



Ashley Sawyer of Robert Lee got a nice cull buck at Hollis Farris' Wildcat Mountain Ranch not long after the 2010 gun season began. She was guided by her dad, Tom Sawyer.

**It's going to happen eventually:  
The Nightmare Guide**

By Jim Shepherd  
We all know how much a professional guide contributes to a fishing trip. The knowledge of the fishery, ability to run efficiently

between hot spots and to put anglers on fish make guides well worth the money.

So what happens when your guide turns out to be a professional jerk? It's a lesson that you will eventually learn through bitter experience if you don't do some serious checking before showing up

at the docks fired up and ready to fish.

When you're fishing with a lodge, the guides will all be qualified and about equally equipped. There will still be quiet guides, talkative guides, helpful guides and guys who simply drive the boat and put you on fish. If you have a preference, tell the lodge beforehand.

They're going to work to get you with the right personality type -before you hit the water.

Recently, I re-learned that lesson - the hard way.

Here are some hints that should have told my group to either reconsider our assigned guide or cut our trip short:

When we introduced ourselves, he grunted, but didn't tell us his name;

Guide or client? If you can't tell, you have the wrong guide.

At the first fishing spot, he took the front seat and used the trolling motor to turn everyone in the fishing party (except himself) downwind and away from the hot bite;

He yelled at us to get the net- to land his catch. He

never touched the net again until stowing the gear to head back. The anglers (his customers) handled the net the rest of the trip;

When one angler tangled a line, our guide watched - disgustedly-for twenty minutes without offering to help. Instead, he does offer the observation that "everyone knows you don't make that kind of cast in a stiff breeze".

When asked about his choice of bait for the morning, his response was "it was the cheapest they had at the dock this morning". He then complained we were "wasting bait" with the size of the pieces we were putting on your hook.

When he decided to move locations, the only warning we got was his pushing by on the way to the controls.

He asked if everyone brought water - about an hour into the trip-as he reached under his seat and pulled out a bottle -for himself. Fortunately, everyone did bring a bottle of water, but only as a backup position.

When I landed a fish, he asked if I wanted to keep it. Then he tossed it back before

I had time to answer. Turned out he doesn't consider the fish you'd told him you wanted to catch to be "real fishing".

Back at the dock - finally- he tossed the group's catch into a basket and started doing something else. When asked when he'd be done filleting them (part of the deal), he didn't answer. Instead, he grabbed a fish, slammed it onto the cleaning table and started cutting. When he finished, he pointed the pile of fillets and asked "happy now?"

Every one of these things happened -on a single half-day fishing trip.

And it wasn't with a group of tourists with limited experience. It was a group of writers, primarily fishing specialists, visiting an area the local tourism officials were hoping to get written up in the various publications represented on the trip.

Fortunately, our guide was the exception and not the rule. Everyone else was horrified at the treatment we received.

Other writers were skeptical about our laughingly recounting our misadventure - until one remembered he'd heard a guide in the marina coffee

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