



Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance

Powhatan, Virginia

December 13, 2015

The Attack Continues

Hunting with dogs in Virginia faces a continued attack. The group calling itself the Virginia Landowners Association is leading the charge, but make no mistake they have allies. We believe the overwhelming majority of their funding is coming from those who want to bring Texas style commercial hunting to Virginia. During the fight against Sunday Hunting we warned that this was their motive in making Sunday Hunting legal. The proponents of Sunday Hunting called it a lie and said that they were seeking to increase the number of licensed hunters and that they did not oppose hunting with dogs. It should be a surprise to no one that the license sales dropped and those same folks now want to outlaw hunting with dogs. If you follow social media the proof is everywhere.

That individual hunters, who oppose hunting with dogs, are a vocal part of those opposing us as are a small group of animal rights activists should surprise no one, but the funding and drive ARE coming from those who would change the face of hunting and rural life in Virginia. If you think that we are overstating this just ask yourself who is putting up the thousands of dollars to hire lobbying firms? Why would lawyer Mead Spotts drive from Richmond to Southampton County on a Sunday evening to try to promote the “Florida Plan” to the hunting community if he were not being well compensated?

Once again the hunting community is being divided by those who masquerade as friends but are motivated by greed. It is well past the time that every hunter says enough is enough. If you haven't emailed members of the Game Board and phoned DGIF to tell them that valid complaints about dogs “trespassing” are few and far between and that you are tired of greedy individuals attacking your sport, then you are part of the problem.

Far more important is giving that same message to your legislators. Your members of the Virginia Senate and the House of Delegates are focused on the issues that the media is talking about... terrorism, taxes,

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education and transportation, but they care about the opinions of their voters. They need to hear from each of you **BEFORE** they head to Richmond in January. Tell your legislators that the number of complaints is small but that complaints that have been investigated and found to be valid are almost nonexistent. Ask them why DGIF is even considering more regulations when three of their top four law enforcement positions have been vacant for two years! Ask them why 25% of their law enforcement positions are vacant! Tell your legislators that hunting with dogs is not a problem. A State Senator said claims of problems were so rare that he felt if it isn't broken don't fix it.

There are problems with DGIF and the job they are doing for the Sportsmen of Virginia. They continue to lead every charge, often behind the scenes, but are never-the-less involved in the divide and conquer efforts that are designed to change the face of hunting in Virginia.

This is the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries by people dedicated to hunting, fishing and trapping. They were not concerned with creating careers for people who wanted jobs in the new agency; they were concerned with decimated wildlife populations and with the protection of the non-commercial outdoor sporting traditions of Virginia.

Wildlife populations across the nation had been decimated by commercial market hunting! They needed to rebuild and restore our natural heritage. It is proper that we celebrate those visionary sportsmen leaders who recognized the need to create an agency devoted to that task. We now have a great abundance of GOD given wildlife for everyone to enjoy again!

It is not proper that sportsmen's money be spent on lavish self-congratulatory promotion of the bureaucracy as it celebrates the staff achievements that could only have occurred with the devotion of Virginia's Sportsmen. It has been the citizen sportsmen who gave their time to serve on the Board of Directors. Even more, it has been the individual sportsmen that advocated for funding that built the agency. If the legislature wants to know where problems lie, they can look closely at the agency.

What you can do NOW!

Contact DGIF Board Members by going to <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/about/board/> tell them that complaints about hunting with dogs are greatly exaggerated and that there is no widespread problem. Call the DGIF staff at (804) 367-1000 and tell them the same thing and that you expect their support.

To find out who your legislators are and how to contact go to: <http://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov/> Tell them you are concerned that DGIF is on an unwarranted witch hunt in an effort to limit or curtail hunting with dogs. Urge them to tell DGIF "there is no problem, so doesn't try to fix it."

DGIF Board to hear staff recommendations on hunting with Dogs

The DGIF Board of Directors will receive staff recommendations to about hunting with dogs in response to complaints from the Virginia Landowners Association. The meeting will be January 21, 2016 at 9:00 AM. At DGIF HQ - 7870 Villa Park Dr. Henrico, VA 23228.

You will be able to express your opinion at that meeting. Parking and seating are extremely limited! The opposition will be there in force, we must too.

We will keep you informed through the Alerts.

VAHDA membership surging!

New members are joining at an unprecedented rate. We have started new Chapters in Halifax County, Southampton County and elected new Chapter Officers in Brunswick and Caroline Counties. The Northumberland County Chapter will start up on December 13th. Ten new Chapters are in the process of forming with more planned. Chairman John Morse asked each County Chapter to have a meeting in November to inform the membership about the challenges that we face and discuss ways to combat the threats. The turnout at these meetings has been very encouraging.

We believe that we will have to stay strong to defend the Heritage that we love. County Chapters address the basic issue that all politics is local. Those closest to the local Sheriff, Board of Supervisor member or Legislator have the greatest impact. Our members have played a role in a number of local elections, electing friends who believe as we do. Together we can insure the future of the traditions we love.

Dogs being shot

Once again there are reports of dogs being shot. Anyone that has a dog shot, stolen, or otherwise injured should contact the appropriate authorities, i.e., DGIF & local police, and **INSIST** the incident be investigated! If the authorities fail to investigate the incident, contact local media outlets to let them know about the “lack of action” by authorities. Post the incident to social media, which will garner support to have the violators prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law! We are here to help assist you.

Some counties have seen aggressive investigation and prosecution and others have been slow to act. Your timely action in contacting law enforcement can be the determining factor.

Tax Deductible Donations

Now is a great time to make a tax deductible donation to the Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance Foundation. The Foundation is devoted to public education and legal defense for hunting with dogs. You may mail your donations to: Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance Foundation at P.O. Box 657 Powhatan, VA 23139.

It is the Season

This is the time of year we love! Hunting season is in full swing, which means fellowship with those who love the outdoors and hunting with dogs as we do. Perhaps it is for many of us not just hunting season, but the Advent season that helps us appreciate the blessings we have including the opportunity to hunt with family and friends. It is therefore fitting that we remember that Jesus is the reason for the season. The Board Members and Officers of the Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance wish you a Blessed Christmas. May you and your families experience the thrill of the full understanding of GOD's gift to us.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

[Isaiah 9:6-7](#) (NIV)

Merry

Christmas

The Hunting Dog Owner's Code of Ethics

- 1. I will provide proper care for my dogs including food, water, medical care and shelter and will firmly insist other hunting dog owners do the same.**
- 2. I will provide proper identification and contact information on all of my dogs.**
- 3. I will diligently work to retrieve my dogs by the end of the hunt recognizing it is my moral and ethical responsibility to retrieve every dog as quickly as possible. If I cannot locate a dog by the end of the hunt, I will do my best to retrieve it as quickly thereafter as reasonably achievable.**
- 4. I will only release my dogs on property on which I have permission to hunt and will not tolerate others releasing dogs on property where they do not have permission to hunt.**
- 5. I will find a proper home or shelter for any dog that I determine I cannot or will not keep. I will not abandon any dog and will not tolerate any one who does.**
- 6. I will consider myself a guest of the landowner, whether private, state or federal, always seeking permission upfront, and will conduct myself so I will be welcome in the future.**
- 7. I will do my best to tread lightly while afield, to carefully use only established roads and trails, to leave any gates as I find them (open or closed), and foremost to leave no litter.**
- 8. I will promote fair chase of game animals and ethical treatment of hunting dogs.**
- 9. I will strictly follow the rules of safe gun handling, obey all game laws and regulations and will report those who violate game laws and regulations.**
- 10. I will actively encourage young and new hunters to participate in and enjoy the thrill and camaraderie of hunting with dogs.**
- 11. While Virginia's "Right to Retrieve" law gives me legal standing to retrieve my dogs from any property, I will practice the "Right of Respect" toward landowners with whom I come into contact and their property. I will admonish my fellow hunters to do the same.**
- 12. I will always be mindful that I am the public face of all dog hunters when afield or in the community. I will strive to hold myself and others to the highest standards of behavior when hunting with my dogs so we all reflect well on the ancient and honorable tradition of hunting with dogs.**

Submit an article

If you would like to submit an article for possible publishing in our newsletter, email us at info@vahda.org or mail it to P.O. Box 657 Powhatan, Virginia 23139.

All VHDA Board members are real hunters who own dogs. The VHDA has no paid staff. We pay our own expenses because "We HAVE a dog in this fight!" If we sometimes sound angry, it is because we are! We would prefer to be hunting, teaching our children about the wonders that God has given us and training our dogs. We know that we must have a strong voice or we will lose to people, who not only disagree with you, but hate and revile you because you hunt.

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