

J. Land Use

Moderator: Shelby Swain Myers, Indiana Farm Bureau

- a. Setting Aside Marginal Farmland for Wildlife Habitat, *MLA Toby Barrett, Ontario*
- b. Hunting Policy, *Ches McDowell, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton*

Hunting Policy, Ches McDowell, Lobbyist, Hunting Policy, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton

Why is hunting policy important for land use? The most important reason that we need sound hunting policy is because of sport hunters. Hunters are the sole source of money for conservation money.

The federal Pittman Robertson Act (1937, now known as Federal Aid in Wild Restoration) and Dingell-Johnson Act (1950, Sport Fish Restoration) provide funds to state wildlife agencies through excise taxes on everything from fishing line to guns. The taxes have raised over \$20 billion.

Hunting is in decline. In 1982 there were 17 million hunting licenses in the US; in 2005 there were 14.5 million. In 1992 the average age of a person with a hunting license was 38; in 2012 that average hunter was 52. Hunters are 89 percent male and 91 percent white.

How do we get more hunters outside? Sunday hunting is legal in 41-42 states. Before the era of traveling outdoor sports, hunting was a great way to get kids outdoors. Now other sports occupy multiple weekends, making it harder to get a kid outside to hunt. Free fishing/hunting days are beneficial, as are incentives for mentorship. Licensing has become easier due to on-line methods. North Carolina has a hunting heritage program whereby a licensed hunter can take someone over the age of sixteen hunting for a year, after which that person has to get a license. "If you teach a kid to duck hunt, he can't afford drugs."

Another approach, especially in the Midwest, is opening land for hunting. The president just signed an order opening 1.4 million more acres and eliminating 7500 regulations to allow people to hunt and fish in 74 refuges and fifteen fish hatcheries. Hunttable wildlife populations have increased due to hunter dollars that are protecting them as a resource.

North Carolina and about twenty other states have legislation for the right to hunt or fish. North Carolina amended the state constitution guaranteeing the right to hunt/fish/harvest wildlife by traditional means and methods.

These laws are needed to protect hunting rights from animal advocacy groups who would like to end them. The most dramatic example in the US where the right to hunt and fish was needed was in California. In 1991 they banned the sport hunting of mountain lions. They have since issued 98 depredation permits every year that is four times the number that were killed prior to 1990. California has deemed the mountain lion a Specially Protected Species. Mule deer and bighorn sheep populations are becoming threatened by lion predation. Similar scenarios are in place for bears in Maine and Florida, for wolves, etc.

We will see a conflict between wildlife and humans as some wild species overpopulate and get closer to humans causing dramatic destruction of crops, livestock and property. Two examples in Africa demonstrate where we are headed.

Botswana has opened hunting for elephants this year. Half of the licenses will go to local communities. Most importantly, it restores an economic value to elephants which gives communities a strong incentive to protect them. Zimbabwe had an unwanted decline in elephants. Losses amounted to 40 poached annually and 10-15 killed by farmers for destroying their crops. A safari company took over the hunting concession. Since the introduction of hunting the loss of fertile elephants has been reduced by 80-90 percent. However, negative popular sentiment regarding the hunting of lions in that country closed them to hunting. Subsequently, the government announced it was going to shoot 200 lions to control the population. A lion hunting license costs \$50,000. That's a \$10 million loss to the government.

Mother nature has extincted many species over time without human involvement. However, because humans are now part of the food chain, we are taking over many wild species' lands. Human evacuation of these areas is not an option.

The most important factor to solve this problem is access. Get more kids outside, pass legislation that protects rights to hunt and fish, and build a big tent for hunters that entices non-traditional populations to hunt. Convince environmentalists that hunting is part of good conservation strategy. Utilize the locavore movement where people want to eat locally and organic. Get hipsters involved in hunting. Mark Zuckerberg, who owns Facebook, is a hunter who eats what he kills. He's going on a diet where he only eats meat that he harvests.

Setting Aside Marginal Farmland for Wildlife Habitat, MLA Toby Barrett, Parliamentary Assistant to Agriculture and Food, Ontario

Canada does not have a program like the US Conservation Reserve Program. However, legislation established the Alternate Land Use Services program in Canada about nineteen years ago. ALUS incentivizes farmers to set aside primarily marginal lands – wetlands, tallgrass prairie and woodlands - for wildlife protection. The program is driven by farmers, ranchers and hunters.

The program is funded by philanthropists and government grants to hunting associations. It is community-based and incentive-based. Landowners are seeing the benefits to these marginal lands in the return of ducks, dragonflies and frogs as well as benefits in clean air, clean water, healthy soil, and nutrient and soil erosion prevention. Barret is convinced that farming and forestry is the answer to carbon sequestration.

ALUS is incentivizing the return of wetlands that increase resiliency to flooding. The insurance industry is interested in this concept due to increased flood-related claims.

Barrett also introduced legislation that recognized the right of agricultural landowners to set aside land for these kinds of purposes. It mandated the minister to develop a provincial framework and an action plan to develop guidelines to provide educational material to promote research with respect to these issues and to host an international conference.

Barret is working on a second bill which will incorporate some of these principles with a focus on North America's great lakes. The focus is not only protection but promotion of tourism.