

Personal Testimony from Pete Kingsley

I have been a USP Board member since 1991, USP Treasurer along with my wife Janet for the past 6 or 7 yrs.

If I had not been a USP Board member, I would not know all that I know about what goes on between politicians, tree huggers and the Pa. Game Commission. Before 1991, I was just a hunter born and raised in Maine. Hunting and fishing has always been in my blood.

I came to Lancaster Co, Pa. in 1961, hunted pheasants and rabbits big time with my beagles and friends of mine who had bird dogs. This good hunting came to a screeching halt with the ground and winged predators and a change in farming practices. I bought ground in Western Clinton Co., and started hunting and still do hunt in Clinton, Centre, Cameron and Potter Counties. In the 1970's, on the steep side hills, beautiful mountain valleys and the thick mountain tops, there were plenty of game animals to hunt which included deer, turkey, grouse and ground squirrels.

In the 1980's things changed. The amount of county doe tags went crazy, example - Clinton Co. 14,000 doe tags per year and all the surrounding counties were high as well. USP fought for 2 yrs. to take the then bonus tags that came on the second drawing and were to be used on private land only. This was approved for one year only because Gary Alt, when he took charge, got rid of the private land only. Then the PGC changed to 23 large management units instead of the 67 county management units, why? I think that way more hunters had more access to go where there were more deer and further decimated the herd. At the same time the coyote showed up, some were large with wolf genes in them proven by DNA testing.

Then the ever expanding bear population caused by Gary Alt when he was a bear biologist, moved them into mountainous areas to expand their range where there were no bears. My thoughts, was this to kill more deer, along with the coyotes, bobcats, fishers and mountain lions, yes, I mentioned mountain lions. I know many people who have seen them. I have not but I have seen their tracks in the snow. I have a copy of a private meeting held on a Sunday afternoon with both DCNR and PGC members saying "If the hunters can't get rid of the deer we have ways of doing so"!

ECONOMICS

For 10 Yrs., 1986 to 1996, we bought the old YMCA in the town of Renovo. We opened the old YMCA which is a hotel a month before the Oct. of 1986 two day bear season, we were nearly full with hunters in all 50 rooms on three floors.

Buck season, same thing. Deer hunters came in on Friday and Saturday and a lot of them stayed well into the week.

Two day doe season, Monday and Tuesday, hunters came in Friday and Saturday and stayed until Monday afternoon or Tuesday. We were not full, only two floors.

All 3 hunt seasons - hunters were there and around town spending money.

Then the 1990's bear season stayed the same with the amount of hunters.

Buck season- we could not even fill the second floor and no one stayed after Tuesday. very few deer.

Doe season was put into the first two weeks of buck season.

Bars and restaurants went out of business, grocery stores closed and/or changed ownership. Camps don't even open for deer season or if they do it is for a day or two.

PREDATION

No one talks about what all these predators are doing to all game animals in the Big Woods Country of Central Pa. Some of the areas where we hunt bear and deer are 3 and 4 miles off the hard road and there are practically no deer. There is no one hunting doe that far back in the woods and in those steep side hills. We drive those same areas in bear season, kill some bears and practically see no deer with a crew of 25 men and boys. These same hunters say it is a waste of time to hunt deer up here in the Big Woods.

Predation on turkeys is what is happening to the turkey population. Coyotes and bobcats on the ground and fishers climbing the trees while the turkeys are roosting.

NOTE: I brought a couple of pictures along on predation on deer.

We need to address the problem - which is a lack of a product. That product is deer. If you do not have a good product when you are in business your business will not stay open!!

These are some of the reasons and there are many more why H.B. 2083 must be addressed and passed.

Thank you for this time, Pete Kingsley