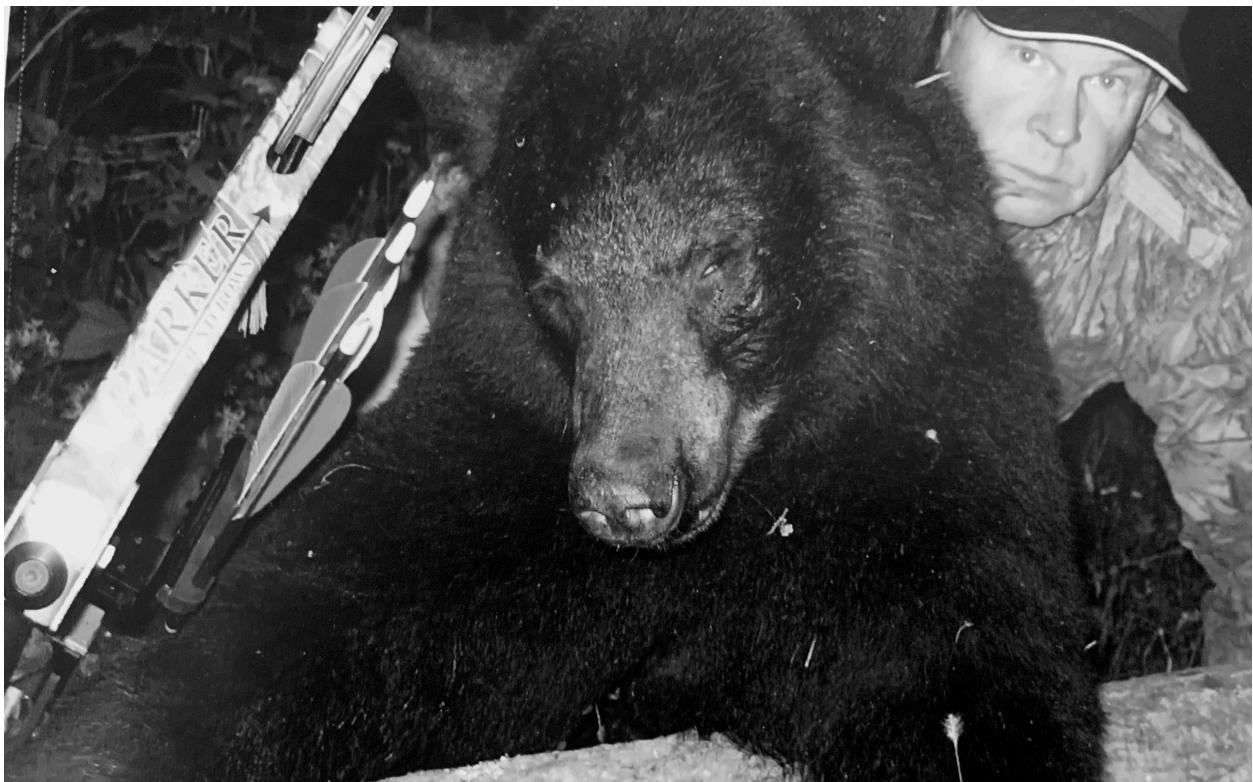


Chicog-Then and Now for November, 2025
JoAnn Malek

Chicog neighbor Steven Loiselle has written a second column for our enjoyment during this autumn hunting season:

When I began bow hunting you were allowed to harvest a bear with a big game license. Now you need a bear license. Though I spent a lot of time in northern Wisconsin woods I never ran across any bears. Eventually I understood the sport and the rules a little better. Hunters weren't just stumbling across bears, they were hunting over bait. It turned out these were not outlaws but pioneers in our sport.

During my college years the nearest tract of woods large enough to hold a decent bear population was the Chippewa County Forest. I did a little research on bear baiting and made the 48-mile round trip every day for four weeks. When opening day came around, I was set up and ready to hunt. The 272 pound bear came in to the bait just as I hoped he would, but because I was hunting with arrows I needed him to give me the ideal angle. This took about 3½ hours, but when he turned to leave I had my shot. We found him about 80 yards away. This was the start of an obsession, and since then I have harvested 11 black bears with my bow and arrows, most of them in Chicog township.



Interestingly enough, the first black bear I ever saw alive in the woods was at the bow range. When I came up to the shooting stakes on target 27 he was standing nearby. He saw me coming, walked to the end of the course and disappeared into the woods.

Several times I've been reluctant to leave my stand because there were bears between me and my vehicle. They eventually walk off and I leave with no issues.

When I climb into a tree, I usually tie my bow to a rope attached to my belt so I have both hands free to climb. Once I am settled with bow in hand, I throw the rope over a limb to get it out of my way. On one occasion I missed the limb so the rope hung down to the ground. Rather than pull it up and try again, I just let it hang, thinking it wouldn't be an issue. Of course, a bear came along and decided to play with the rope. I didn't want him to take it and maybe get tangled up in it. That was when I realized that I had a bigger problem: That rope was still tied to my belt!

On another occasion I was sitting on a hillside near an oak ridge, waiting for deer to come and feed on acorns. When I heard something walking in the dry leaves, I thought 'super buck' was coming, so I froze and hoped for a good shot at a big deer. Then I heard scratching sounds and the tree started to shake. When I peered over the edge of my stand, a bear was about halfway up to where I was sitting. Thankfully, when we made eye contact he went back down and walked away.

There was only one occasion when I was a little worried about my safety. I had set up near the edge of a field, hoping to catch a nice buck coming out to feed. Instead, two adult bears came from back in the woods, walked right up to where I sat and started wrestling. I would not call it fighting because there was no snarling or growling. After a few minutes, they climbed a tree about 20 yards from the one I was in and continued wrestling about 20 feet off the ground. I found this interesting, but not particularly scary. After a few minutes they came down that tree and walked closer to me. They played a little more on the ground, then climbed the tree right next to mine and resumed the wrestling match on a branch about ten feet from me. Now it was scary!

After a while they came back down on the ground and resumed being bears. They are cute when they aren't ten feet away. I waited for them to walk away and then I got down and beat it to my truck. I am sure it was the fastest exit I ever made from the woods in all the years I have hunted.

I will continue to bow hunt and bear hunt for as long as I am physically able, and I am sure the stories will continue to occur. Good hunting to all of you!

Thank you for reading Chicog-Then and Now
Town Website: www.townofchicog.com

IMPORTANT NOVEMBER DATES

Wednesday 11/12, 6pm, monthly Chicog meeting

Wednesdays 11/12&26, Namekagen Transit Service

Thursday 11/13, 10:30-12, Bibliodragon bookmobile, town hall

Saturday 11/22, 5-8pm, Hunters Feed, town hall

Wednesday 11/26, 10:30-12, Books&Bread, Beaverbrook