

## CLEAN UP RIDE 2013 TRIP REPORT

### **Monday Sept 29<sup>th</sup>:**

With over 100,000 acres to ride this week, we had our plates full there was no doubt. Taylor, Craig and Robert went to town to pick up all the guests. We had one set of guests we were holding our breath on as they were due to arrive in Sheridan 20 minutes before scheduled pickup. Now this is fantastic if plans go accordingly. Since this is reality, accordingly is really just a word in the dictionary. Occasionally things do luck out and Tim and Lindy arrived right on schedule from England. I had gone up the mountain earlier in the day as I was doubling as camp cook for the week and needed some prep time in order to feed people that evening. I really don't know why people think they need to eat! The guests arrived around 3:00pm and Taylor did a horsemanship quick clinic and out they rode, since most of these were repeat people. Robert went back to the valley as he still wasn't healed up enough to do anything more than just drive a vehicle. For some reason riding a horse from the bottom side is never a good thing for a cowboy physically! Riding was out of the question. Taylor took everyone to ride Little Switzerland and get the gather for the week started. Trent came up the canyon by himself to open all the gates, so that animals could go to the valley. This also gave us an indication of what cattle were in the Little Horn so that we could plan the next day's circle. Trent did not see any cattle in the Parks area or around the Green Cabin but did see some in the area we call the swamp. Well, that would be part of the next day's gather. Our neighbors across the creek were scheduled to start gathering their cattle the next day for their trip off the mountain. We knew they had a few of ours so were trying to coordinate ours circles so we could give them what we had of theirs and get what they had of ours.

### **Tuesday Sept 30<sup>th</sup>:**

Trent and Taylor took the guests and split up for the day. It was hoped that either Trent or Taylor would run into Crosby's to check their scheduling. It's easy to make plans in the valley and then once on the mountain, when you see where the cattle actually are, the plans generally change. I had had a phone conversation with Brett Crosby the day before we went up so did know their tentative plans.

Dana & Craig took the Gator loaded with supplies and headed to the Dry Fork with coolers of food, tents and other camp items that would be needed for the following day when we arrived in the Dry Fork. They were calling for a pretty major storm to come through starting sometime Wednesday. At this time we had no idea the amount of snow that they were predicting.

When Craig and I arrived in the Dry Fork we discovered that someone had left the horse pasture gate open so we had no fresh horses in the Dry Fork. The three horses we had left in there had disappeared somewhere on the mountain. We hoped as we gathered cattle we would find them. It is so easy to injure a horse that you always need spares available. We have everything happen from galls over the withers to cuts from wire, to tree branches, getting kicked by other horses or someone insisting on riding with their stirrups too short, which makes them sit back which puts all the pressure right on top of a horse's kidney's, bruising up the kidney's. Any of these injuries causing us to pull the horse from the usable string is a problem because not every horse is ride able by every rider.

While Craig and I were setting up camp we had heard the weather report so we put a tarp wall up around the overhang to give us more protection around the big barrel stove. When we had arrived earlier that day, we discovered some idiot had decided to steal the barrel stove. They had hooked to it with their 4 wheeler attempting to drag it the 8 miles back to the closest vehicle. They got all of 40 yards from the cabin before the first leg broke off. The weight of the stove became more than they could pull up the steep hill so they left it lying in the middle of the road. I really hope whoever did this

rot's in hell! Craig and I were able to prop it up and tip it over onto the trailer and haul it back to camp. My best guess is that the stove weigh's close to 300 lbs. We sort of rolled, lifted, scooted and dragged it back in place and propped the broken leg back under it, shoved the stove pipe up through the roof and were ready for the storm, or at least we thought we were. We split a pile of dry wood and shoved it next to the stove, loaded up the Gator and high tailed it back to Lake Creek as we had to get dinner prepared for the cowboys that evening.

When Trent and Taylor came riding in that evening, they confirmed Crosby's schedule and all the guests knew they were in for lots of hours in the saddle, if that day had been any indicator of what was to come.

### **Wednesday Oct 1<sup>st</sup>:**

Taylor and the guests rode Lake Creek and then headed to the Dry Fork leading one extra horse. It is about 14 miles to the Dry Fork from Lake Creek. Trent helped Craig and I load up more tents and luggage. Since we were still short the 3 horses in the Dry Fork, I decided to have Craig go with us to the head of the Dry Fork and then have him ride one horse and lead another while I drove the Gator in loaded with supplies. Craig grabbed a saddle out of the tack trailer to ride in on, as we had both taken our own saddles into the Dry Fork and left them there the previous day. This at least gave us each a horse to ride with no spares. Trent helped us get unloaded at the head of the Dry Fork then he took the pickup and trailer and his horse and headed over to Crosby's to get our cattle and haul them to the valley. We wanted to get the cattle hauled off the mountain before the storm hit and then the plan was for Trent to ride back in the following morning and join us for the rest of the gather. Craig and I had a very pleasant drive and ride into the Dry Fork. When we arrived Taylor and his group had already arrived. Some of them decided to stay in camp and call it a day, while the rest decided to go with Taylor and start gathering cattle. Taylor headed to the Pass and ended up on top of the Charlie Miller Ridge gathering cattle. It was an absolutely gorgeous day. When Taylor topped out on top of the Charlie Miller Ridge, he came across a rider who was just wandering around enjoying the country. The guy had ridden up from the valley and was just exploring. Taylor asked if he had seen any horses running around but he hadn't. Later that afternoon as they were trailing the cattle they had gathered back to the Dry Fork, out of the timber comes one of the 3 missing horses. He was certainly glad to see some buddies and followed them back to camp. We now had two extra horses. So far the storm hadn't hit so I was hoping that maybe it was going to miss us. They had called for it to hit that afternoon. It started snowing lightly about dark. I called the valley that evening to check in and was told that some hunter had reported two horses running around on the face of the mountain with the elk. I also got a current weather report and it wasn't good. They were calling for a foot of fresh snow. After calling my wife I called Trent and told him not to come to the mountain in the morning as I could see no sense for him to come up the mountain in a blizzard. I also knew with the storm, cattle would be headed to the valley and I needed to have someone pick them up in the bottom. The cattle spill out onto a neighbors ranch and I didn't want them sitting there eating his feed and us not showing up to take care of the problem.

### **Thursday Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>:**

It had snowed off and on during the night, but the ground was so warm we were just barely white. The ceiling lifted and we could see about a half mile so the visibility was good. I sent Taylor up into the Moose Hole to gather the cattle they had found the day before and I headed East to gather that side of the allotment. I told Taylor we would meet up probably just above camp. My group found cattle and kicked them through into the horse pasture and then headed to the Moose Hole to find Taylor and his group. We saw a few cattle scattered amongst the scattered pine and Quaken Aspen trees, but no cowboys. We kept riding on into the head of the Pass wondering what had gone wrong. From the looks of the tracks in the snow, it appeared a bunch of cattle had turned around and gone back to where they

had been the day before. It was around 10:00am by now and the wind had come up and the snow flurries turned into a steady snowfall. When we topped out in the Pass the wind hit us full force and it was just plain miserable as the wind and snow cut right through your clothes. We were riding with our heads down as we cut cow tracks headed in the wrong direction and started following these. We ended up on a very steep mountain side and the trail we were following kept breaking into smaller and smaller groups. I knew there were cattle around, but finding them on the snow covered, sparsely timbered mountain side was going to be a challenge. The footing wasn't exactly the best. Above us on the top of the ridge I thought I heard a cow bawling and assumed Taylor and his group must be above us somewhere. All the trails we had been following were headed towards the top of the ridge. We finally caught up with a few animals, turned them around and started them back towards camp. I heard cattle bawl again above me and was sure Taylor and his group must be trailing in what they had found, coming down the main trail. This meant we would meet up somewhere in the bottom. We threw our two groups of cattle together and with the snow blowing around, we all felt a chill and the thought of a hot cup of coffee. Taylor rode up to me and commented that the guy they had seen the day before was still up there on the ridge, only now he was afoot. Seems he had hobbled his horse and headed off to explore on foot and when he got back his horse was gone. This had happened yesterday shortly after Taylor had bumped into him. Obviously someone with little horse experience! Only Hollywood shows horses being hobbled and left unattended for long periods of time and still being there when you want them. Most horses can lope with hobbles on. Hobbles are great as long as you aren't out of sight or out of running distance or walking distance from camp. Since the guy was at the top of the mountain he had a long walk but it was all downhill so I didn't feel a lot of sorrow for him, only the horse. The problem a horse has with hobbles on is all the downed trees and brush. They can hang their hobbles up on a snag and there they are until they die of thirst, or you find them. Now if they hang up in the middle of a big timber patch, chances are you won't find them alive. In this case the horse was still saddled so was not only out his horse but all his tack as well.

We kicked the cattle through the gate on the west side of the horse pasture. We only had about 35 head of cattle as we anticipated the rest had all gone on to the valley. About half the guests went back and the fire and the rest of us continued on down the trail with the cattle for another couple of miles. It was actually a pretty nice ride. The cattle had already had their fill of snow and were headed to the low country. However, we wanted to make sure they would go on down country and not head back up country like they had the day before. We dropped the cattle and rode on back to camp. When we rode into camp they had the fire roaring in the overhang and it was pretty darn comfortable. It had stopped snowing and the snow on the ground had melted for the most part. I was hoping the storm was over and we had just enough to add to the trips flavor, but not enough to really complicate things. Boy was I wrong! I called the valley that evening about 8:00pm with the Sat phone and it was really starting to snow. Trent had made it off the mountain with the cattle from Crosby's and I told him there was no need to come in the next day if it was blizzarding.

### **Friday Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>:**

We awoke to 7 inches of fresh snow and it was still snowing. Seems most of the guests who had brought in their back packers tents hadn't gotten much sleep as they continued to have to get up and scoop snow off their tents in order to keep them from collapsing. Every time I was missing some pans to cook with, I generally found someone out using them as shovels to get the snow off their tents. It snowed hard all day long. We had visibility of about 100 yards. As we finished breakfast we thought we heard a cow bawl. We looked out the door and up the hill and right next to the horse pasture gate were a couple cows. They looked miserable and cold, obviously very concerned about the amount of white stuff that was piling up. I told everyone we were going to just sit in camp and watch the weather. If it lifted we would get the horses in and go make a circle. As we sat having another cup of coffee and

watched a few more cows show up we started wondering where we had missed them the day before. The look on the cattle faces was very evident "Do not leave me on this god forsaken mountain". We had left one horse in the corral the night before so that we had a jingle horse in the morning. It now appeared there were about 20 animals who had shown up. I was hoping they would just hole up in the willows and wait this storm out just like us. However, Murphy had decided we had had it easy enough so she sent the cows North, towards where we had gathered the day before. I walked into the cabin and told Taylor "I'm sorry to do this to you, but those cows are leaving and you are going to have to go get saddled up and get them gathered up and headed in the right direction". Taylor threw on his Muck Boots, Oil Skin coat, grabbed his bull whip and headed to the corral to catch a horse. By now the snow was close to a foot deep and the snow was coming down in big white flakes. The cabin sits down in a hole so you couldn't really tell if the wind was blowing. I saw Taylor ride by the cabin headed up the mountain to find the wandering cows. He was a blur of dark brown oil skin with white blotches all over him and by now the visibility was just slightly over 50 yards. He looked completely miserable and I was really glad I was the cook or it would have been me out there. Family relationships only go so far on a ranch. Taylor managed to find the cattle in all the swirling snow and he started them back down the mountain. I could hear his bullwhip cracking through the dense swirling snow. When I saw the cattle coming off the mountain, I threw on my coat and muck boots and headed up to open the gate for him. The snow was knee deep on me by now. I opened the gate and the cattle decided they wanted nothing to do with the open gate, so ducked down the outside of the horse pasture fence. They were at least headed in the correct direction. Taylor yelled, let them go this way and then if more cattle were to show up maybe they will follow their path in the deep snow. It was a great idea! We didn't dare leave the gate open for more cattle to show up as we had the horses in the horse pasture and the thought of being left afoot was not one I liked. I told Taylor that when he came back to find the horses and shut them in the corral. I knew they wouldn't have anything to eat, but I also knew we would have horses to ride for sure the next day. There was no way anyone was walking out of here the next day in those snow conditions. When Taylor came back and jingled the horses they figured out pretty fast what he wanted and the wanted no part of it as there is no wind shelter in the corral. They were determined they weren't going in the corral. They ran past the opened gate several times. We finally had to get people out to the corral to form a wing to get them in the corral. The horse Taylor had been riding was completely spent from his couple hours of charging through the deep snow after the cows and then the horses. Yet we had no choice but to shut him in the corral with the rest of them. Better to be a little hungry than dead! I did feel sorry for the horses as all they could do was stand with their butts to the storm and wait it out.

Around 3:00pm with it still snowing, people started making other plans for the evening. Some who had spent the night shoveling snow off their back packers tents to keep them up right had given up and folded their tents up and moved their sleeping bag into the overhang with Taylor. A couple others decided they didn't want to have to deal with a tent that might collapse in the middle of the night so they too moved into the overhang. However, the hardy souls from across the pond all stayed in their tents and said they actually slept rather well. The snow insulated things very well, so they stayed nice and warm. Of course by now, my problems were just getting started. It was obvious from all the snow that we weren't going to drive the Gator out with people belongings. We had plenty of food and lots of firewood so we were in no immediate danger. I guess I would have another whiskey and wait and see what daylight holds. I was keeping most of my thoughts to myself about how we were going to do things the next day. Really, until we saw what daylight brought, we really couldn't make any serious plans.

**Saturday Oct 4<sup>th</sup>:**

We awoke with lots of cloud cover but the ceiling was much higher than the day before and it wasn't snowing. By my estimate the storm was over and the day would steadily improve. There was in excess of 20 inches of snow. It was rather obvious that we were going to have to make some decisions as to what would be left behind and what would go. There was no choice to make, we were all going to have to ride out of there. The Gator wasn't going to make 20 yards before you would be stuck, just too much of that delightful white stuff. Many of the drifts I knew would be 3 and 4 foot deep. I talked to everyone at breakfast and told them how we were going to do things. Since we had 4 people from Europe I wanted to get as much of their stuff as possible, so as to not have to ship it later. We had one pack saddle in camp and one set of salt panniers (ply wood box about 12 inches deep and 18 inches high) and the extra saddle that Craig had used on the spare horses. My hope was that we could put one sea bag in each salt pannier and one seabag lashed down across the top. I was then hoping to tie two seabags onto the spare saddle. Then with everyone else tying as much stuff as possible, onto their saddles we could get most of their luggage out of there. All of the food, the coolers, the tents and all the crew bags would have to be left until later. Pierre Leonard had two of his own sea bags and he left both of those. We would have to come back at a later date either with a pack string, or ride in to get the Gator once the weather stabilized. I hoped it would be in a few days as the food wouldn't keep forever and then we would start having bear issues around camp.

By the time we were packed, the skies had cleared and were bright blue. The crisp white landscape was actually breath taking as long as you weren't having to work in it. With as much stuff loaded as we could take we headed out. Without a scale to weigh our loads I knew we would have some repacking to do as the day went on. We got as far as the west side of the horse pasture when it was obvious we were going to have to repack the pack horses. We had made it all of a ¼ mile before the first repack. One of the last things I mentioned to the group as we rode out, that it was imperative we all stay together. With our saddles piled high we looked like a band of bandito's coming back from a raid. As Taylor, Craig, Myself and Lindy stopped to repack the others either didn't think my lecture was meant towards them, as they kept on going. This created a real problem with the packing as the horses we were riding and packing, could see the others leaving them and wanted to join them. We were also standing in snow mid thigh deep trying to repack. As the discussion of how to repack became slightly heated between Taylor and myself, I could see the appearance of irritation in school teacher Lindy Wood's eye's. We changed the style of packing and made slight changes in our style to see if that would work any better. By now the other group is at least a ½ mile ahead of us before it dawned on them to stop and wait. Our horses have about had it with waiting and Taylor slightly lost it and punches Boots right along the side of his jaw. It didn't help, but Taylor did feel slightly better. We finally got repacked and on down the trail we went. Taylor and I lead the two packed horses and Lindy was out in front. I think the school teacher in Lindy must have come out as she rode up to the other group. Since I have never known a school teacher to not speak their mind, I have a hunch Lindy lined people out when she rode up to them. We repacked 6 more times that day and every time we stopped to repack, the whole group stopped, no questions asked. The main reason I wanted to stay together was because if people got off, getting on was a real struggle because we had so much stuff tied on our saddles. I wanted Taylor and myself to be right there in case someone started to hang up as they were getting on or getting off. Other than the repacking we had an absolutely beautiful day. The frost on the trees and the snow on the green branches made for a brilliant view. Everything was so crisp and fresh. It was like man had never been there to leave behind any signs of human life. It was an all day ride and we crossed lots of elk and cow tracks but they were all headed the same way we were, anywhere the snow wasn't so deep. We rode into the Rocky Bottom just before dark, unpacked our stuff and headed to Sheridan. People were tired and elated as they knew they had experienced something completely real and untarnished by modern man. They not only had experienced it, but had survived it. The only big draw back to the day was that once we reached Double Springs on our way out, it was discovered that my dog

had decided the snow was just too deep and apparently had gone back to camp. So now I was in the valley and my dog was probably back at cow camp. When it was discovered she was missing we were probably about halfway of the 8 hour ride out of there, so going back was not an option in those conditions. If the weather had been dry I could have dog trotted all the way back, got my dog and probably caught them by the time everyone else was in the valley.

**PS.**

**NOW TO FINISH THE TWO PARTS OF THE STORY LEFT UNFINISHED.**

- 1. The hobbled horse that had gotten away from whoever it was that Taylor had run into.**
- 2. The hunt for my dog**

**Monday Oct 6<sup>th</sup>:** Trent and I decided to ride in to the Dry Fork to find my dog. The plan was that we would trailer to the X-X Ranch at the foot of the mountains and ride up the Pass on the an old irrigation ditch that had been built around 80 years ago. Trent and I took 2 pack horses and his hand saw. We rode up the face of the mountain to the ditch and headed up the ditch bank. I wondered with the heavy snowfall and the beetle killed trees how many trees we would find blocking our path. We had gone about 200 yards when we came to the first downed tree across the ditch. There is a big patch of Ponderosa Pine that you ride through for a mile or so before getting above it in elevation. We cut the first tree out with the hand saw Trent packs on his saddle. It was a tree about 6 inches around. We proceeded up the winding ditch bank about another 50 yards and came to the second tree. This only slightly bigger, but needing to be cut in two different places to get it wide enough to get the pack horses through. It wasn't just getting them through it was getting back through with their loads on. When we came to the 3<sup>rd</sup> tree I went to cutting and Trent said he would walk on ahead and see if this was the last one or how many more there might be. I was busy sawing away when he came back and said "You may as well save yourself, there are several more to cut out and some of them are 2 feet around". It was going to be a real challenge with an 18 inch saw. Not only that, but by the time it would take to cut out the trees, we then had about a 3 hour ride on into camp, then pack the mules and ride back out. There was no way we could do it in a day. I agreed that punting it was the only option and we would have to go to plan B to get the dog the next day. As Trent and I had ridden in earlier we noticed some cattle that had come down the Charlie Miller ridge and were trapped in the elk pasture. Well since we were this close and it would save us having to make this circle another day, I took the pack horses back to the trailer where I tied them and then headed back to help Trent gather cattle. What we had noticed was about 8 head, which soon turned into about 35. They were scattered all over those slick hillsides looking for something to eat. As Trent and I were sliding up and down the canyons picking up cattle Trent came across this grey hobbled horse standing in the middle of a timber patch. The horse was still hobbled and saddled. It had been 5 days since that guy had lost his horse. Trent approached the horse, took his hobbles off and encourage the horse to take a step. Can you imagine the thought going through his mind at that point in time? The truly amazing thing was that the horse was completely uninjured. He was a little stiff but he hadn't even worn the hair off his legs, where his hobbles were fastened around his feet. This horse had obviously been very well trained by someone and it obviously wasn't the owner. When Trent got the horse to the trailer he unsaddled him, loaded him and again noticed not a mark on the horse. He had travelled about 8 miles we figure down this heavily timbered ridge to where we found him, and had never hung himself up or injured himself. Trent had run into the owner of the horse while being snowed in the valley so he had his phone number. Trent called the guy and offered to buy the horse but the guy wouldn't sell. It was the first horse the guy had ever owned. I did have to chuckle because when Trent offered to buy the horse the guy interpreted it as we were holding the horse ransom. They guy was from a town about 3 hours from here and came and got the horse a couple days later. I still do not understand though how anyone could go off and leave a horse in

that situation. Well we had a very successful day from a horse and cow standpoint but the main part of my mission, the rescuing of my dog Murphy was still ongoing.

**Tuesday Oct 7<sup>th</sup>:** Trent and I left before daylight the next morning with two horses & two pack horses and trailered to the top of the mountain and rode down to camp from there. The hope was that we would go to camp, load the pack mules or if it had melted enough, load the Gator and drive it out. I was sure Murphy had gone back to camp and was hoping she was patiently waiting there. It had been 3 days since we had last seen her and I was sure that by now her stomach was probably dictating her actions. We rode into camp around 8:30am and were really hoping to see a dog come out wagging it's tail completely delighted to see you.

This is an old joke but still funny, you know how to tell who loves you more, your dog or your wife? Shut both of them in the trunk of a car and let them both out in 30 minutes. Which one is glad to see you? Anyway, back to my story, no dog came out. It was obvious from the sign that she had been there but my best guess was that hunger probably got the best of her the day before and she had left, looking for us or something to eat. The snow had melted and there were white patches here and there. I was sure I could drive the Gator out but was not sure I could pull the trailer out. The mud was starting to get soft, but I thought I might as well give it a try. I hooked to the empty Gator trailer and headed up the hill out of camp. I made it about 2/3 of the way before I spun out in the mud. I couldn't go up anymore and I knew I couldn't back it down the hill without jackknifing it in the middle of the slick hill. Trent rode up and tossed me his rope and I tied it to the front of the Gator. The rope tightened up as Dudley leaned into it. The breast collar on Trent's saddle pulled tight against Dudley's big chest as he dug down deep to try and get enough traction to make a difference. I poured the coal to the Gator and the tires went to spinning coating the trailer behind me with a layer of mud. The Gator started to inch forward, then another inch and we kept throwing mud 30 feet in the air but we were heading up the hill. If Dudley had not continued pulling I wouldn't have gone anywhere. We finished the last 15 yards to the top and were finally on level ground. I untied the rope, unhooked the trailer and knew I wouldn't be going anywhere with the trailer that day for sure. I drove back down to camp with the just the Gator, loaded it up with goods and off up the hill we went, clawing and chewing for every inch. However, with out the drag of the trailer I was able to get to the top where I unloaded my load of coolers, people's left over luggage and beer. I turned around and went back down the hill to get another load. I knew I needed to get as many loads as I could while I still had a little frost left in the mud. I got the second load and knew by now I wouldn't be able to get a 3<sup>rd</sup> load today. Trent and I loaded 2 loads on the pack mules and Trent stepped on his horse and looking like John Wayne and his pack train, headed back the 8 miles to the head of the Dry Fork where the pickup and trailer were. I took my load in the Gator and headed on out knowing I could travel much faster than he could. The plan was that I would haul my load out and then come back for my second load, hoping that by the time I got out with the second load, Trent would be out with his pack loads also. I headed out feeling very dejected and lonely as I wasn't sure where to start looking for Murphy. I had no idea which way she might have gone. I thought there was a chance she would show up in the valley but still the thought of nothing to eat and the snow and mud made me feel just awful. I went out with the first load and went up over a couple real bad rocks to a relatively level spot and thought I will drop this load here and go back and get the last load to get up the steep muddy area's while there was still some frost in the shady areas. I stepped off the Gator to unload and realized my tailgate had popped open and most of my load had slid out the back somewhere enroute. Feeling very ticked off at myself I spun the Gator around and headed back down country. Sure enough, when I got to the bottom of the steep hill where the real bad rock is, here is my load sitting right in the middle of the road. I reloaded and off we went again. When I arrived at the pickup about 30 minutes later I started calling hoping that maybe Murphy would be there waiting. No such luck, I was completely crushed. You keep clinging to hope, but sometimes the disappointment is overwhelming. I

unloaded my load of wet, muddy tents and threw them in the back of Trent's pickup, turned the Gator around to head back for the next load and Murphy came bounding out of the sage brush. I was one happy cowboy and she was one happy dog. After bouncing around me for about 1 minute, she turned and ran and jumped into the back of Trent's pickup laying down on top of the tents. At that point she wouldn't even look at me for fear I was going to make her get out of the pickup. I gave her another hug and ruffled her ears and went joyfully back after the next load. I got the last load and just finished unloading them when Trent showed up. We unloaded the pack horses and headed to the valley. We had taken two pickups up so that I could pull the Gator back off the mountain, but since the trailer was still down in the Dry Fork I knew I would have to come back real early the next day to get the trailer and the rest of the stuff. I let Murphy in the pickup to enjoy the warm ride off the mountain.

**(Side Note.)** When I came up out of the Dry Fork that day with my last load on the Gator some hunter stopped by and asked if that dog happened to be ours. I said yes. Seems, early that morning he had found Murphy walking down the logging road headed north towards the town of Dayton. This would have been about 2 miles from where we were parked. He said she was obviously a stock dog and since he hadn't seen any cowboys around when he saw our parked pickup and trailer he assumed the dog belonged there. He had loaded her on his 4 wheeler and hauled her back and dropped her off there about an hour before I had shown back up. See there are lots of good people in this world!

I drove the Gator in real early the next morning still on the frost and was able to get everything out of camp including the trailer. I then headed to Lake Creek to use the Gator to haul the stuff out of that camp that had been left. It was a good thing because we had another 20 inches of snow about 4 days later and had we not gotten everything when we did, all the stuff would have probably been there until sometime in June.

The Cow Boss but my wife's second in command!