Youth hunter Robbie Ivey was the first hunter to harvest a deer from the newly built Wildlife Unlimited of Iron County's handicapped/disabled hunter trailer. (Dave Painter photo)

IRON COUNTY—Work was completed on the Wildlife Unlimited of Iron County's handicapped/disabled hunter trailer just in time for the Michigan Youth Hunt weekend, Sept. 21-22.

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Youth hunter Robbie Ivey of Iron River was the first to take advantage of the specialized equipment outfitted in the WU trailer.

Robbie, who was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy in 2004, enjoys hunting and has had a number of opportunities to participate in special hunting programs.

Harvesting a buck during this year's youth hunt, he completed a Michigan Slam – bear, turkey and deer all in one year.

In the past, equipment had been borrowed from neighboring sportsmen's groups for Robbie to use.

The newly constructed trailer by WU offers disabled users, like Robbie, more opportunities. Robbie was able to utilize the WU trailer on both Friday and Saturday of the youth hunt weekend.

Because the larger size of the trailer, 6 by 12 feet, he could share the experience with his hunting mentor, Dave Painter of Crystal Falls; his step-dad, Brad Kaiser; step-brother Cory; Painter's son, Zach; and another young hunter, Haley Nichols.

The trailer was set up on private property with a WU food plot in south Iron County.

The shooting device in the trailer-blind was designed by Be Adaptive Equipment out of Indiana.

Robbie made his 120-130 yard shot using the mouth-tube, which triggered the 30.06 scoped rifle provided by WU. When it came time to field-dress the deer, Robbie wheeled from the trailer and could watch the progress.

He then was able to haul the deer with his newly acquired off-road wheelchair, compliments of Wheelin' Sportsmen of Escanaba.

"Even though the new WU trailer is top-of-the-line," said Painter, "Robbie has the same challenges of other hunters plus some. He had sleet in his face on the way to the trailer, sun in his eyes while setting up his shot. It takes skill. It was cold, but he never complains."

Wildlife Unlimited of Iron County constructed the handicapped/disabled hunter trailer through fundraising and donations.

The committee of WU members consisted of Scott Westphal, Floyd Dropps, Bob Gallup and Dave Grondin.

The trailer will be available for use for many sporting season by other area handicapped or disabled hunters.