

Doing Good While Doing What They Love

It started out as a desire to hunt elk out West. But today, Mark Bowers' participation in the Elk Foundation is more about making other kinds of memories.

Bowers' love of hunting was the gateway through which he found the Elk Foundation—a story he's heard from other RMEF members as well over the years. "Somebody gets a notion to go out West and go elk hunting, and then they find they don't know anything about it," says Mark. "I was in the process of acquiring the appropriate equipment and was a year or two out from actually going somewhere. Then I stumbled across a *Bugle* magazine, read it and said, 'Wow, this is really something!'"

So began a quest to find out more about the Elk Foundation, which introduced Mark and Diane Bowers to the world of RMEF banquets.

Ralph Cinfio, who was director of operations for the central division at the time, met the Bowers eight years ago at a North Star Chapter banquet in Minneapolis.

"The Bowers are exactly what the Elk Foundation is about," says Cinfio. "They're grassroots people who have a strong conservation ethic. Just stalwart, Midwestern, down-to-earth good people."

At another North Star Chapter banquet, the Bowers sponsored a table, inviting their sons Jon and Spencer, the boys' girlfriends, other family members and friends. Everyone had a memorable time.

"You go to these things and there's always people winning stuff, and they get all amped up



Diana and Mark Bowers with the bull Diana killed in New Mexico on Opening Day of the 2007 season.

and excited," says Jon. "But then, when it actually happens to you and you get to walk away with something, you feel like, 'Wow! This is really cool.'"

Mark remembers that night often because his family keeps asking him to do it again. It was a fun night, and a lot of money left his wallet, he says. "It seems whenever we do these things, everybody has a good time and good memories are created. Just like when you're out in the field."

Contributing to the well-being of your community and country is a theme the Bowers see in the Elk Foundation. And public service is important to the Bowers' family. Spencer is a fire-team leader assigned to the 509th Airborne in the U.S. Army, while Jon is a volunteer firefighter for the town of Chaska, Minnesota. Diane volunteers with the Red Cross and Mark has been a firearms safety instructor for more than a dozen years.

"Being a good citizen first,

helping others, giving generously to charity—those things are important," says Mark. "Then if you are an entrepreneur that's all the better. Take the gifts given to you and help others raise themselves to a standard where they want to be. In my mind, the Elk Foundation is totally the embodiment of that."

Mark and Diane had planned to join the Habitat Partnership program years ago, says Mark, but around Christmas in 2007, he developed heart problems. "It took several years for me to regain my health," he says. "Just this last year I started enjoying life again as a person and not as a patient. So it derailed our plans a little bit."

But after a conversation with Lou George, regional director for northern Minnesota and Wisconsin, the Bowers decided they'd waited long enough. They made a financial commitment to RMEF and became Habitat Partners. "I figured

I'd procrastinated long enough," Mark says.

Both Minnesota natives, Mark describes Diane and himself as "a couple of typical Midwest kids," where an affinity for the outdoors is natural. For Mark, exposure to hunting came through a neighbor. "His family was big into hunting, and my dad was a city kid. Hunting just sort of stuck to me," he says.

Introduced to the outdoors by fishing trips at her grandfather's cabin at Lake Mille Lacs, north of St. Cloud, Diane also remembers being roped into going hunting with three uncles. These early adventures helped prepare her for meeting Mark.

When Diane and Mark began dating 38 years ago, they discovered their mutual interest in hunting and the outdoors. Diane recalls going grouse hunting at Mark's great aunt's farm in New York Mills, Minnesota. The couple went to the farm to help out, but they also

hunted whenever they could.

Now retired from his job as an executive with CH Robinson Worldwide, a supply chain

Contributing to the well-being of your community and country is a theme the Bowers see in the Elk Foundation. Public service is important to the Bowers' family.

company, Mark and Diane live in Wisconsin. He now has more time for the Indian Head Chapter and the things he cares about, like hunting with his boys.

"I'm lucky that he's [Mark] gotten me involved with hunting

and being part of the outdoors as I am today," says their son Jon. "Growing up, my dad traveled a lot, and we didn't get to spend as much time together as we have the last couple years. It's been quite an experience. I wouldn't trade it for the world."

Even though the Bowers have belonged to a variety of groups over the years, they find that RMEF is an ideal fit.

"None of them gives you the same sense of satisfaction the Elk Foundation does," says Mark. "I think being a Habitat Partner allows us to be part of a legacy."

And perhaps it's a little more than that.

"We've hunted all kinds of game in all kinds of places around the world," Mark says. "The strange thing is that from the first time I heard a bull elk bugle, it was like something just pulled at my heart strings."

—Tim Kukes, Bugle Intern



Perfection in ballistics.

The Rangemaster CRF 1600-B.



Concentrate on the decisive moment, knowing that your CRF 1600-B will handle everything else. In a split second, the new ABC™ ballistics system gives you all the information you need for that perfect shot. Simple, precise and at the touch of a button. With this reliable companion in your pocket, you're always ideally equipped for every hunt.

- ballistics system: point-of-impact correction, equivalent horizontal distance, click/MOA reticle adjustment
- distance, click/MOA reticle adjustment
- high nominal range of 10.9yds to about 1,600yds (horizontal distance and ballistics info to 800yds)