One of the biggest misconceptions regarding landowner tags seems to be the type of property that the landowner tag holder will be hunting on. Despite the name, most landowner tag holders actually fill their tags while hunting on public property. In fact, a landowner tag hunter in the field will be impossible to differentiate from a hunter with a tag drawn in the regular draw process. A landowner tag is simply a means of circumventing the draw system, and, in most states, you will hunt exactly as if you drew the tag in the regular draw. Landowner tags are typically season specific, and this will require the landowner tag hunter to hunt exclusively during the same seasons found within the regulations.

Every year hundreds of hunters enter the field with tags that were purchased and not drawn. It is no secret that the odds of obtaining a quality hunting tag through the public draw process is becoming increasingly more difficult. Purchasing a landowner tag may be the only option for many who are lacking the number of points necessary to draw a given tag. Although the availability of landowner tags may be low in some of the highly desirable units, there are some other good hunts that may have a greater availability and still provide a decent chance at a quality animal.

Colorado and New Mexico are by far the most popular western states that offer landowner tags and have the largest number of tags issued. Nevada and Utah also have transferable tags but on a much more limited basis. Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming also have landowner tag systems in place, but these systems are not market friendly, thus we cannot help our members in those states. Montana landowners may apply for preference points in the permit drawing or designate a family member or employee to be placed in the draw instead. Their permits are non-transferable. Idaho offers a landowner tag program, but the landowners cannot sell their permits for money. Oregon’s system requires the landowner to submit an application, and then the hunter applies with the landowner through the draw process. Hunters must hunt on that landowner’s property within the unit where they applied. Oregon antelope landowner tags are only available to landowners and their family members. Wyoming lets landowners transfer their tags to blood relatives only.
For obvious reasons we only offer Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah landowner tags for sale.

Colorado offers elk, deer, and antelope vouchers (landowner tags) across its many units and seasons. The hunter who purchases a landowner voucher in Colorado can hunt the parcel of private land that the landowner designated when applying for the voucher. As long as the voucher is not a “Private Land Only” voucher, the hunter is allowed to hunt the entire public land found within the unit. Most of the hunters who purchase these vouchers actually harvest game on the public land within the unit. Colorado vouchers are season specific, and they correspond with the actual hunt code found in the Colorado Wildlife and Parks Big Game Regulations. For example, an archery landowner voucher in a certain unit is good for only the archery season and is entirely different from a rifle voucher, which is only good for the rifle season specified on the voucher, so expect the price to reflect that.

New Mexico offers elk and antelope landowner tags. The landowner elk tags are designated as either “Ranch Only” or “Unit Wide,” but the antelope tags are all ranch specific. Huntin’ Fool only deals with landowner tags that are unit wide, so we do not sell any New Mexico antelope tags or any “Ranch Only” designated elk tags. The “Unit Wide” elk tags are just like they sound and are good for the entire game management unit. All public land, as well as any participating ranch located within the unit, can be hunted. There are two types of elk landowner tags in New Mexico – one is either sex archery, and the other is mature bull. The either sex archery tag is for archery equipment only, and the mature bull option allows a hunter to select from any of the muzzleloader and rifle options that are available in their specified unit. Once a hunter purchases a landowner elk tag in New Mexico they are given a specific authorization number and ranch identification number, along with a blank application to secure the actual elk license. The hunter must then select the season they want to hunt.

Utah also has a limited number of landowner tags available for purchase. Utah has two systems in which they issue landowner tags. One system is the CWMU program (Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit) where landowners are given tags only for their property for deer, elk, antelope, and moose. Landowners have liberal seasons and can transfer these tags as desired. In exchange for these tags, landowners must let a certain number of resident hunters, through the draw, hunt their land. In Utah’s regulations there is a list of CWMU operators with their respective phone numbers. Residents and non-residents are eligible to purchase hunts from CWMU operators, but only residents may draw a tag on a CWMU. The second landowner tag system in Utah is much like the other states’ landowner tag programs I have already described where the state issues tags to landowners, landowners can transfer them as they please, and the holders of these tags may hunt the entire unit during the entire season.

Nevada has a system that is unique and gives the hunter more privileges than if they drew the tag through the regular draw. Landowner deer tags allow the hunter to hunt all of the seasons offered within the unit until they harvest an animal. Landowner elk tags require the hunter to select one of the available seasons within the respective unit. Each unit in Nevada offers different seasons, so the total number of days is different depending on the unit you purchase a landowner tag in. The average price of a landowner tag in Nevada is higher than the average price of landowner tags in other states. This is due to the very limited number of tags offered, but if you consider the total number of hunting days provided for a landowner deer tag, the price is reasonable.

Once a hunter purchases a landowner tag, in any state, there is still another step before the hunter is ready to go hunting. The respective state will require the necessary licenses and stamps to be purchased. This can be done through the mail or through a department office for the wildlife agency in that state. In Colorado you can purchase your licenses at any license vendor, and the process is very simple. Depending on the state, season, and species
you buy a landowner tag for, the state fees can be an additional $100-$850. Be aware of this when planning to purchase a landowner tag.

Once tags become available to the landowners, the higher demand tags go early and they rarely sit around in surplus if they are priced right. Many of the high demand units and seasons in Colorado only issue two to four landowner vouchers, so if the opportunity is there to purchase, the experienced buyers take advantage of it quickly.

On the other end of the spectrum we often see the buyers who prefer to wait as long as possible in hopes of getting a better deal on a last minute tag. This can be an effective way to save some money, but it can also prove to be risky and can cause the extreme bargain buyer to miss out on an opportunity if they wait too long. Landowners are often busy right before the hunt and may not be available to negotiate a lower offer.

During previous years we accepted deposits for “reservations” on landowner tag purchases. For the upcoming 2014 landowner tag season, we will not be taking deposits. Instead we will list tags on our website as they come available, and they will be sold on a first come-first served basis. Our new website has many great improvements, and our landowner tag area is one of them. After December 16, 2013 we encourage all members interested in purchasing a landowner tag to register for automatic updates related to any new landowner tag activity. When you register under our landowner tag webpage, you will have the opportunity to enter your information. At that same time you can enter your top three choices for the landowner tag you desire. This will give us an example of demand so we can know what tags to concentrate on getting. You will also be able to input your cell phone number and email address. Every time we receive a new tag and it is added to our website, we will automatically send a text message and email to those who registered. These messages will inform the member that new tag(s) have been received. This will give you an edge to find those tags as they come available. We will cover this process in greater detail in our December issue of Huntin' Fool under the Landowner Tag Alert column.

Landowner tags are a great way to get a tag without affecting your hard earned bonus or preference points. If you are interested in trying a new unit, they are the perfect fit. Our new registration option will begin on December 16, 2013. Make sure to register on the new website to receive our updates on tag availability!