

POLITICAL ASSAULT ON WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT: IS THERE A DEFENSE?

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Who has you targeted? Sportsmen and wildlife managers know their opposition: Defenders of Wildlife, The Humane Society of the U.S., Friends of Animals, Fund for Animals, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Greenpeace, The Animal Protection Institute, and hundreds more anti-sportsmen organizations. You have felt their wrath as they steamrolled an emotional public relations campaign to build a constituency of believers in their causes.

A vast body of supporters are opposed to the taking of wildlife with a gun, trap, fish hook, bow and arrow, and are equally opposed to wildlife management. "Let the wildlife alone" is the fanatical demand. The appeal is for the so-called rights of animals to breed and roam as freely as they did when this was primitive habitat, coast to coast. Now the wildlife shares the habitat with 227 million human beings.

This appeal has been so effectivety directed that the adversary organizations now collect an estimated 30 million dollars per year in contributions to be used largely against the interests of sportsmen. This lucrative public relations campaign keeps their treasuries filled. They can now afford more expensive and potentially far more damaging efforts in legal and political action. Their unifying principle is an appeal for animal rights, a phrase that *sounds* reasonable enough until you examine its implications.

When the California legislature passed an Animal Rights resolution in 1979, *some* sportsmen were inclined to say—it doesn't mean a thing because it has no force in law. The Wildlife Legislative Fund took a different view. We said, "From now on wildlife decisions will be measured against it. If a judge is looking for support in law, for an interpretation limiting the rights of hunters, he will have found it in this legislative resolution."

Sido, a California dog, was ordered put to sleep by its owner, in her will. She feared Sido would be lonely after her death. The dog was taken to court, with a human proxy, the director of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The plea: Sido had a right to life.

The judge said he wanted to "go on record" in granting Sido the right to life even though Governor Brown already had signed a law passed by the California legislature to save the dog. The attorney for the SPCA "said the ruling could have legal implications in the area of animal rights in California".

While we agreed with everyone else that Sido did not need to be killed, we find the ready resort to "animal rights" as a legal justification for whatever it is a court wants to do alarming and unpredictable in its ultimate effects.

Use of the animal rights concept has become the grand strategy of the anti-sportsmen organizations. It is effective because it is picked up unthinkingly by national print and television news. The animal rights message is thus spread from coast to coast. The anti organizations support their strategy with political action in the state legislatures, in the U.S. Congress, in voter campaigns, in international treaty negotiations concerning wildlife and, in legal action in the state and federal courts.

The sportsmen of America recognize the need for a strong counter-attack. They are now angered to the point of rallying to their own defense, and to the support of defending organizations, The Wildlife Conservation Fund of America, and its political arm, The Wildlife Legislative Fund of America. We are organizations of professionals in political action, legal action, public relations, research, education and information. Our purpose

is: to protect the heritage of the American sportsman to hunt, to fish and to trap, and to protect scientific wildlife management practices.

We could go clear back to 1775 for a battle cry. The words of Captain Parker of the Minute Men are chiseled into the rock that stands today on Lexington Green:

“Stand your ground
Don’t fire unless fired upon
But if they mean to have a war
Let it begin here.”

If sportsmen are to defend themselves, it is important that they recognize the significance of the attack upon their rights. Rights, as applied to man, are defined in the Bill of Rights. The self-styled “animal welfare” organizations use “animal rights” as their battle cry. If we make “animal rights” a legal principle, how does one distinguish this legal principle of “rights” from rights as in the Bill of Rights?

And how do you EAT something that *has* such rights? The answer is, you don’t, and this is the significance of the arguments.

Down the road, it means that animals are not to be used for food. Or fur. Or hunting. Or fishing. This is the spearhead of the movement that would revolutionize man’s relation to animals. A few direct quotes from their literature should make the ANTI position clear. The Humane Society of the U.S., in referring to its educational work in the public schools has said: “The ultimate goal is to develop a generation of adults who will no longer wish to kill any living creature” and, further, that “the HSUS is unalterably opposed to the killing of any creature.”

The HSUS has created a special division for the Study of Animal problems. It is headed by Michael W. Fox who has an impressive string of initials denoting academic credentials after his name. He sent out a questionnaire to animal scientists and to veterinarians asking for their opinions on stress and other problems affecting domestic animals raised by modern methods.

And if you think “pursuit of happiness” for domestic animals is not on their minds, how about questions concerning the effect of social isolation of bulls? Some may discount Michael Fox as a kooky dreamer, but don’t forget those academic credentials; they give his statements authority. The respected magazine, the Smithsonian, regards Fox as an authority in the field of animal husbandry and publicizes his opinions in a 14 page lead article.

David S. Favre, Detroit College of Law professor, has written an article for Environmental Law entitled “Animal Rights: the Ever-Widening Circle”. It features several startling ideas: “All animals have a right to a natural life. No state. . . may make any law. . . to deprive wildlife of life, liberty or habitat without due process of law”. In his discussions of a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution, he mentioned that, of course, *all sport hunting would be prohibited*, and animals would have a right to go to court, with human guardians—that’s the object of the concerted drive for animal rights. Legal rights to lower animals, wild or domestic; an object designed to take sportsmen out of the field, and wildlife managers out of business. This aspect of the animal rights issue has long-range implications.

A suit brought by the ANTI’S had more immediate consequences. The Committee for Humane Legislation brought suit against the U.S. Department of the Interior to cut off funds to wildlife agencies. These funds are excise taxes paid by sportsmen on arms and ammunition and are earmarked by federal law for allocation to the state agencies.

Ultimately, all state projects were continued but only after months of effort and hundreds of thousands of dollars of agency funds were wasted in preparing environmental impact assessments. The CHL brags about the delaying effects of the suit, in newsletters to

contributors. They regard the suit as a beachhead for animal rights. ^ CHL spokesman said, "We did it for the animals themselves."

We surveyed all 50 state wildlife agencies because this suit provided an illustration of the thinness of the financial base in some agencies. This survey, which reveals the sources of funds, has been released. For instance, in Colorado, Oregon and most recently, in Minnesota and Kentucky, state income tax refunds are a source of wildlife funds. A taxpayer who is owed a refund can check on a line of the tax return that instructs the state treasurer to allocate part of the refund to wildlife purposes.

In Ohio, the Wildlife Legislative Fund filed suit against the state treasurer to insure that the interest earned on state hunting and fishing license fees be credited to wildlife purposes rather than to the general fund, as had been the practice for many years. The court decided in our favor. Interest income, in Ohio, is over a million dollars a year.

We defend the rights of sportsmen and the practices of wildlife agencies whenever and wherever they are under attack. Almost every state is under attack so the counter-attack has to be national. The successes we have had, and hope to have, are dependent on the professional skills that enable our staff to know when to *do* something, a little or a lot, and when to do nothing.

We monitor the state legislatures. Thirty-two states had legislative and voter campaigns designed to interfere with sportsman's rights during one recent season. Our questions, on legislative issues, are always:

Is the bill going anywhere

When's the vote?

What is the trend of the vote: who's for it, who's against it?

A typical bill was one to prohibit hunting on a state's public lands. Two phone calls to the right people solved the problem. Two of the legislators who favored the bill represented city districts. They were indifferent to the rights of hunters but they were strongly pro-labor. Labor unions have realized that there is a connection between jobs and sportsmen's activities. It took only the two phone calls to the right people from the right people to get the necessary support.

In other states we have needed to do a lot more. Getting anti-trapping bills stopped in New Jersey, in Georgia, in Connecticut required intense work: our people on the scene behind the scene. We have no vote in New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, but thousands of sportsmen do have votes in those states. The successes are theirs. Wherever we have worked, we have found sportsmen eager to work. It is our job to coordinate their efforts, to help them raise money, and to provide the tools they need to get the job done.

Connecticut provides a good example of how we work. Anti-trapping bills were introduced in the legislature. A group of trappers asked us for help. We found that, though the ANTI organizations had been very active in the newspapers and on TV, the hunters, farmers and labor union men likely to be adversely affected by a trapping ban seemed indifferent.

It is accepted that the strategy of the anti-hunters has been to knock off trapping first because they believed it to be more vulnerable. It is a fact that trapping is a necessary control for over-abundant wild animals that can become farm pests. And jobs are affected by trapping. There are over 200,000 fur processing jobs on the East Coast.

We assigned a member of our staff to work in Connecticut. We hired an experienced, full-time lobbyist. We contacted the farm organizations, and the AFL-CIO. Within days there were letters from the Farm Bureau and the AFL-CIO on each legislator's desk telling him why these organizations opposed the bills. We directed a phone campaign to key

legislators, and we printed a comprehensive brochure which hunting organizations mailed out to their members.

The point is, we are not just advisors. Giving advice is easy. It takes an hour, or half a day. Coordinating the efforts of sportsmen so they can do a professional and effective job is hard work and requires an investment of our staff time and funds. The critical difference between success and failure can be our decision to spend the necessary effort and money to work on a problem. In Connecticut, as in all other states where we worked during the year, the legislative measure was defeated.

An activity in which sportsmen and wildlife managers have less expertise is the ballot issue. Here, instead of addressing a legislative committee that may be composed of a dozen people, the number of people who must be convinced runs into the millions. It becomes a statewide advertising campaign using newspaper, TV, radio, direct mail and phone banks to educate the voters.

The victorious campaign that established our track record was the Ohio voter campaign of 1977 to outlaw trapping which was won by our side though the early odds were very much against us. Anti-organizations put over a million dollars into this campaign. We developed Ohioans for Wildlife Conservation to oppose passage of the trapping amendment. This grassroots organization of sportsmen, farmers, labor union men, public health officials and wildlife agency professionals collected most of the funds needed for a massive advertising campaign. They gave talks, conducted raffles, passed out brochures, installed displays and got out the vote.

More recently, sportsmen's organizations in three states asked us to advise them concerning efforts being made to get anti-hunting and anti-trapping measures on the 1980 ballot. We analyzed the problems faced by the petition-passers in Washington. Our advice—wait and monitor the activity. It was our estimate that the measure was not likely to get on the ballot in 1980. In fact it did not.

In Oregon and South Dakota we accurately forecast that the measures would go to the voters. South Dakota had already qualified. We advised both to develop aggressive counter campaigns. In both Oregon and South Dakota we helped set up the campaign committees. We made frequent trips to Oregon and South Dakota to work with the campaign committees. We provided each committee with "seed money"; a completely detailed plan on how to proceed in building a grassroots organization; and in raising money for an advertising campaign and public opinion surveys.

An example of the detail is a timing calendar that runs 14 pages of typescript. Election day is a fixed date and certain actions have to be taken every week of these months-long campaigns. Public opinion polls take time. They must be done by professionals asking the right questions, and analyzing the depth of conviction voters have about an issue. The preparation of an effective advertising campaign takes time. And you have to start a long way out to accumulate the advertising money, through letters, raffles, and whatever else it takes to get up the money.

The critical difference between success and failure, between an early voter attitude of outright opposition to the sportsmen's positions, and our November victory at the ballot box can be attributed to WLFA help, amounting to about one-half the total cost of these campaigns. Contributions were in the form of cash, of staff help by legal experts, fund-raising experts and advertising professionals.

South Dakota's \$225,000 campaign for dove-hunting succeeded. So did Oregon's \$400,000 campaign to defeat a ban on trapping. A defense effort such as ballot campaigns or the work with legislators, or in the courts, requires an exceptionally able legal services division. Ours has acquired a considerable reputation in the three areas important to defense effort: Legislative research and analysis of a bill or an initiative; Litigation; and

Legal interpretation and impact analysis.

For example, we were asked by several sportsmen's organizations to look into a proposed amendment to the migratory bird treaty with Canada. We did, and discovered significant flaws which no one else had caught, which would adversely affect American sportsmen and jeopardize waterfowl populations. Along with other national wildlife organizations, we then began to press actively for renegotiation of the amendment.

We have established a Washington office headed by an experienced wildlife lawyer. We aim to become fully informed and involved in every action concerning wildlife—in the federal court cases stimulated by anti organizations, in the frequent Congressional bills, and in the workings of federal administrative agencies.

It is our goal to build a directory of lawyers who have qualifications in the wildlife legal field. For our legal work, we do not maintain a staff of lawyers. This would be contrary to our goal of keeping our professional staff small and flexible. And it is better, as a public relations requirement, to use local counsel.

We also are building an on-call bank of wildlife professionals who can testify, or talk and write, with authority about wildlife. We have access to a wide circle of professional experts with impressive academic credentials and with field experience. They are connected with the wildlife agencies, the public health departments, the veterinary and agricultural institutions and organizations. Their evidence, and testimony, can have enormous value because it is based on facts, not intuition. We have set aside a budget to cover expenses.

The A-B-C's of wildlife conservation by proper management and control have been known, in the past, to very few except the members of sportsmen's organizations, wildlife professionals and some farmers. The educational effort to get our side of the story told has had to start from scratch in each ballot campaign, legislative issue or court case. The general public, the legislators, judges, news media haven't known the benefits. They've been getting only our opponents' views on wildlife conservation.

There is a readymade network of people—the sportsmen organizations and their millions of members—ready to be mobilized into educational action. They need authoritative, professionally produced materials to do it with. We will develop program material, built around a film. It can be used for programs with students, service clubs, scouts, garden clubs. We will develop dramatic display posters that can be built into imposing exhibits with instructions we will provide. The exhibits can be used at county fairs, community festivals, sporting goods shows, in shopping malls. We will develop brochures to be passed out at community programs, fairs and other events.

We are now raising the one million dollars that this program will cost. It should get into production soon. The effect of having scores, even hundreds of these programs working nationally can be dramatic; far more effective, sustained and practical, for instance, than an hour of primetime TV (even supposing such a TV program were possible). Our medium is people. This educational program is people to people on a massive scale.

Our development program, fund-raising to expand our work, has been greatly accelerated by a grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation of Pittsburgh. This grant for \$450,000 is totally earmarked for development use.

An evergrowing number of American sportsmen understand the threat of the opposing forces, and know that a powerful defense requires professionals. They cost real dollars: legal experts, political experts and public relations experts. Sportsmen contribute to our two non-profit corporations to protect our common heritage. Because they support our work, we do not need to charge one cent for our services.

The Wildlife Legislative Fund of America handles the political campaign and lobby work. Contributions to it are not tax deductible. The Wildlife Conservation Fund of

America handles information and education activities, most of the research and legal services. Contributions to the WCFA are tax deductible. Both organizations have the same staff and board of directors.

The scope of knowledge represented on our board of directors and trustees is wide in terms of geographical breadth, wildlife knowledge and business management. All are sportsmen, and dedicated to wildlife conservation, and very important people in their career fields of endeavor.

Three are wildlife management professionals. G. Ray Arnett of Stockton, California is our chairman and a past director of the California Department of Fish and Game. He also is a past president of the National Wildlife Federation and currently is a director of the NRA. He is a petroleum geologist and cattleman. Edward L. Kozicky, East Alton, Illinois, is a former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service official. Dr. Kozicky is director of conservation, Olin's Winchester group. Dale L. Haney, Lititz, Pennsylvania, was formerly chief of Ohio's Division of Wildlife, and now President of Victor Division, Woodstream Corporation.

Lee J. Howley, Cleveland, Ohio, is a lawyer, and like his fellow member, Herman Taylor, Jr. of Nachitoches, Louisiana, a past national President of Ducks Unlimited. Joseph W. Hudson of Spartanburg, South Carolina, is past chairman of the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Commission.

Four business leaders with long experience in wildlife conservation are: Toddie L. Wynne, Jr. an oilman of Dallas, Texas; David B. Meltzer, Chicago, Illinois is chairman of Evans, Inc., the world's largest furrier; Daniel M. Galbreath, Columbus, Ohio, our Treasurer, is a real estate developer and President of the Pittsburgh Pirates; Vince Shiel, Dayton, Ohio, is a prominent sporting goods dealer.

Mrs. Gilbert W. Humphrey of Miccosukee, Florida and Cleveland, Ohio is a distinguished sportswoman and civic leader. She is president of the National Committee of New York's Metropolitan Opera. Abe Feinglass, Chicago, Illinois, is an international vice president, AFL-CIO. Joseph J. Foss of Scottsdale, Arizona and Thomas E. Bass of Washington, D.C. are political professionals. Mr. Foss, one of America's most renowned sportsmen was formerly governor of South Dakota. Mr. Bass is an executive with Colt Industries.

James H. Glass, President and Chief Executive Officer of our two non-profit organizations, was a Rockwell International executive. James W. Goodrich, Secretary and Senior Vice President is a public relations and political expert. James R. Hanson is a lawyer with long experience in the legal aspects of wildlife conservation and sportsmen's rights. He is our general counsel.

The need for our twin organizations is obvious. We are involved in a defensive war, and our goal is to win for the sportsmen and the wildlife management agencies of America.