

It All Worked Out!

JOANN HELGESON

First of all, I want to say that I have been really blessed with a great wife and family. Not only has JoAnn given me four incredible kids, she also likes to hunt! This passion actually started when we were dating and as our hunting adventures have accumulated, the pursuit to acquire a deer tag north of the Colorado River eventually began.

very dry spring had a few of the powerhouse bucks dropping nearly 20 inches of horn growth from the season before. But what do you do? I mean, everyone dreams of a Strip tag and everyone hopes that when theirs comes around, that it will be a great year...but sometimes it just isn't meant to be. The reports were that if you were lucky enough to find a 190 buck, you should probably take him. Funny thing was, we would probably take a 190-class buck no matter what the year was like anyways.

After what felt like an eternity, we finally arrived to camp. Approximately 100 miles from a paved road, JoAnn just about killed me by the time I got us to where I wanted to be. But there we were...me, JoAnn, and her cousin Robert Bueno.

For the first few days of the hunt, I found myself convincing JoAnn and Robert that we just needed to keep doing what we were doing. I knew if we stayed the course, good things were bound to happen. In reality, JoAnn did a great job and was a trooper. She passed several decent bucks...one of which was a 33-inch wide 3x4 that a guy shot and we got to see up close.



GROSS SCORE: **211** | POINTS: **5X6** | SPREAD: **30** | LOCATION: **ARIZONA**

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In 2012, JoAnn pulled tag #65 in a unit where there were 65 tags issued. Phew! Even though it was just barely, she finally had her Arizona Strip deer tag! With it official, the daydreaming commenced. Along with the visions of big bucks, however, also came a boatload of stress. That's where my good friend Travis McClendon came to the rescue...and I must say, I am really thankful for Travis. In fact, his exact words were, "Save your time and your money for the hunt. I should have some places for you by the time your season rolls around." And that he did...(I also need to give a big shout out to Joe Mulcaire...he gave us the info we needed just a few days before we left.)

Now anyone who was on the Arizona Strip last year will concur that 2012 was an exceptionally poor antler growth year. A dry fall in 2011 and a

On the 5th day, we found JoAnn's buck. The same five does that we had been seeing in the same meadow for five straight days, now had a giant buck with them. The "never give up" attitude was finally going to pay off. The mighty buck was oblivious to our presence as he tended his ladies and Joann made the 60-yard shot with ease! I am so very proud of her...because of her great attitude it all worked out!

Many people played a hand in JoAnn's success, but I would like to give a thank you to the "behind the scenes" crew. With young kids, it's hard to plan a trip like this and not worry. Our kids range in age from 4 to 15 years old and much planning was taken for them to get around while we were gone. Thanks to a loving family, it was all taken care of. What a great hunt and what a great country we live in! Land of the free because of the brave!

