airport Great Falls](#). We have a group rate set up with them.

**Hotel Arvon** - This is a locally owned hotel that has been renovated. It sits in historic downtown Great Falls right next to an Irish pub/eatery and close to several other restaurants. They provide a free airport shuttle service, but you need to let them know in advance that you need it. Rooms come with a free breakfast from the Celtic Cowboy next door, which opens at 6:30 am. The number to Hotel Arvon is (406) 952-1101 or visit them at [Hotel Arvon](#). We have a group rate set up with them.

Plan your departure for the day after the trip gets out.

**Tipping** - *We are often asked about tipping the guides and crew. While it is completely up to you, we recommend 10 - 15% of your trip cost if you feel you received good service. Gratuities will be shared equally among staff unless otherwise indicated by you.*

## **Hunting information**

### **License information:**

A Montana hunting license and tags must be obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks -- For information and to apply for tags, visit [www.fwp.mt.gov](http://www.fwp.mt.gov). You will be in hunting district 441, hunting on National Forest lands only, on the east side of the continental divide. You must have your license and tags with you at all times while hunting. **For archery hunts, you must also purchase a bow and arrow tag.** For non-residents, we recommend either the Big Game Combo or the Elk Combo Tag. You can additionally purchase a black bear tag.

Preference Points: For non-residents going with an outfitter, you can now apply with up to 3 preference points (which we strongly recommend for the best odds at drawing). One point must be purchased by December 31st of the year before your hunt. The second two points are purchased when you apply for tags. One of these is called an Outfitter Preference Point. In order to qualify for that point, you must go with an outfitter and you will need to enter the outfitter name and number (Maggie Carr #37133). You can apply for tags from March 1 - March 31st of the year of the hunt.

District Specifics (441) for both in and out of state general tags :

1. Brow-tined Bull. General Elk License. In Bob Marshall Only.

- Brow-tines bull: Any elk having an antler or antlers with a visible point on the lower half of either main beam that is greater than or equal to four inches long.
2. Antlerless Elk - General Elk License.
    - Antlerless: A female or juvenile male with antlers less than 4 inches long as measured from the top of the skull.
  3. Antlered Mule Deer Buck - General Deer License. National Forest only
  4. Either Sex White tail - General Deer License
  5. Black Bear – 48 hour mandatory reporting
    - It is unlawful to harvest/take black bear cubs. Cubs are defined as bears less than one year old. It is unlawful to harvest/take a female black bear with cubs.

### **Dropstone Hunting Ethics and Conduct:**

Hunting with Dropstone -- either on a drop camp, unguided base camp hunt, or guided hunt -- requires that the participant understand the privilege of hunting big game in the wild. Dropstone provides Fair Chase hunting. Fair chase, as defined by the Boone and Crockett Club, is the ethical, sportsmanlike, and lawful pursuit and taking of any free-ranging wild, big game animal in a manner that does not give the hunter an improper or unfair advantage over the game animals.

The participant should prepare him/herself to safely and effectively handle their firearm or bow, to make a clean, terminal shot when pursuing big game. Dropstone understands that occasionally an animal is wounded. If an animal is wounded, every effort will be made to recover the wounded animal. In the event that an animal is not recovered, that animal is considered the participants, and the individual will not be allowed to shoot another animal of that same species during that hunt unless they have multiple tags.

### **If you harvest an animal:**

1. Animal will be boned out or processed to the point of the guide's specification for ease of packing out. Make sure you let your guide know if you want it caped out. Meat will be hauled down to where horses/mules can easily get to it. Meat packing to the trailhead is included in your trip fee and you do not need to leave camp with your meat if the trip is not complete. However, you are responsible for:
  - You will have the choice to either store meat in our chest freezer when it is brought out of the mountains or you can rent walk-in cooler space until your trip is complete.
  - **meat processing fees and arrangements:** We can suggest certain processors but their ability to take meat depends on their availability. Each processor has their own policies and pricing regarding shipping as it may not be possible for meat to be processed before you return home. If we are able, we will take meat to processors before you get out, but we cannot guarantee this service.

- **Taxidermy:** We can make suggestions, but cannot guarantee availability. You will need to make arrangements with the taxidermist once your trip is complete.

## **Map Information**

We provide you with a one-page map showing camp location, general area, and route to and from camp. However, most hunters use OnX or some sort of phone app or GPS device. We can share map area information with you ahead of time if you are interested so you can download it on your phone. If you wish to purchase a larger, paper map before the trip, we recommend maps published by Cairn Cartographic, a mapping company based out of Missoula, MT. These maps include mileage approximations that can be helpful. They can be purchased on-line at <http://www.cairncarto.com> or directly from us when you arrive. There are two maps published for the Bob Marshall - one that covers the north half and one the covers the south half. You will need the north half map for your hunt.

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex Map, produced by the United States Geologic Service (USGS) can be purchased on-line at: <https://store.usgs.gov/product/254522>. You may also want to buy more in-depth topographic maps (1:24,000 scale). These maps can be purchased at <http://store.usgs.gov> as well. The 7.5-minute quads of the area are: Gateway Pass - MT and Walling Reef - MT.

## **Additional Resources**

**Traveling in Bear Country:** The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex is home to the largest Grizzly Bear population in the Lower 48. This is one aspect that makes the Wilderness Area so unique. All of our guides are familiar with proper bear etiquette and carry bear spray. We also have bear spray available to anyone who would like to carry a canister and will go over proper use during our orientation. If you bring a firearm on the trip, please do not bring it in the cook tent and make sure it is secured safely so it will not accidentally go off. Take some time to educate yourself about traveling safely in bear country by visiting [our website](#). We have a section titled **"Bear Safety"** located under the **"Trip Resources"** tab for more information.

**Backcountry Water Treatment:** Passing birds, animals, or humans can contaminate all backcountry water sources, including fast-flowing, glacier-fed streams. We will have a group gravity filter in camp, but you are responsible for how and if you treat your water when out hunting. Aquamira water treatment drops are available from us; however, there are many other options available to you. Take some time to learn more by looking at our **"Water Treatment Options"** section on [our website](#) under the **"Trip Resources"** tab.



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# Hunting Gear list

Please note that you will be limited to 30 POUNDS of personal gear to be carried by the pack stock. This includes the weight of your sleeping bag, sleeping pad, alcohol and ammunition but not your bow/rifle. You will also be carrying a daypack if you are hiking in. What you bring in this pack is not included in the 30 pounds. We provide tents, cots and chairs for personal use.

CLOTHING – Quick dry fabrics preferred. Our temperatures in the fall can range from 0 – 65 F during the days, -10 – 40 F during the night. Be prepared for highly variable weather. Wind is common.

- Undergarments
- 1-2 T-Shirts
- 2 Long underwear tops
- 2 Long underwear bottoms (one heavier) (NO COTTON)
- Light weight pull over and/or vest (NO COTTON)
- 2 Mid weight pullovers or jacket (NO COTTON)
- Light weight down or synthetic jacket
- Rain gear—BOTH top and bottom. Great for wind, rain, snow
- 2 pairs of hunting pants
- 5 pairs of socks (NO COTTON)
- One set of comfy camp clothes
- 2 Warm hats
- 3 pairs gloves – some lighter weight and at least one heavy weight
- Buff or neck gaiter
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Any medication you may need during the trip
- Blister-care/1<sup>st</sup> Aid
- Toiletries
- Hand and Feet warmers for chilly mornings
- Headlamp (New batteries or bring extras)
- Two water bottles/Camelback (*enough to hold 64 oz. of water*)
- Waterproof stuff sack or plastic bag for isolating wet/dry items

## Of the items on the gear list, what should I carry in my daypack?

- Rain gear – *BOTH top and bottom, every day*
- Hat and gloves – *every day*
- Light or mid-weight pull over
- Water bottles/Camelback
- Lunch and snacks
- Sunscreen, sunglasses
- Any blister care/1<sup>st</sup> aid products you may need
- A small stash of toilet paper
- Binoculars
- Pack cover
- Weapon (bow or rifle)
- Ammunition (bow or rifle) – bring extra
- Binoculars
- Flagging
- Hunting knives/saw
- Electrical tape or zip ties
- GPS (*optional but recommended*) + extra batteries
- Montana Hunting License and Tags
- Fire starting kit
- 20 feet of rope/cord
- Hunters Orange (*rifle season only*)
- Bear Spray

- 2 pair Hiking/Hunting Boots or shoes (*MUST be broken in. Blisters = our #1 medical issue*)
- Gaiters
- Camp shoes (*something appropriate for stream crossings*)
- Hiking poles (*optional but nice for steep hiking*)
- Small backpack for day use
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad
- Camera (*optional*)
- A small book or journal (*optional*)
- Weapon (bow or rifle)
- Ammunition (bow or rifle) – make sure you bring enough extra bullets
- Binoculars
- Flagging
- Hunting knives/saw
- 20 feet of rope/cord
- Electrical tape or zip ties
- GPS (*optional but recommended*)
- Game bags
- Any game calls you would like. Guides will also have them, so this is optional.
- Montana Hunting License and Tags
- Fire starting kit
- Hunters Orange (Rifle season only)
- Bear Spray (we have some available to borrow)
- Shooting sticks (*optional*)
- Any alcohol you may want on the trip

**Packing for Trips:**

-We recommend using a waterproof compressible stuff sack for your sleeping bag

- We can provide a duffel bag for personal items if needed

# Dropstone Outfitting LLC Covid-19 Policies - 2023

## Before Your Trip

- Practice good personal hygiene.
- Please be respectful of others, and if you are feeling unwell or have had a close known exposure, do not participate in the trip.

## Our Pre-Trip Practices:

- We will clean all group gear between trips.
- We will monitor our health regularly. Any staff member displaying signs of illness will be removed from daily operation. We will follow the current public health protocol to determine the next step if a staff member tests positive for Covid-19.

## On the trip:

- Please bring a mask if you'd like to wear one in the van. Also, pack your own hand sanitizer to use along the trail.
- Each backcountry camp will have two hand washing stations. One at the latrine and one near the kitchen. We make every effort to have a clean camp and practice good backcountry hygiene. We encourage all of our guests to do the same.
- All dishes and kitchen equipment will be cleaned thoroughly between meals.
- If you start to feel ill on the trip (in any way - not Covid specific), please let us know.

## Responding to Illness or COVID-19 Symptoms in the Field

- Anyone exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms while on the trip should alert staff and immediately self-quarantine in their tent while symptoms are monitored.
- We will consult health care professionals to determine the best evacuation options and the risk of exposure to other guests and staff.

## A Note on Vaccinations

- Regardless of your vaccination status, we will continue to take precautions regarding Covid - 19. Please be respectful of others.

Thank you for your help in keeping us all healthy and able to enjoy the mountains this summer! If you have any questions, please contact us at [info@dropstoneoutfitting.com](mailto:info@dropstoneoutfitting.com) or call (406) 289-0863.

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