



Share the Hunting Experience

Some of my fondest memories are from my many hunting trips with family and friends. Those memories, whether we harvested an animal or not, are what keep me going back for more every year.

Most of those memories may not be exactly what you might think. Rarely do they focus on the kill. Instead, my mind reflects on things like . . .

- Dragging out at 2 a.m. for a long hike to the summit of Salvation Peak, sitting there and seeing the stars. Yes, we were there hunting for elk. That's what brought us to that amazing place in time, but the stars will never be forgotten.
- Eating amazing meals around the campfire after a long day in the mountains, laughing, sharing stories and telling lies. The company we keep at the campfires can never be replaced.
- The time a hunting companion—so carefully stalking an elk—tripped over his own feet and tumbled down the ridge, spooking everything within a half-mile.
- My son's first spring turkey hunt and a morning so perfect that the gobbler came running, strutting to within 10 yards . . . and my son couldn't see it.

These kinds of hunting experiences came to mind recently when someone asked me what message I would like to share with our state's hunters and anglers.

This year, I encourage everyone to share the hunting experience—with our children, our friends, perhaps an acquaintance who may not hunt but enjoys companionship and the outdoors. We can share the scenery, the thrill of the chase, the crazy mistakes, the fresh air, and the friendship that comes with the hunting heritage that is so much a part of us.

Invite them along and with a little effort, we can give them this gift. We can show them what hunting's really all about, and perhaps inspire them to keep going back for the memories, and if they're lucky, some meat for the freezer or antlers for the wall.

Thank you for supporting New Mexico's wildlife, and I wish everyone the best of luck in this year's hunting season!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandra Sandoval".

Alexandra Sandoval, Director
New Mexico Department of Game and Fish