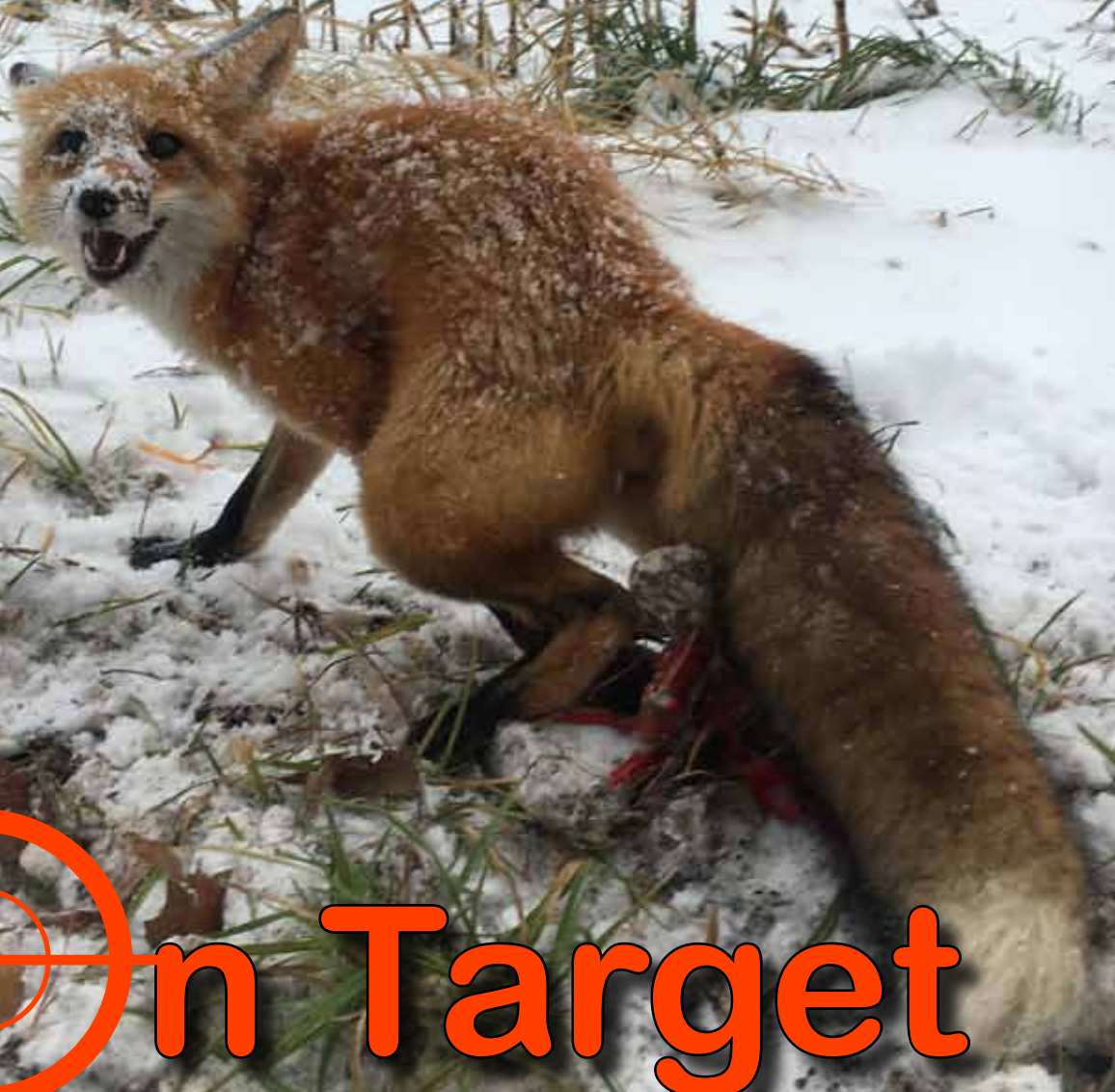


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On Target

The Official Publication of the
Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs

January/February 2017



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PFSC On Target

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The mission of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc. is to provide a statewide, united voice for the concerns of all sportsmen and conservationists; to insure that their rights and interests are protected; and to protect and enhance the environment and our natural resources.

Cover Photo:

Nice Red Fox trapped on a snowy mid November morning in Mercer County. Photo by Charlie Sykes





We Must all Stand Together...Or We Will all Fail

By Todd Strohecker, PTA VP East



**Be Responsible!
Be Respectful!
Be Ethical!**

I saw a statistic somewhere which revealed some interesting information about the consumptive use of animals and wildlife in this country. A relatively small demographic of the overall population showed their passion for the outdoors through hunting, fishing, and trapping. This is the group I would hope most of us reading this would fall into. On the other end of the spectrum was another small demographic which consisted of individuals who radically opposed all consumptive use of animals by humans. These zealots are what we know as animal rights activists. In the middle is a very large group that is basically the general population. These folks generally do not feel strongly either for or against the consumptive use of animals.

Over the years, the very radical views of the animal rights movement have not resonated well with the general public. This is due to the fact that (thankfully) most people believe animals are here to provide us food, clothing, companionship, and more. The animal rights folks have realized this and have become smarter and are cloaking their agenda to appear much more sensible to the general public.

Montana is currently in a battle with the antis with a

ballot initiative that would ban trapping on public land. Their hopes were to sway the general public (many of which are pet owners) to believe trapping has no place on public land and that by banning trapping will somehow protect the users of the land. Their agenda is to eliminate trapping all together, and this would be a step in the right direction. One could see how a hunter who owns a bird dog and does not trap could maybe be swayed to support this position since a ban wouldn't affect them directly and might save them a few minutes of trouble releasing their dog if, by chance, it would get caught in a coyote or bobcat trap. This brings me to the point I want to try to make in this article which is that it is imperative that we as sportsmen and women stand together in support of each other and our respective passions. The only way we as hunters, trappers, and anglers can be taken down is through division...and the animal rights zealots know this.

A couple months ago, Ontario closed the upcoming wolf and coyote season under the guise of protecting a sub species of wolf named the Algonquin wolf. There is no scientific evidence that this drastic step

needed to be taken, but it is obvious that emotion led to the decision. Once again they are hiding a true agenda from the general public. Most level headed folks would never want to see an endangered or threatened species become extinct. This is another example on a means to the end the animal rights activists really want.

The state of Maine is a perfect example of the antis using the endangered species act to limit trapping. Trappers in that state are absolutely crippled with the devices and techniques they are allowed to use due to the presence of Canada Lynx in the state. Across the border in Canada, lynx are abundant and thriving, but Maine is on the fringe of their range. The animal rights movement has



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United BowHunters of PA

<http://www.ubofpa.org/>

By Wes Waldron, Chairman, Legislative Committee

With the House of Representative still unwilling to pass Senate Bill 1166 and give the PA Game Commission long-long-long overdue financial relief, one can only speculate if in fact it is their intent to destroy the very agency that manages our significant and valuable wildlife and habitat resources. From my own personal perspective I find the inactions of the House and the obvious rancorous and vengeful positions taken by several longtime – perhaps too longtime – Representatives as morally and ethically bankrupt.

With a stroke of the pen Governor Wolf recently made the use of semi-automatic firearms (SAF) legal for hunting use across the Commonwealth. Now the PA Game Commission and the PGC Board of Commissioners must make the decisions as to when, where, and for what SAF's will be allowed. I do not envy their charge on this one.

Interestingly enough, UBP has been asking hunters – bow and firearms hunters alike, their position on this since legislation was first proposed in the General Assembly. Much to our surprise we find little support for the legalization of SAF's, and although the UBP did have a position on both the SAF's and air/gas powered firearms, it was to support what we heard from bow hunters, that being, SAF's for coyotes and ground-hogs, and air/gas powered firearms for small game.

With the PGC Seasons and Bag Limits Meeting scheduled for January 29-31, 2017 we must assume that the hot

topic of discussion, not to mention testimonies, may well be centered on the SAF issue. However, when we consider all the negative responses we have been hearing from hunters in general, our organization may well go to the podium at Elmerton Avenue lacking any solid position on the matter.

When we tally the responses we have heard from all hunters, the greatest response favored limiting SAF's to coyotes and groundhogs, but no big game; and with air/gas powered firearms, the response was to limit them to small game such as squirrels and rabbits. The next most common response has been a resounding “no way for anything”, followed by the least heard response of “SAF's for deer”, a very small percentage.

Additionally we heard that, if approved for hunting, SAF magazines should be limited to 5-rounds, and that there should be a .24- caliber minimum regulation. We also have been hearing that the use of SAF's should be limited to adult hunting license holders only, and no small percentage of hunters we spoke to supported that position.

When one gets past the initial response of many hunters and into deeper conversations, the general consensus seems to be one of “here we go again”, another item that only a small percentage of hunters want, but one that the industry and certain legislators do. Of course, as expected, the NRA has thrown its support behind the issue, as well. We shall see.

UBP

The United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and protection of bowhunting opportunities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The UBP supports game management based on sound biological principles and a "resource first" philosophy.

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effectively thwarted productive trapping in that state under the guise of protecting the Canada lynx. One of the ironies of the whole ordeal is the fact that fisher trapping has been severely limited in Maine even though fisher are one of the most effective predators on young lynx. It is obvious to me that protecting the lynx is not the goal. The lynx is a means to end trapping.

We know the ultimate goal of the animal rights movement is to end all consumptive use of wildlife and animals. It has always been their goal and they have realized the only path to that goal, is one step at a time. Today it might be trapping on public lands or bear baiting, tomorrow it might be running bobcats or mountain lions with dogs, and the next day it might be bowhunting or upland bird hunting. When

one small segment of the outdoor community goes down, the group as a whole becomes weaker. If an individual has the mindset that their passion will never be under attack, they are playing right into the hands of the antis. At the end, who will stand with the bird hunter, the archery hunter, and the fly fisherman if the bear hunter, the wolf hunter, and trapper are no more?

I recently read an internet memo about gun control that I believe sums up my point perfectly. It said something to the effect of, “When they came for the AR15, I said nothing because I don't own semi autos. Then they came for the hunting rifles, and I said nothing because I don't hunt. Then they came for the handguns, and I said nothing because I don't like handguns. Then they came for the shotguns, and there was no one left to speak for me.”

PTA