

 **BUILD IT YOUR WAY**
100% American Made

SHOP NOW
LIFETIME WARRANTY

AMMOLAND

SHOOTING SPORTS NEWS

[TANDEM KROSS]
Making Good Guns Great!



MENU

[Home](#) » [Conservation News](#)

Final Report: Was Bear Spray Effective in the Mark Uptain Grizzly Fatality?

Ammoland Inc. Posted on February 14, 2019 by Dean Weingarten

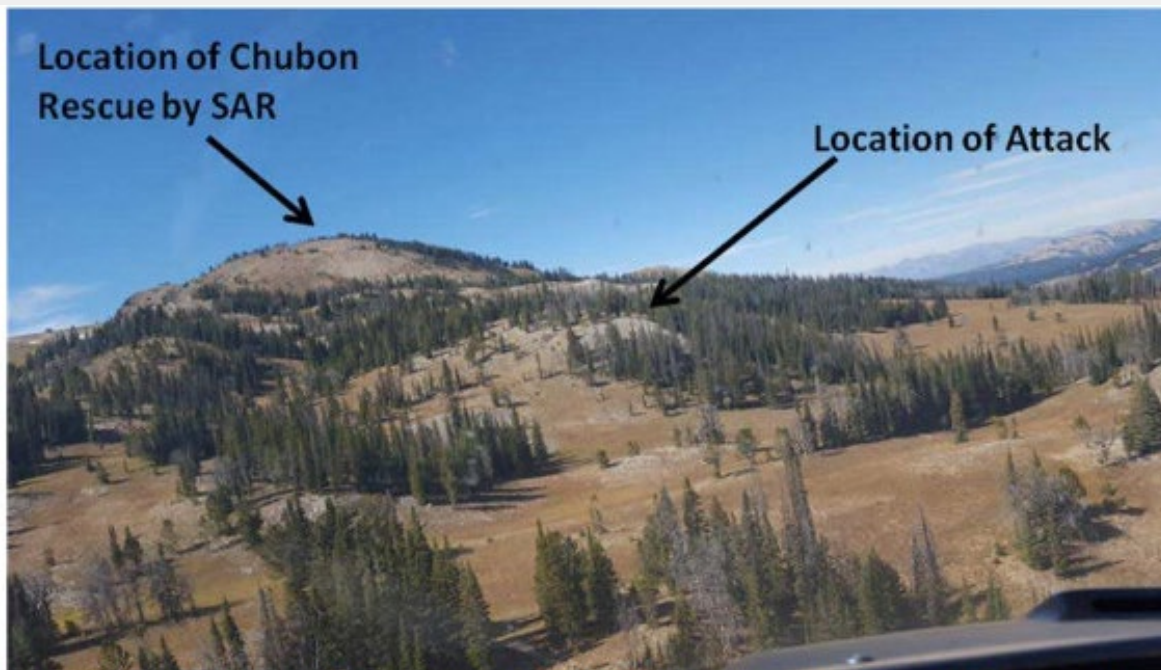


Figure 3. WGF D Aerial photograph from SAR helicopter of Uptain fatality location in the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) location of attack is 568056 East, 4859578 North, Zone 12T. View is looking southwest.

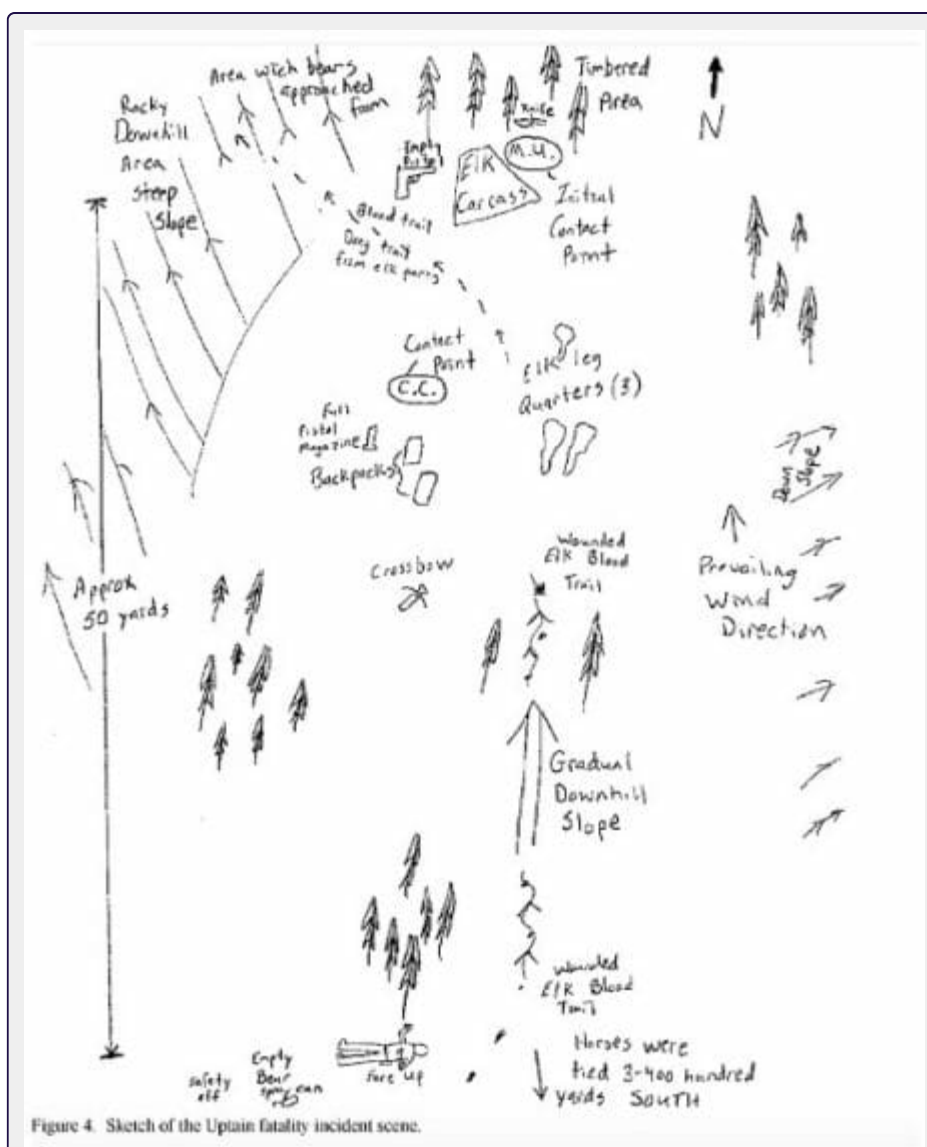
Final Report: Was Bear Spray Effective in the Mark Uptain Grizzly Fatality?

Wyoming -(Ammoland.com)- The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGF) has released a **final report on the grizzly bear attack** that killed hunting guide Mark Uptain and injured his client, Corey Chubon.

The **report confirms previous information** that the Glock pistol was found without a round in the chamber, and separated from its magazine. The magazine was fully loaded with 15 rounds of F C flat nosed full metal jacketed rounds. The pistol had not been fired.

At some time during the attack, bear spray was used by Mark Uptain. The bear spray can was emptied. The grizzly sow was reported to have a strong odor of bear spray about her head.

Below is a hand sketch of the relationship of various items found at the scene by the investigators:



sketch of the relationship of various items found at the scene by the investigators.

The weather was warm enough to compel Uptain to take off his shirt. Unfortunately, Mark Uptain also took off his holstered Glock 10mm.

The Glock pistol, in a shoulder holster, had been placed with the packs, about 5-10 yards from the elk carcass.

He placed it too far from him to be accessed before the sow reached him. By doing that, he negated one of the greatest advantages of pistols for defensive use. The advantage is having a gun on your person when you need it. Holstered pistols free up both hands to do other things.

To sum up the events: The guide, Mark Uptain, and his client, Corey Chubon, were processing the bull elk they had recovered. The elk carcass had not been molested by any predators. They were nearly finished when the bears attacked, from down hill and downwind.

The sow, about 250 lbs, attacked Uptain at the elk carcass. Corey Chubon ran to the packs and drew the pistol from the holster. At first, he did not fire for fear of hitting Uptain. Then the sow turned her attention to him.

Being unfamiliar with the Glock, he was unable to make it fire, because the pistol did not have a round chambered. While attempting to fire the pistol, he ejected the loaded magazine on the ground.

This has been known to happen when people unfamiliar with a pistol's controls are desperately attempting to make it fire in a life or death scenario. People try every control they can find, trying to make the pistol work.

When the bear started to maul Chubon, he attempted to throw the pistol to Mark Uptain. The bear then left Chubon and re-attacked Uptain. Chubon fled for help.

Chubon had bear spray, but it had been placed in one of the packs, making it inaccessible during the attack.

A rescue helicopter picked up Chubon about two and a half hours after the attack. The helicopter was being used on a fire, and had to be called back for the rescue. The report concluded that Mark Uptain had died about the time that Chubon called for rescue, two hours before rescuers reached Chubon.

The report states the use of bear spray likely halted the attack. Writers for other publications conclude this **shows bear spray was effective** in this incident.

Bear attack expert and author Dave Smith questions that assessment. From correspondence with Dave Smith:

2. The bear spray spin. Uptain did not have time to use bear spray before the bear initially attacked

and injured him. Is that a bear spray success, or a bear spray failure? The 2nd time the bear attacked, Uptain sprayed the bear but was killed. Is that a bear spray success or a bear spray failure?

The WyoFile article begins by stating, " Evidence suggests bear spray stopped a grizzly bear attack after it mortally wounded hunting guide Mark Uptain." According to the WGF report, "Evidence suggests that when Uptain deployed the bear spray, it stopped the aggression, giving him time to escape, however, this appears to be after the fatal injuries were inflicted."

It is hard to see this event as successful use of bear spray. Bear spray was used, but the user was killed. The bear stopped attacking at some point, and Mark Uptain, fatally wounded, was able to move about 50 yards from the elk carcass before he died. The empty bear spray canister was found near his body.

There are several incidents where bear spray initially deterred a bear, which later returned to continue the attack. There are numerous incidents where bears left mauled victims, without being sprayed, then returned later.

By all accounts, Mark Uptain was an outstanding man, hunter, and guide. He will be missed.

Many people have suggested that while dressing game in grizzly country, one person should stay alert and guard, while other member(s) of the party dress the game.

Dave Smith added this useful tip: The person on guard should be on the downwind side of the location. Bears almost always approach from downwind, as they did in this case. From Dave Smith:

"Given that it took Uptain and his client 2-3 hours to field dress the elk, it would have been wise for Uptain to have the hunter standing guard on red alert with bear spray in hand. Wind was broadcasting the scent of elk blood & guts; thus, the hunter should have been downwind from Uptain and the carcass. It's 100% predictable that the bears would approach from downwind. But the hunter was only 3 to 4 yards away from Uptain, unarmed. The hunter did not have Uptain's Glock in hand. The hunter did not know how to use Uptain's Glock. The hunter did not have bear spray in hand. Bottom line? Uptain and the hunter were not prepared for a worse case scenario. It's a bit surprising the bears charged the hunters, but it's no surprise the bears showed up. Does WGF offer hunters and/or guides any meaningful guidance on how to handle this field dressing an elk in grizzly country situation?"

This is a sad case. It appears to be an example of bear spray failure, rather than a bear spray success story.

If the 10mm Glock had been in the hands of someone who knew how to use it, **both men would probably** have survived.

It is likely only one bear would have been killed.

About Dean Weingarten:

Dean Weingarten has been a peace officer, a military officer, was on the University of Wisconsin Pistol Team for four years, and was first certified to teach firearms safety in 1973. He taught the Arizona concealed carry course for fifteen years until the goal of constitutional carry was attained. He has degrees in meteorology and mining engineering, and recently retired from the Department of Defense after a 30 year career in Army Research, Development, Testing, and Evaluation.



27 thoughts on “Final Report: Was Bear Spray Effective in the Mark Uptain Grizzly Fatality?”



Dave Smith says:

February 19, 2019 at 11:32 AM

You make a good point. Wildlife agencies should tell hunters not to sling their rifles while hunting in grizzly country. A 1983 U.S. Forest Service report on Safety in Bear Country: Protective Measures and Bullet Performance at Short Range said, “Because there is almost no possibility of a slung rifle being brought into action during a short-distance confrontation, rifles carried in bear country should not be permanently equipped with slings. The sling should be

mounted on detachable swivels, and should be removed when conditions exist for a possible confrontation.” Incredibly, an Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee video titled “Bear Spray Demonstration For Hunters” shows a hunter with his rifle slung over his shoulder using bear spray. The hunter needs two hands to remove bear spray from its holster, and tells you to hold the can with 2 hands when spraying. That’s not possible with the 5 other field carries for long guns, so the bear spray demo for hunters does not demonstrate how to use bear spray with 5 of 6 field carries for long guns. It’s a con job.

[Reply](#)



Janet says:

February 18, 2019 at 11:25 AM

I would add that there be a Guard standing and that the Guard have a loaded rifle with the safety on OFF to deal with any bear. Then a readily accessible pistol or revolver with a chambered round. Bears move FAST. This same issue can arise in fishing country. I know of a man who went hunting in Alberta and a Sow jumped him as he left the parking area. He was killed. His rifle was over his shoulder and no handgun was available because he was in Canada. One should never go into grizzly country unless ready to fire.

[Reply](#)



Carlos says:

February 16, 2019 at 5:01 PM

Layered defense is a must. First is evaluating the terrain that you will be doing a lot of work in. I probably would have moved that Elk carcass out in the open, as far away from the woodline as possible. If you have Bear Spray, you should be aware of the prevailing breeze in case you have to use it. The Guide should have taken the time to (a) Load his pistol; (b) Strap his holstered pistol back on; and (c) Brief his client on the proper use of both Bear Spray and the handgun.

This is an unfortunate failure due to complacency (on the Guide's part) and ignorance (on the client's part). Such a shame. Rest in Peace.

[Reply](#)



willy d says:

February 16, 2019 at 1:36 AM

There are different times to carry different guns or knives, I carry different when hunting then when in town or city, hunting is large caliber pistol, rifle, and large knife, town medium caliber revolver, above 38, plus a medium knife, and back home in the city, east coast, a semi-auto with at least 15 rounds with a back- up ankle unit plus extra mags, I do not want to be lunch or a victim, I have a wise I plan to live a long life, my own way without being lunch or a victim!!!!!!!!!!!!

[Reply](#)



Larry Brickey says:

February 15, 2019 at 10:59 PM

My bear spray is made of lead.

[Reply](#)



Scotty Gunn says:

February 15, 2019 at 7:06 PM

When I was young, we used to hike in bear country. Everyone carried a gun at all times-always. I even carried a take down model 12 shotgun broken down (bbl cut to 18 1/2") and ammo spread out in several packs. (Buck and slugs). Holsters were on belts that stayed on your person, if you shed the pack. Decent sized good quality knives were on the belts as well as a mag or two. Speed loaders for the revolver guys. At night the shotgun was assembled and loaded and kept at hand. Weight was critical, we lived out of the packs, but still we carried guns and ammo. Not one of us carried bear spray.

I am afraid these guys let their guard down. In bear country, one guts and butchers, and the others maintain watch.

[Reply](#)



Roy D. says:

February 15, 2019 at 3:27 PM

Attention Ammoland: Perhaps when there have been previous discussions on a subject, like this one, you could post the links to the other discussions for the benefit of those who have not seen them.

[Reply](#)



Mark K says:

February 15, 2019 at 2:44 PM

The client was probably a "greenhorn" who didn't know how to field dress and quarter an animal, leaving the guide to do all of the work. As has been said, unfamiliarity with a firearm at a critical time is a recipe for disaster, and this story is proof. . It's unfortunate that the guide was the only one who had a handgun and knew how to use it, but the old Boy Scout saying "Be Prepared" was not followed. Whenever I'm in bear country I carry a double action revolver with all cylinders full. There's no round "stove piped" when using a revolver, misfire? Pull the trigger again. Always folks, KISS! When in bear country.

[Reply](#)



Staccato says:

February 15, 2019 at 1:39 PM

Thanks for the report, well done.

Being in Wyoming I've read about everything I could find on this tragedy. A wonderful man and guide who left a wife and five children, and who made several fatal mistakes. To his credit he didn't want to go back the next day after the bow hunter made a poor shot late on the previous afternoon. We say that "Anything left out in Grizzly country belongs to the bears", but that's the job and he went back, followed the blood trail and found the elk which had finally bled out.

The operation was a success, however, the patient, an elk and two Grizzlies died. And the brave crossbow hunter fled his unskilled candy ass back to melt in the Florida sun... before they even located the guide's body.

Reply



alex says:

February 15, 2019 at 9:26 PM

the Florida hunter sounds like the kind of guy who read too many action stories. he made a bad shot late, didn't know anything about hunting, only what he probably read in a magazine. he didn't even know how to shoot a pistol, the asshole should have stayed in Florida and made sand castles.

Reply



TomC says:

February 15, 2019 at 1:27 PM

This wasn't a Bear Spray Success — but it also wasn't a Bear Spray Failure. This was a Human Failure. It was nothing but hunter/guide incompetence.

If either Chubon or Uptain had been properly on guard, it is almost 100% certain that no one would have been killed or even injured. The failure to have anyone properly on guard rests with Uptain as the experienced guide who certainly should have known better.

Reply



Rattlerjake says:

February 16, 2019 at 3:58 AM

EXACTLY! There is no excuse for incompetence! One of the first things they should have done was use one of the horses to drag the elk into the open area so they would have a much better 360 degree view. Second is NEVER be unarmed in bear country.

Reply



Jim Macklin says:

February 15, 2019 at 8:46 AM

The problem is modern living and the false "life lessons" learned from so many sources. Bears are of one mind. They only do one thing at a time. People have many advantages, unfortunately it isn't strength.

Bear spray, pepper spray, Tasers and weapons are seen and recognized by anyone over 10 years of age. But bears never recognize weapons.

If you insist on using bear spray best use bare spray so you don't get sun burned.

[Reply](#)

 **JPM** says:

February 15, 2019 at 8:44 AM

Bear spray is an animal rights, politically correct and deadly scam, as evidenced by Mark Uptain's regretful death (one of many over the years). The North American Grizzly bear and his northern cousins are the largest land predators on the face of the PLANET! If spray is so effective, why hasn't it been adopted and used by others in other places in the world with major land predators smaller than grizzly bears, like in Africa for lions and leopards and in India for tigers? Simply, because they have to deal with predators often and don't want to die. We live a politically correct country populated by "safe" individuals in urban areas away from contact with large predators who advocate methods that are ineffective to protect the animals more than the people who live in and/or spend time in dangerous places.

[Reply](#)



Larry Brickey says:

February 15, 2019 at 10:55 PM

And don't want you to have guns, period.

[Reply](#)

 **Hey Jude** says:

February 15, 2019 at 7:28 AM

Well unfortunately the guide made a HORRIBLE and very costly mistake. Folks if ever in a situation like that, for the love of God have your pistol for example in a holster, on your Body not in a bag and several feet away and other such stupidity. It sounds like novice hour at best good lord seriously.

[Reply](#)

 **TS the Deplorable** says:

February 15, 2019 at 7:19 AM

There is a huge lesson here for people who carry for all sorts of self defense. If you don't have the weapon on your person at the time of the attack, you may not have a weapon at all. That gun in your glovebox is likely worthless in a carjacking. That gun in your tackle box is likely worthless in a bear attack. That gun in your purse is likely worthless the moment you set it down on the car seat or the bench in the restaurant.

Carrying a pistol without a chambered round is just damn stupid. If your pistol isn't safe with a round chambered, you made a damn stupid choice of firearm. Self defense incidents are usually not telegraphed, and occur in mere seconds. In the rush to chamber a round you may not rack it fully and you may have a miss feed. You know that the other guy is going to have a round already chambered.

If you are going to rely only on bear spray, get the type with dye in it so they will know for sure what bear to shoot so they can retrieve your missing body parts from the bear's stomach. Your family will appreciate the ability to bury you with all of your parts.

Reply



Hey Jude says:

February 15, 2019 at 7:30 AM

TS: I agree with you 1000%

Reply



Ross says:

February 15, 2019 at 9:01 AM

Amen

Reply



Jerry S. says:

February 15, 2019 at 9:34 AM

Hit the nail on the proverbial head....nice job!!

Reply



Matt in Oklahoma says:

February 15, 2019 at 7:12 AM

A pack isn't a holster and a holster goes on the hip for both weapons. Laziness and complacency will get you killed in a lot of places, jobs and activities.

They can try and spin this anyway they want to try and show that the spray was effective but at the end of the day the final results speak for themselves.

Just like on a tac-team non lethal is always covered with lethal.

Reply



Mark K says:

February 15, 2019 at 2:32 PM

Matt, perhaps you could google shoulder holsters. They are quite popular.

Reply



Matt in Oklahoma says:

February 15, 2019 at 9:41 PM

Perhaps you should just take the point at face value and shut your sharpshooting piehole. Put that in your shoulder holster fanny pack ankle rig

Reply



Larry Brickey says:

February 15, 2019 at 10:58 PM

He wasn't attacking you or your position. He simply pointed to another possibility. And personal attacks really add zero to the conversation but that is easier than taking a breath, calming down, and thinking about what he said.

Reply



Sal Chichon says:

February 15, 2019 at 3:22 AM

A 10 mm pistol in the hands of somebody who knows what they are doing will always be better than a glorified can of pressurized seasoning.

Reply



ras says:

February 15, 2019 at 5:59 AM

The Glock would have changed this sad story if it was used properly.

Reply



Hubcap says:

February 15, 2019 at 6:52 PM

My father told me pepper spray just adds flavor. Don't wear bells either, they just call a bear to supper.

Reply

Leave a Comment

Comments (1)

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Comment

Name *

Email *

You may also like:

by shareaholic



Former Maryland Permit Review Board Member Physically Dragged from Hearing ~ VIDEO



Pistols or Handguns used to Defend Against Bear Attack: 95% Effective, 63 Cases



Judge Denies Fishing Expedition in State AG Anti 1st & 2nd Amendment case



Gun Safety Bill is Moving in Arizona





American Tactical Introduces Galeo Rifle



Columbus Sues Ohio for Protecting Second Amendment Rights



Swat Team Takes Children from Home Because of "Potential Liability" VIDEO



Firearms Registration Act Introduced in Pennsylvania

[Home Page](#) | [Recent Posts](#) | [Most Popular](#)

[Back to Top](#)

Copyright 2019 Ammoland.com Shooting Sports News! Site map | [Privacy Policy](#)