



# Visitors Enjoy Mills County Man Camp

## By Steven Bridges

This Spring I organized a trip to Mills County for the Dossey Family from San Francisco, California. I went to school with Doug at the University of Illinois over 20 years ago and we have stayed friends.

Doug and I wanted to give his two boys and his wife a taste of Mills County living. Doug especially wanted to have his two boys go through my "Man Camp."

Over the phone, I went over a checklist of activities that the boys might enjoy. I mentioned things like building a fire, fishing, driving off-road vehicles, feeding livestock, and shooting guns, etc.

Doug, however, pulled me up short when I mentioned that their trip was to happen during turkey hunting season. "I'm not sure about the boys and hunting," said Doug. "They have been raised as San Francisco pacifists. They think chicken comes from a store." We had a good laugh.

Well, Doug was certainly surprised by his sons' reactions to going hunting and I was delighted. As most of you know it is absolutely the highlight of my day to take kids out and teach them hunting techniques.

The following stories were written by each of Doug's kids which tell the story better than anyone could.

## Do I want to go Hunting?

### by Finn Dossey

Last night Steven Bridges asked me if I wanted to go hunting for turkeys in the morning, and within a second I said "yes." He asked me if I was sure because I'd have to wake up at 6 am, but I was already up the stairs wanting to get a good sleep. At 5:51 am my dad woke me up and I put on the warmest clothing I had brought. Then I hurried downstairs to find Steven in the garage standing in a pile of camo of all sizes (more than in the Walmart hunting section I think). As soon as he saw me, he dove into the pile pulling out



Pictured left to right are Bode, Doug and Finn Dossey with their big Mills County gobbler taken last spring on the XTC Ranch during "Man Camp".

insulated pants, thick jackets, boots and half ghillie suits. I put it all on just to find myself on the verge of melting in the heated garage. After everyone was in full camo, we got in the truck. Thirty minutes later we arrived at XTC Ranch.

After opening a series of gates, we got to the cabin by the lake. Steven parked the truck and grabbed his shotgun and some ammo. I zipped up my jacket and squeezed into the Polaris between Steven and my dad with the gun in my lap. We drove around a few fences and gates and finally parked in a field of bluegrass. Steven gave us camo face masks with eyeholes so that our faces didn't stand out against the bush. We walked three hundred meters listening to Steven's turkey calls, then we looked and saw a big tom disappear behind a bush. Steven said that the turkey saw us walking and got scared so it ran away. Steven found a dead tree and we crouched down and waited as still as possible while Steven called. Then we saw one come up the hill, then two, and finally three. We all sat and watched in awe, but then the first one saw us and walked off the hill and the second one followed. The third one was caught looking around and then my dad shot it through the fence. We all jumped up in joy and I ran over in my oversized camo trousers and

peered over the fence to see that the shot was perfect - right in the chest. Steven jumped the fence and handed the turkey over. It was twitching and flapping uncontrollably.

When it finally stopped twitching we took a lot of pictures. The funniest picture was when Steven was in the middle, my brother Bode and I on each side. We were opening its feathers when it suddenly started flapping and my brother jumped three feet into the air. Then we all laughed. We carried the surprisingly heavy turkey back to the rover where we put it in the back with Bode.

We drove the bumpy stretch back to the cabin and took off our camo

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