

The Perfect Hunting Trip

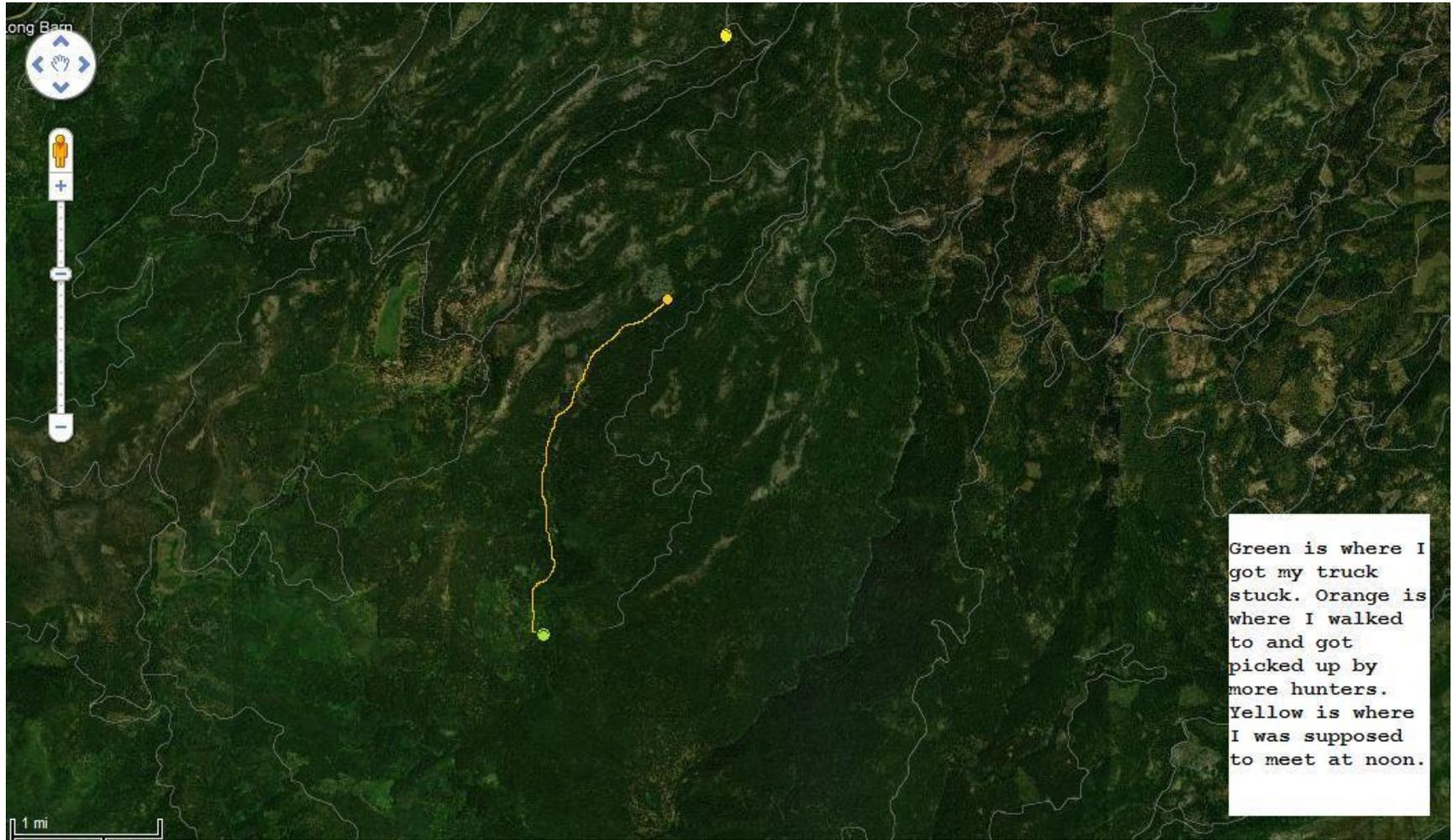
My brother-in-law and I drove to two different locations before the sun came up. We were about 15 miles from each other and were supposed to meet at a predetermined location by noon. By 10:15, I was in my 4x4 Tahoe and headed down a road I had never been on before but I knew it would take me back to where I needed to go. After about 10 minutes of driving, I was stuck in a muddy, rocky valley. After about two hours of trying to get out of that tight valley, even with snow chains, I decide to lock the truck and walk out to the closest busy road. After walking for three miles, three hunters (Dave, Jean, and Evan) in an old jeep picked me up and offered to help me get out of there.

When we got back to my Tahoe, I could not disarm the alarm since I shorted out the system with all the rain and creek water I kept getting in my truck as I got in and out to try to free myself from that location. Finally, after disconnecting the battery terminal and one lucky click of the button she was disarmed. I was able to start the Tahoe and we hooked it up to their winch. After about ten seconds on the winch, the winch popped off the jeep's bumper since the weld holding it was very weak. Fortunately, the men had a chain they used to tie the winch to the bumper and we were inching the Tahoe out of the steep valley. From that point, I left the snow chains on my truck until I followed the men to the closest gravel road, which would take me back to the main road.

By 5:45 PM, I had enough reception to call home to tell my family I was okay. This was about 45 minutes after they realized I was missing. They called off the search and I proceeded to drive down the mountain. Before I was out of the woods, I noticed that my truck was not gaining much speed as I traveled down the steep grade. I thought something must be wrong. About 15 minutes later, my brakes went out as I tried to stop at a one-light town. When the stoplight turned green, I coasted into the gas station and called a tow truck. Ironically, I was only towed less than a quarter mile to a local auto mechanic. I should have drove myself and saved \$75 for the 2-minute tow.

As I waited for a ride outside the auto shop, a sheriff pulled up, ran my plates, and approached me stating that I was the overdue hunter. I was surprised he knew I was not home on time and asked how he knew. He said it was in the computer when he ran my plates. He radioed in that I was okay. I told him my wife had already called to cancel the alert. Apparently, I was still in their database though. He then told me there was a buck up the road that was hit and that I should tag it. I told him I would but then he said I had already been through too much in one day and he didn't tell me where it was at. I told him I would have been fine out there in the woods and had always wanted to get stranded. He said it looked like I would have been fine since it looked like I was wearing a sleeping bag. I was wearing two wool pants and three wool sweaters.

The morals of the story are; always tell people where you are going and when you plan to be back, don't panic but think logically, always help a fellow hunter, make sure your vehicle is in good condition, and wool is amazingly warm even when soaking wet.



Green is where I got my truck stuck. Orange is where I walked to and got picked up by more hunters. Yellow is where I was supposed to meet at noon.