That’s team work

As a Spencer youth headed west to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, visions of giant bull elk vanishing into the underbrush filled his imagination. Joshua Svejda is afflicted with cancer and was referred to the United Special Sportsmen Alliance by a concerned Pittsville resident who hoped the young man’s wish for a hunt of a lifetime may come true. Thanks to Roger Prock, the financial support from the Denver, Colorado chapter of SCI and Dave Hahn of the Wood County Tavern League, Brigid O’Donoghue of USSA was able to coordinate the event which featured Gene Schoonveld a retired wildlife biologist from the Colorado Department of Natural Resources as the guide.

While Gene Schoonveld conducted his master’s degree study on native mule deer digestion efficiency in 1968-69, he was the first scientist to observe what is known today as Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Together with his assistant Dr. Terry Spraker, Gene has been in the CWD battle at the front lines researching and testing for CWD. An outspoken critic of wanton slaughter of deer as a means of preventing disease spread, Gene is now on the board of USSA. (See: www.childswish.com and click on USSA’s Board of Directors.)

It turns out, that Gene’s knowledge of elk behavior helped position young Joshua in the right place at the right time. This giant 6x6 point bull elk was dropped with one well placed shot by this very excited young man. “The live weight of bull elk in this age class is around 1,000 to 1,100 pounds. Average, maybe more”, said USSA Vice President Pete Normington. “This huge bull had to be hauled out of difficult terrain in pieces; strapped to backpacks on the guides and outfitters.” It appears that this Marawood Teamwork was well worth the effort!

If you know of a disabled or terminal child that would like to go on a FREE outdoor activity contact USSA at: (800)518-8019, biotec@tds.net, or visit them at www.childswish.com/