

LEADING WOMEN IN THE OUTDOORS

Featuring Kirstie Pike

By Chad Winters

Sticks & Stones Outdoor Adventures brings you Women Hunting and Angling in the Great Outdoors. In today's hunting and angling world there is one segment that is growing and infusing new blood into our sports world, WOMEN! There have been many predecessors who have helped bring this about and we at Sticks & Stones will be featuring some of today's women in the outdoors who are out in the woods and on the lakes hunting and angling. We are very excited and proud to bring several of these hard working women to the forefront and hope this will encourage other women to pick up that bow, rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader, pole or fly rod and join the great tradition of hunting and angling.

Kirstie Pike is our Inaugural Hunter, for many reasons, foremost is that she has a fascinating story to tell, so grab a cup of Joe and settle in for a great tale featuring Leading Women In The Outdoors.

Kirstie comes to us from Gunnison Colorado where she lives with her husband Steve and their two daughters Hanna and Haydyn. She enjoys the small town warmth and breathtaking views that are her surroundings. There is a plethora of outdoor activities in Gunnison such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, mountain biking, mountaineering and of course skiing. Kirstie tries to make time to enjoy all of them when she isn't in the Emergency Room taking care of people. She has been the Trauma Director for Gunnison Valley Hospital since 1990 and earned the coveted State of Colorado Florence Nightingale Excellence Award in nursing in 2004. As if being head of an emergency room wasn't enough to keep her occupied Kirstie is a 4-H leader, assistant cross-country coach and serves on a number of local and regional task forces but still finds time to enjoy her passion the outdoors.

Kirstie was introduced to the outdoors by her father and still utilizes her dad's old 12 gauge on pheasant hunts. Fast Chinese take out wasn't enough for this Colorado gal, so Kirstie picked up her Remington 700 25-06 and has been hunting mule deer and elk ever since. She truly enjoys the concentration and practice that goes into long range hunting and shooting. Not afraid of a challenge, eight years ago she decided it was time to add archery to her resume. She admits that Steve, her husband and a professional guide, has helped her immensely but a little brow sweat and practice on her part has made her feel comfortable going after an elk. Kirstie loves the challenge of a bow hunt and fine-tuning the shot to make the most humane kill possible. When in elk woods she says there is no bigger rush than being so close you can smell the big bull. Now that's hunting!

As the sacred tradition was passed to her from her father Kirstie is doing her part in passing hunting and angling down to her daughters Hanna and Haydyn. The family loves to spend the day hiking into the high mountains and fishing their favorite spots for brook trout. Hanna is handy with the steel and has already taken her own doe, mule deer and a nice 5-point bull. Haydyn got her first taste of a solo hunt this past year and didn't harvest anything but immensely enjoyed the experience and we all know good things come to those who wait and don't whine.

Being a true outdoorswoman Kirstie became a little frustrated heading to her favorite sports store and finding hunting apparel that just didn't cut the mustard. She wasn't content to put on a sad rendition of cotton Capri pants with bow ties on the pockets and suffer in the cold and elements out in the woods and men's gear was too bulky and big and to find small sizes is a major undertaking. Turning her frustration into a positive she decided to design her own line of real, functional women's hunting gear (and I mean GEAR!). Prois was born out of Kirstie's passion for the outdoors and frustration from watching men have

everything designed for them and that didn't work for the serious outdoorswoman so she created a functional set of women's apparel for female hunters who are out in the fields and woods hunting hard like her.

Kirstie has some great advice to women and anyone who wants to get involved in the outdoors. First get off the couch and do it! Remember safety and know your terrain and don't be afraid to ask for help from someone more experienced. Always invest in some appropriate gear and practice with your chosen weapon or pole. Kirstie has always enjoyed the freedom, silence, exhilaration and peace in her native Gunnison and wants all the folks to know there are women hunting and angling out there.

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