

# **WILL HUNTERS GO DOWN FIGHTING — WITH BOTH HANDS TIED BEHIND THEIR BACKS?**

*Prepared by  
Webb & Athey, Inc.  
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## **PREFACE**

**“SPORTS HUNTERS HAVE DESIGNATED THEMSELVES AS ‘CONSERVATIONISTS.’ HOW CUNNING. HOLDING ALOFT THEIR BLOOD-STAINED HANDS THEY CRY OUT ‘SEE HOW MUCH WE HAVE CONSERVED.’”**

This statement by Dr. Cyril Toker appeared in a recent article entitled “Will this Priceless Heritage Be Taken From You?” It is typical of the increasingly negative attitude of a rapidly growing number of legislators, news media, organizations and a small but vocal group of private citizens throughout our nation and abroad. If their condemnations of hunting and the hunter continue unanswered, the end result could be fatal. The sport of hunting might very well be banned.

You're looking at a picture of the American hunter. A picture in the minds of many whose only contact with hunting is driving along a highway and observing a sign like this.

They don't know what hunting is all about except that it requires a gun. And they don't care.

That, perhaps, is the crux of the hunter's problem. The vast majority of Americans don't have a clear picture of what it is. Or, more importantly, the ways it affects their lifestyles.

As a result, like the road sign, the hunter's sport gets shot up many times. Shot up road signs are misunderstood. Criticism abounds. And, on a broad level, endangered and extinct wildlife species, deaths and injuries caused by guns, etc., are blamed on the hunter.

Clearly, the challenge is to create a broad awareness that the hunter is the backbone of wildlife preservation. That hunters are not enemies of wildlife, but for many years the sole source of support. But, realistically, that wildlife prosperity depends almost entirely on the hunter's prosperity.

What's needed is a strong voice that can speak for all hunters and tell this story. Fairly. Honestly.

The Southeastern Information and Education Unit must be formed now to do that. There is an urgent need for counsel, creativity and professional communications experience that will assure you that your message gets through.

## **A LOOK AT THE PROBLEM**

**“WE CAN BE SURE THAT ANTI-HUNTING SENTIMENT HAS INCREASED, THAT IT IS FAR MORE EFFECTIVE THAN IT HAS EVER BEEN, AND THAT IT MAKES GOOD SENSE TO LARGE SEGMENTS OF THE PUBLIC.”**

Dr. John Koziacky - John Madson  
Conservation Department  
East Alton, Illinois

The anti-hunting forces are using all the people they can muster, including Senators, Congressmen, Hollywood stars, environmentalists, animal preservation groups, and the news media, to their advantage. They are influencing Congress to pass legislation restricting hunting seasons, open land, etc. Various print and broadcast sources are

slanting and distorting their stories blaming hunters for incidents in which they are not involved. And, a major shift of public attitude against killing has transpired as a result of the Vietnam war.

Max Ailor, outdoor editor of the Richmond Times-Dispatch recently wrote, "the anti-hunting groups in the past have been taken rather lightly by the sportsmen, despite the fact that preservationists have established a lobby in Washington." Two lawsuits have been filed in New Jersey by protectionists to prevent hunting on the great Swamp Refuge lands; and to halt the 1974 waterfowl hunting season. Although they were both dismissed, the second one, filed by Wildlife Preserves, Inc.; Fund for Animals; the New Jersey branch of the Humane Society of the United States; and an organization known as Deer, Ecology, Environment and Resources, Inc., claimed that no environmental impact statement had been filed. The New Jersey District Court Judge suggested a settlement. An agreement was worked out and agreed upon by all concerned parties. Then the case was dismissed.

Although waterfowl hunters won the case, they actually lost the decision. The agreement calls for the Secretary of the Interior to prepare an environmental impact statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and the Guidelines of the Council on Environmental Quality, prior to the promulgation of the final migratory bird hunting regulations for the 1975 season. In effect, this means unnecessary duplication of effort because the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited, International, annually conduct surveys to determine what the agreement stipulates. According to Ailor, "funds contributed by sportsmen in the support of management of waterfowl, both in the United States and Canada, now must be shared in the extra administrative functions of environmental statements to a greater number of people, and organizations and public hearings. The preservation organizations, some of which have members who do not really know the true intent of the organizations, would have all hunting stopped, even if it meant the demise of the species of wildlife they claim they want to protect."

A greater percentage of our federal legislators are residents of urban environments than ever before. Because hunting has its roots in our rural communities, their lack of exposure, appreciation or comprehension of the sport results in biased opinions. Even the legislators who reside outside our cities are highly urban-oriented. Senator McGovern of South Dakota is a good example. Key figures such as Senators Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts and John Pastore of Rhode Island illustrate the shift. Walt Disney movies, newspapers, and even television network news and feature programming are slanted against hunting. The Columbia Broadcasting Network, probably the most negative network, exhibits their bias on all fronts, even in administration. A recent article in the Los Angeles Times by environmental writers Jeff Stansbury and Edward Flattau, exposed an abuse of administrative powers at CBS. Jack Frome, recognized conservationist and conservation editor of *Field & Stream* for six years, was recently fired. Why? Because CBS owns the publication. And its new publisher — who evidently has no credentials as an outdoorsman — shares the network's dim view of hunting. It is appalling that a magazine which enjoys the popularity and respect of sportsmen and is supposedly their ally, is controlled by this major network. Frome, along with recently deposed editor, Clare Conley, has "exposed the abuse of America's forests by clear-cutters, stockmen, oil men and mining companies." Frome had written a column entitled "Rate Your Candidate" in 1972 which rated each federal lawmaker's stand on conservation and his legislative voting record.

City by city, county by county, state by state, region by region, we are losing the fight. We are being overwhelmed by our opposition because they are organized and unified at all levels, from grassroots to Congress.

**GENTLEMEN, OUR PROBLEM IS BROAD IN SCOPE, INTENSIFYING ON ALL FRONTS AND URGENTLY NEEDS OUR ATTENTION AND ACTION. AS ONE HIGHLY PLACED CONSERVATION OFFICIAL STATED, "WE'VE BEEN TALKING TO OURSELVES INSTEAD OF THOSE WE NEED TO REACH, THE UNCOMMITTED CITIZENRY."**

It's a waste of time to talk to those who hate us, such as Alice Herrington, because they won't listen. Obviously, talking to those who love us, the hunters, is also a waste because they're already on our side. We must set our targets on the vast majority of Americans who are uncommitted.

Alice Herrington, founder of the most vocal anti-hunting national organization, Friends of Animals, with over 50,000 members, stated in a recent New York Times article, "hunters kill for the fun of it. It turns them on. They always will because its fun. We, the protectors of our little God-fearing, furry and feathered friends, know it is wrong. Our only hope is to expose them and convince others to help." Again, gentlemen, as in today's meeting, we are talking to ourselves. Naturally, we are all in agreement. Well, we must begin to put our expertise and resources to work together before its too late. Almost daily we see some program, read a newspaper or magazine article, hear on the radio or see an advertisement for a new movie, all of which are critical of hunting.

At the risk of oversimplifying, our basic problem is one of image and a general ignorance of the facts.

### RECOMMENDED APPROACH

**"WE MUST WORK TOGETHER. WE MUST CONTRIBUTE OF OUR TREASURE, OUR KNOWLEDGE, AND OUR TIME TO THE HUNTER. OTHERWISE, HIS SPORT AND THE WILDLIFE HE DOES SO MUCH TO PRESERVE WILL DIE."**

William E. Talley  
Senior Vice President  
Winchester Group, Olin Corp.

I'll bet by now you're all saying to yourselves, "Who the hell are these people from Webb & Athey? What are their qualifications? Where are they from? And what have they done so well that qualifies them to be here?"

We are problem solvers. During our 12-year history, we have encountered and dealt with marketing, public relations and advertising problems for a diversified clientele, including many state agencies in Virginia. **WE PIONEERED THE FIRST PUBLIC INFORMATION PROJECT EVER DEVELOPED FOR AN EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY.** Dramatizing their problem to them, in much the same manner as we are with you today, resulted in a federally-funded pilot project for the Virginia Employment Commission.

When we approached them, VEC ranked near the bottom in the image department of all state agencies. Most people referred to them as the "Unemployment Commission" and thought of them in terms of long lines of disadvantaged, low-skilled people who didn't want to work at all, collecting unemployment checks. Employers didn't think of VEC as a source for qualified applicants. They were partially right, because many qualified applicants were embarrassed to be seen there. So, we structured a campaign to achieve four objectives: (1) Attack the image problem head on, and present VEC as what it is, a highly efficient, computerized and well-run state agency, effectively matching people with jobs and jobs with people; (2) generate increased job orders from employers; (3) attract more applicants with high level skills; (4) improve internal morale among VEC employees. As a direct result of our program's success with VEC, the Labor Department, for the first time in its history, created and funded a \$3 million national communications program in 15 states. Gentlemen, it all started with VEC in a manner like our discussion today. It takes a long and concentrated effort by many good people, like yourselves. But it can be done. It must be done.

Working on behalf of the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, we have taken the first minimal step. A series of five radio public service announcements have been produced for distribution to over 100 radio stations in Virginia. All of us involved realize this is only a token effort compared to the scope of our problem.

However, it is a beginning. What we need to do in order to carry on from this starting point is combine our resources, as we suggested earlier in this report. The potential of a joint program funded proportionately by each state in the Southeastern region, is far greater than individual state projects. If we are going to be successful in reaching and educating those middle-of-the-roaders with an effective message, then we need all the expertise we can muster from our ranks. Naturally, we would want to consider all available communication outlets for our program. Because our budget would most likely be limited, we would probably concentrate on television and/or radio. Our knowledge of, and expertise in production and distribution of public service announcements, has made us believers of their potential. It is estimated that about \$500 million a year in free advertising time and space are provided by the mass media for public service announcements.

Unfortunately, public service spots are too often unsophisticated - poor in quality. When this is the case, because TV and radio stations are inundated (see appendix) with PSA material, only the really good ones ever get used. According to the National Association of Broadcasters, "Your television and radio commercials must be of such high quality that they stand out from the average to catch the eyes and ears of those persons charged with deciding which of the myriad of PSAs being produced should get frequent network exposure." Good production quality increases your chances of exposure. For example, a 60 second television spot we did for the Virginia Employment Commission has received over \$600,000 worth of *free* time on TV stations throughout Virginia. It was produced for \$11,000 early last year and it is still being used. While other advertisers were paying hundreds of dollars per spot, our client was paying under two cents per spot, including production. Don't you wish you could get that kind of return on your investments? Another TV public service announcement we produced for the Virginia Agriculture Foundation received the 1973 CLIO Award from Eastman Kodak for best commercial cinematography in the world and every other major national and international film award. In other words, the best approach to reaching the largest number of people with your message is through both quality television and radio announcements. High quality public service announcements carried at no cost by the stations.

## SUMMARY

A review of the key points we have considered regarding the anti-hunting movement are as follows:

### *Scope of the problem*

We are facing a problem that is so broad in scope that there is no one simple solution.

### *Urgency to respond*

Because our opposition is intensifying their efforts on all fronts, we must respond immediately.

### *Unified efforts*

In order to achieve maximum return on our investment of time and money, we must begin to work together. Our opposition is doing it very effectively.

### *Emotional impact*

A basic human trait of love for birds and animals is being used and distorted against hunters.

### *Education*

We should tell the true story about the issue to the great majority of Americans who are uncommitted.

### *Desired audience*

Our message will be wasted on those who already favor or dislike hunting. We should concentrate on the neutral, middle-of-the-road populace. Not necessarily to convince them hunting is good, but to prevent them from becoming opposed to it.

### *Communication*

In order to reach the largest number of potential supporters effectively at the lowest cost, we should concentrate our efforts on top quality public service announcements for television and radio.

## PROGRAM AND BUDGET

Based upon our in-depth research and analysis of the problem, combined with our experience, qualifications and success in dealing with similar public information projects, we recommend a public service campaign on radio and television.

### *Radio*

Purchase and adaptation of five public service announcements recently completed for the State of Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries. The package includes three 60-second and two 30-second commercials which were created and produced by Webb & Athey under the direction of the Commission. They were developed following a thorough research and evaluation process by the Agency. Over 500 agency man-hours were devoted to this series. Since the cost has already been absorbed, we can provide them at a very low cost. We would be pleased to provide the necessary dubs for all your state's radio stations, if you desired them. The cost would depend on the number of radio stations in your state.

### *Television*

A high quality public service television campaign would be desirable to hitch-hike with your radio spots. However, because of the prohibitive costs, we recommend creating and producing one top quality 60-second commercial and a 30-second lift (a shorter version). One spot and a lift developed to address the key points of our desired message, would help our viewers relate to the radio spots, thereby increasing the potential of reaching a maximum number of people. This was the case with the Virginia Agriculture Foundation "Abandoned Farm" spot which won the coveted CLIO and many other awards in addition to communicating the desired message. We estimate the cost of producing a top quality TV commercial to be \$20-\$30,000 depending on the concept, amount of travel, equipment, etc. A joint state effort would require AFTRA talent which is more expensive when state lines are crossed. Our fee for creating the concept, preparing the storyboard, writing copy, overseeing production and project administration is \$19,000. We believe that the greatest impact of this effort would be realized by an equitable investment and participation by each state in the region. Appropriate prints would be provided, if desired, at a fee based on the number of television stations in your state. The more states that participate in the project means the lower the cost and the higher the saturation of our message.

## CONCLUSION

We do not suggest our recommendations are by any means the complete answer. However, we do believe it is a beginning. As in our experience with the Virginia Employment Commission, we know you have to start somewhere. As we noted, there is now a federally funded, national employment program. With our guns sighted on a national program to combat the anti-hunting movement, we urge you to exhibit your interest and concern, while there is still time. As a great Chinese philosopher stated hundreds of years ago, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with but a single step."

## **A NOTE REGARDING REGULATION BOOKLETS**

*Georgia Department of Natural Resources*

Ideal regulation booklets should be short, simple, appealing and small enough to fit into a shirt pocket. They should also adequately set forth the wildlife regulations and applicable state laws, govern the taking of all hunted species and identify the protected ones. If there are special regulations for special areas or special species, these must also be included. The text should be complete to prevent confusion but concise to prevent boredom. They must be general enough to allow flexibility of biological imperatives but specific enough to stand up in court. Also certain special situations such as endangered species, field trials, taxidermists, local exceptions ought to be included. It would also be nice if directions to areas and....say, just how large is your shirt pocket.

### **MEETING ON THE HUMANE TRAP ISSUE**

**Southeast Wildlife Conference**

**White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia  
November 17-20, 1974**

#### *WELCOMING STATEMENT*

*James M. Ruckel  
Assistant Chief in Charge of Game Management  
Division of Wildlife Resources  
State of West Virginia*

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen: It is nearly 9:00 p.m. and we're sorry that we are so late, but we were unavoidably detained in that elegant dining room.

Last year an anti-steel trap bill was introduced in the West Virginia Legislature. Duane Pursley served as our Wildlife Resources Division spokesman to the joint Senate and House Committee which was deciding the fate of that legislation.

While preparing his presentation, we found that we were somewhat ignorant of the status of humane trap research and the anti-trap movement. Consequently, Duane and I traveled to North Bay, Ontario, where we met with a number of people who have been involved in the humane trapping issue. We received an abundance of valuable information on this subject. Realizing the problems of disseminating this information, we felt that we should bring the experts to this panel meeting and let them enlighten you first hand.

The first speaker is Mr. Art Lalonde of the well-known and highly respected Ontario Trappers Association. This organization is the focal point of the wild fur industry in Canada, and its fur sales service has given invaluable assistance to our Division of Wildlife Resources.

#### *FIRST SPEAKER*

*Art Lalonde  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Ontario Trappers Association*

Thank you, Jim! Honorable sirs, ladies and gentlemen: I am pleased to be here tonight to speak to you in regard to trapping, as I know it in Canada. As Jim mentioned, I am an elected officer of the Ontario Trappers Association and a member of the Canadian Federation of Trappers. I serve in the official capacity of secretary-treasurer.