

going to remove any "NO HUNTING" signs, or keep more from being erected, or improve the hunter's image across the nation. The only one who can improve the hunter's image is the hunter himself."

Dr. Shaw also stated:

"It appears, however, that anti-hunter sentiment may be posing a serious threat to the sport. Hunter disregard for ethics and for the rights of property is significantly damaging when carried on to any degree. If nothing else, such misbehavior, if continued, will cause the closure of more and more potential hunting land in private ownership and may bring increasing demands that public lands be closed. The sport of hunting cannot survive without land upon which to hunt.

And finally his conclusion in this area of the study:

"According to this study, the major threat to sport hunting is hunter misbehavior. Wildlife management agencies and wildlife-oriented media should concentrate on making the hunter aware of this threat. It should be made clear to the hunting public that if self-policing is not practiced, the consequences can be an increasingly rapid decline in public acceptance of the sport accompanied by more and more demands that hunting be eliminated from the American Scene."

I think that it is quite evident that we as Conservationists have our work cut out for us if hunting, as we know it, is to survive. Unless we take positive steps to counter the negative attitudes being produced by the hunter through his misdeeds and the closing of young minds through the classrooms to the positive aspects of hunting as a wholesome sport and the legitimate peaceful use of firearms for recreational purposes.....Hoyt, Harvington and Avery might very well see their dreams come to pass ...."The abolishment of all hunting.....through the ballot box.....within the next 15 to 20 years."

#### THESE ARE THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

Though approaches vary from one state or province to another in accordance with needs, finances, program priorities, etc.....Hunter Safety Programs throughout the United States and Canada *are taking positive action.....One thing that all hunter safety programs have in common is their positive action toward Hunter ethics and the training of youth.....*

### HUNTING ETHICS — A CHALLENGE TO THE ANTI-HUNTING MOVEMENT

by

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The hunter is not as free today to act without ethical restraint as he might have been 100 years ago. He is accountable to his sport, to the wildlife that sustains his hunting, and to the non-hunting public. This sense of accountability must be drilled into hunters if the sport is to survive. I sometimes think that whatever the future holds for the hunter, he deserves. He's probably going to get what's coming to him; whether that is good or bad depends largely on him.

In its simplest terms, the sport of hunting must operate on two principles: (1) that the act of hunting does not jeopardize the existence of any wildlife species, and (2) that the act of hunting shames neither hunter nor the animals that he hunts. Professional game managers have been preoccupied with the first principle, and have tended to neglect the

second. Yet, if either of these principles is violated, the act of hunting is unsupportable. So what can we do to strengthen these principles in the future?

Biological game management, based on good research and good enforcement of such management, is the beginning. This is basic, as is a solid information-education effort. Then comes the big problem of conducting good public programs.

The best answer that I can see is training, and certification of all new hunters. Actual safety training is only part of this, and perhaps a minor part. Equally as important is education in the principles of game and fish management, and in the fundamentals of ethical hunting. If there's a grassroots effort that holds more promise than this one, I surely don't know what it would be. It is important to recognize that it is not so much "hunting per se" which is on trial as it is the "conduct of the individual hunter" which is at the heart of the issue.

The weak point, of course, is the availability of qualified instructors. Such men not only must be hunters who know guns and shooting, but they also must be able to convey the essence of wildlife conservation and hunting ethics — and make it stick. It's a very tough job to find and recruit such men, and furnish them with good materials; but it must be done.

To make things even tougher, there may be a critical time element.

A lot of us didn't begin hunting with a ready-made set of ethical guidelines. I certainly didn't. Anything that I know about ethical field behavior, and ethical attitudes toward wildlife, has taken me 35 years to learn. Now we just can't leave it to chance, and let our hunters "jes grow," like Topsy. We've got to give the young hunter a running start — a working knowledge of gun safety and conservation. And above all, we must instill in him a bitter intolerance of slob hunting. The militant anti-hunters won't give us much time to do this — they want the sport of hunting (and our state fish and game departments) abolished now.

"Ethics" is a fancy word which many people associate only with medicine or law or some philosophic essay by a long-dead Greek. The fact is, ethics are principles, or disciplines, which everyone uses every day. Let us look behind the word for a moment.

"Ethics" is defined as the discipline dealing with what is good and bad, right or wrong, or with moral duty or obligation. So, it means our own set of rules for our own conduct. It is not at all strange, then, that sportsman-like conduct is said to involve fair, honest rivalry, courteous relations, and graceful acceptance of results. To go just one step further, we could say that the ethical hunter is a sportsman and the sportsman who hunts is an ethical hunter, or he does not deserve the title "Hunter." It is probably fair to say that there are no sportsmen except practicing sportsmen. The sportsman shows his true colors in what he does, not just in what he says. Because he respects wildlife, his hunt is fair, honest rivalry with the game he seeks. His attitude is graceful acceptance of the result, even if it be defeat. This is the sportsman — a man who can respect himself.

Only ten years ago the hunter would have thought it unbelievable that he and his sport would soon be under fire — by anyone — especially by those who say they speak for conservation. But it has happened and seems to be increasing. Whether it's called conservation, preservation or just plain anti-hunting, it all means the same thing. And it is well known by the true conservationist that those who speak against hunting don't know what conservation is all about.

The hunter is not completely without fault, however. There are poor sportsmen in hunting just as there are in any sport. There is no question that the indiscriminate killing of game is wrong and that poor sportsmanship and bad field manners greatly affect what people think about hunting. However, the thing most frequently over-looked by the hunter is the necessity for him to fully understand his role and contribution to the field of conservation. And he must tell others about it.

Hunters have had more influence on the conservation of America's outdoor landscape than any other segment of our society. The sportsman has been making a contribution to this nation's out-of-doors since its beginning, blazing the trail for the farsighted conservation programs he still supports today. He has been in the forefront of nearly every worthwhile conservation movement for over 75 years.

It was the sportsman, the hunter and angler in search of serenity and recreation in the outdoors, who first saw the ill-effects of expanding civilization. They saw the ravages of forest fire and soil erosion, the destruction of habitat and wildlife, and the population of our streams. Hunters approached these problems with the same patience and perseverance of the hunt. But they didn't stalk their goals in silence; they made plenty of noise.

Hunters set up a cry for public conscience, but the public wasn't ready for action yet. They felt there was plenty of room for the expanding population, even considering the shrinking countryside. In the meantime, sportsmen at all levels took up the battle on their own, establishing state fish and game agencies, pushing for conservation legislation, policing their own numbers to preserve their sport.

This is especially important today. Shorter work days, shorter work weeks, increased vacations and holidays, will be sending increased numbers of people out of the cities in search of elbow room. In the years ahead, as competition for open space increases, it is important that the general public be aware of the stake that the American hunter has in the out-of-doors and the vital role the sportsman has played in preserving this land for the mutual benefit of the hunting and non-hunting public alike. Hunting is an extremely emotional issue surrounded by misinformation and name calling. Therefore our communications approach must address itself to that level of thought and action.

Hunters have done more than any other group to protect and preserve wildlife, e.g., antelope, ducks, geese. In the early 1900's there were 500,000 whitetail deer. Today there are over 11,000,000. There are 796 species of birds in North America. Hunters are largely responsible for laws allowing only 74 species to be hunted. Nearly 100% taxes paid on licenses, firearms and ammunition, to date over 2 billion, has been spent on fish and game programs, much of which is scientific management of wildlife, game and wildlife preserves and salaries of state fish and game department personnel and law enforcement officials who protect game and non-game wildlife. If hunting were stopped in America, the status of wildlife would become a hopeless, pathetic situation. We would end up with two realities — starvation and disease. During a 20 year span in Kaibab National Forest in Arizona all hunting was prohibited and predators systematically removed. The deer numbers increased from 5,000 to 100,000. Within a few years after the increase nearly 90,000 deer were lost. Hunting is more than just killing. It means taking home meat which is a universal practice, except for the occasional vegetarian. In one state 60,798 deer were taken, with an average field dressed weight of 82 pounds of processed boneless meat. Based on the local price of ground beef chuck at \$1.20 per pound, \$5,982,523.00 was realized in food value.

Hunting in itself instills a oneness with nature, and hunting builds a close bond between hunters of all ages throughout the world. Most important, hunting provides the companionship of father and son together.

Typical anti-hunting comments are that hunters pay fees to hunt and kill for the joy of killing — that hunters have the power to decide the destiny of life — that hunters kill because of a need to kill, not as a sport — that hunters destroy wildlife and land. Other opinions: guns kill children; do not let youngsters hunt. Guns increase the crime rate. Stop the sale of all guns. Hunters are cold-hearted people who lack humane feelings. Only the rich can afford to hunt; it would be fair for all to abolish hunting. Hunting is nothing but an attempt to prove masculinity by marching through the woods, blasting at helpless animals, and leaving them injured and behind to die. Hunting creates extinction and endangerment of wildlife species.

These comments indicate a negative attitude of these people directed toward the hunter and not hunting in general. Why? Because they close their minds to the reasons why hunters hunt; they do not really have an awareness of what the sport of hunting is all about.

If the negative attitude toward hunters is ever to be altered, the job must begin with the hunters themselves, whose most effective approach to turning around feelings of anti-hunters is education. How can this be accomplished? By banding together on

local, regional, national, and international levels. By forming clubs, organizations and associations whose primary function is to speak with and at those who oppose them. By providing them with the facts, backed up by statistics, which relate the positive impact of hunting on the game and non-game wildlife, preserves, commission, etc. In effect, what must be accomplished, if hunting is to survive on a long range basis and thereby avoid elimination and depletion of wildlife, is to turn so-called preservationists into believers. Once they believe, they can usually be convinced to contribute their time, effort and dollars toward the same objectives of the hunter. Only then will they realize our objective is the same — preserving wildlife and its natural habitat.

Of course, this is far beyond the scope of one project or of what can realistically be accomplished by one state. But we do believe it is important to keep these long range goals in mind when developing specific short range programs about hunting.

The problem is so broad in scope that there is not one simple solution.

The negative words expressed about the hunter and hunting in general do not cease when the guns are put away at the end of the season.

The great majority of people who are in favor of hunting and the hunters themselves will always be the way to counter unfavorable attitudes. Some opposed to hunting will probably never change their minds, regardless of how hard you try to reach them.

Overall research and several conclusive national studies indicate that we should direct our attention to the individuals who are in the middle. In other words, those who really have not formulated an opinion one way or another. If we attempt to talk to these persons, and do it successfully, possibly we can help at least to keep the ratio of pro and anti people relatively stable. Maybe we can even tip the scale in favor of the hunter and/or hunting.

In order to achieve maximum success, I recommend a series of radio announcements which would reach our defined target, the segment of your state's population who are neither pro nor anti hunting or hunters.

Radio can be used for many reasons. A hunting message done in an educationally interesting manner will properly utilize the medium.

Since our objective is to reach individuals who really have not formulated an opinion about hunting and hunters, we believe there are four directions our messages can take:

1. Straight news — relate facts and statistics in a news type format.
2. Humorous — treat facts and statistics in a light manner.
3. Nostalgic — trace back to facts and statistics of the past, comparing them with those relevant today.
4. Informative — recite various facts and statistics in a “did you know” type way.

Regardless of how well we get our thoughts across, we will never reach everyone we would hope for. However, using the above suggested approaches, in my opinion, would be more effective than any other direction open to us.

In conclusion, to combat the anti-hunting movement we need to direct our attention to the middle of the road and attempt to talk to those persons who have not formulated an opinion one way or the other.

Every hunter is accountable to himself, the sport of hunting and to the wildlife that sustains his hunting. Whatever the future holds for the hunter depends largely on himself.