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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

**WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS**

2005-06

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on Natural Resources and
Transportation...**

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

➤ Committee Reports ... **CR**

➤ Executive Sessions ... **ES**

➤ Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

➤ Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)

➤ Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)

(**ab** = Assembly Bill)

(**ar** = Assembly Resolution)

(**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)

(**sb** = Senate Bill)

(**sr** = Senate Resolution)

(**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)

➤ Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

* Contents organized for archiving by: Stefanie Rose (LRB) (June 2012)

Senate

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Natural Resources and Transportation

Assembly Bill 586

Relating to: hunting and firearm possession by persons who are under 16 years of age.

By Representatives Gunderson, Moulton, Musser, Pettis, Bies, Hines, Kestell, Krawczyk, Lehman, Montgomery, Ott, Suder, Townsend, Turner, Vos, Vruwink and M. Williams; cosponsored by Senators Zien, Reynolds, Decker and Breske.

December 16, 2005 Referred to Committee on Natural Resources and Transportation.

January 11, 2006 **PUBLIC HEARING HELD**

Present: (5) Senators Kedzie, Stepp, Kapanke, Wirch and Breske.
Absent: (0) None.

Appearances For

- Scott Gunderson — State Representative, 83rd Assembly District
- Bill Torhorst — National Wild Turkey Federation
- Rob Sexton — U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance
- Dean Hamilton, Waunakee
- Greg Kazmierski — Wisconsin Deer Hunters Coalition and Safari Club International
- Scott Meyer — Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association
- Gary Jackson, Marshall
- Jeff Nania, Portage — WI Waterfowl Association
- Ralph Fritsch — Wisconsin Wildlife Federation
- Dan Gunderson — Wisconsin Outdoors Alliance
- Charles Burke — National Wild Turkey Federation

Appearances Against

- Timothy Corden — Dr., Wisconsin-American Academy of Pediatrics
- James Slattery, Mazomanie — Dr.
- Joe Slattery, Green Bay
- Karen Slattery, Waukesha
- Mark Doremus, Waukesha

Appearances for Information Only

- Tom Van Haren — WI Department of Natural Resources

Registrations For

- Ryan Burke, Westby
- Nick Burke, Westby
- Dave Zien — Senator, 23rd Senate District
- Mark Pettis — State Representative, 28th Assembly District
- Mark Reihl — Wisconsin State Council of Carpenters
- Steve Schuster, Madison

Registrations Against

- Nan Peterson — Safe Kids Coalition

January 11, 2006

EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD

Present: (5) Senators Kedzie, Stepp, Kapanke, Wirch and Breske.
Absent: (0) None.

Moved by Senator Breske, seconded by Senator Wirch that **Senate Amendment 1** be recommended for introduction and adoption.

Ayes: (5) Senators Kedzie, Stepp, Kapanke, Wirch and Breske.
Noes: (0) None.

INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF SENATE AMENDMENT 1
RECOMMENDED, Ayes 5, Noes 0

Moved by Senator Breske, seconded by Senator Wirch that **Assembly Bill 586** be recommended for concurrence as amended.

Ayes: (4) Senators Kedzie, Kapanke, Wirch and Breske.
Noes: (1) Senator Stepp.

CONCURRENCE AS AMENDED RECOMMENDED, Ayes 4, Noes 1

Dan Johnson
Committee Clerk

Record of Committee Proceedings

Joint committee on Finance

Assembly Bill 586

Vote Record

Committee on Natural Resources and Transportation

Date: 1-11-06

Bill Number: AB 586

Moved by: Breske

Seconded by: Wirch

Motion: Introduction and Adoption of SA1

Committee Member

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
Senator Neal Kedzie, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Cathy Stepp	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Dan Kapanke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Roger Breske	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Robert Wirch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Totals: _____

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Vote Record

Committee on Natural Resources and Transportation

Date: 1-11-06

Bill Number: AB 586

Moved by: Breske

Seconded by: Wirch

Motion: Concurrence as Amended

Committee Member

Senator Neal Kedzie, Chair

Senator Cathy Stepp

Senator Dan Kapanke

Senator Roger Breske

Senator Robert Wirch

Aye

No

Absent

Not Voting

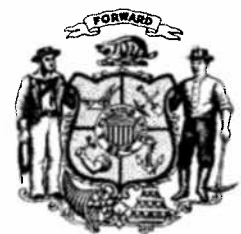
Totals: _____

Motion Carried

Motion Failed



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



**Chairman's Notes: Senate Committee on
Natural Resources and Transportation
Public Hearing – January 11, 2005**

- ✓ • Welcome to today's hearing of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Transportation.
- ✓ • Committee Clerk will take Attendance. The roll will be left open for members who have yet to arrive.
- ✓ • I would like to remind individuals wishing to testify to fill out a hearing slip and give it to the member of the Sergeant's Staff.

✓ **Senate Bill 162 (Introduced by the Joint Legislative Council)**

Relating to: creating a Council on Transportation Infrastructure in the Department of Transportation.

Summary: This bill creates a 16-member Council on Transportation Infrastructure (council) in the Department of Transportation (DOT). The membership of the council is composed of the following:

- four persons who have knowledge or experience in matters related to transportation infrastructure, appointed by the governor;
- four persons who have knowledge or experience in matters related to transportation infrastructure, of whom one person is appointed by, respectively, the speaker of the assembly, the assembly minority leader, the senate majority leader, and the senate minority leader;
- two state officers with duties related to transportation infrastructure, appointed by the governor;
- the secretary of transportation (secretary) or his or her designee, who serves as the chairperson; and,
- five legislative members, three from the assembly and two from the senate, who serve on standing committees dealing with transportation matters, appointed as are members of legislative standing committees.

The council is authorized to consider and make recommendations to DOT on matters related to transportation infrastructure development, including

Questions:

- How many stoplights are equipped with this type of technology?
- How prevalent are these types of preemption devices on vehicles in Wisconsin?
- How will law enforcement be able to enforce this provision? Won't it be difficult for law enforcement to know what vehicle has the device attached to it?

Assembly Bill 586 (Rep. Gunderson and Sen. Zien)

Relating to: hunting and firearm possession by persons who are under 16 years of age.

Summary: AB 586 changes the minimum age for hunting to eight years and requires a child age 8 to 11 to be accompanied by a "mentor" who meets the requirements of the statute. A mentor must be the parent or guardian of the child, or an adult (age 18 or older) designated by the parent or guardian. The mentor for a person age 18 or older is not required to be a parent, guardian, or designee. The mentor must stay within arm's reach of the hunter, must hold any hunting approval, must be 18 years of age or older, must hold a hunter's education certificate (unless not required by law to have one to hunt), may have only one weapon between the mentor and the hunter, and the mentor may only accompany a single hunter. The bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to distribute a pamphlet on hunter's safety for use by mentors, particularly those who are not required to have taken a hunter's safety course. A mentor may also accompany a child who is hunting and is age 12 or 13, or a child who is hunting and is age 14 or 15 and does not have a hunter's education certificate, or an older person who does not have a hunter's education certificate but is otherwise required to have the certificate to hunt.

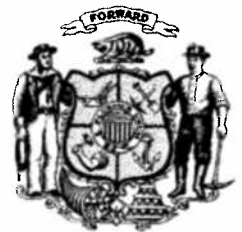
The bill also authorizes a person who is 12 years of age or older and is hunting on family-owned land in a situation where no license is required to use a crossbow as well as a bow and arrow or a firearm. The bill allows a child age eight or older to apply for a bear license preference. Also, the Department of Natural Resources is required to prepare a report on the effect of the bill and distribute the report to the Legislature by June 1, 2008.

Assembly History:

- Assembly Committee on Natural Resources voted 12-2 to recommend AB 586 for passage.
- The Assembly passed AB 586 on a 74-19 vote.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



**Executive Session Notes
January 11, 2006**

- Committee Clerk will take Attendance.

Senate Bill 464 (Senator Brown and Rep. Gunderson)

Relating to: authorizing a person to transport an unencased firearm in a motor vehicle under certain circumstances

- MOTION FOR PASSAGE
- SECOND
- DISCUSSION
- ROLE CALL

Assembly Bill 248 (Rep. Hines and Senator Olsen)

Relating to: operation of motorboats by persons who are at least 16 years of age and born after a certain date

- MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE
- SECOND
- DISCUSSION
- ROLE CALL

Assembly Bill 26 (Companion to SB 33; passed 5-0 on October 20) (Rep. Gunderson and Senator Leibham)

Relating to: entering into the wildlife violator compact

- MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE
- SECOND
- DISCUSSION
- ROLE CALL

Assembly Bill 556 (Rep. Hahn and Senator Grothman)

Relating to: trailers or semitrailers used to transport livestock.

- MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE
- SECOND
- DISCUSSION
- ROLE CALL

Assembly Bill 365 (Rep. Van Roy and Senator Olsen)

Relating to: traffic control signal emergency preemption devices, and providing a penalty.

- MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE
- SECOND
- DISCUSSION
- ROLE CALL

Assembly Bill 586 (Rep. Gunderson and Sen. Zien)

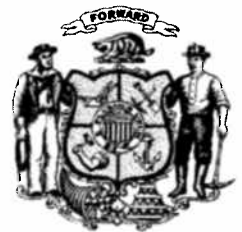
Relating to: hunting and firearm possession by persons who are under 16 years of age.

- MOTION FOR INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF SENATE AMENDMENT 1
- SECOND
- DISCUSSION
- ROLE CALL

- MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE AS AMENDED
- SECOND
- DISCUSSION
- ROLE CALL



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student of River Crossing Environment charter school. I am writing this letter in support of the bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. The reason I'm supporting this bill is because it gives younger children more responsibility. If they get to hunt at a younger age it will help them to learn to become better hunters. If the child is to hunt he/she will probably to be more cautious while using a gun. That's why think you should pass this bill. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

Emily Baggot
Emily Baggot



January 5, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. I think this bill is a good idea because it will help get younger kids interested in the outdoors and hunting. Most children are responsible enough to go out hunting with a mentor. If children start watching a mentor at a younger age they will have more experience when they are older. I think children will be more responsible as adult hunters if they are able to watch and learn when they are younger. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kaci Baillies".

Kaci Baillies



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. I am in support of this bill because I think it would get more kids interested in hunting and nature. I believe that hunting is necessary to maintain the health of our environment. We have eliminated many of the natural predators of our animals and now we must find a way to control their increasing population. As the number of hunters in our state continues to fall each year I think it is a good idea to get kids educated in hunting skills and the importance of hunting to our ecosystem. I think if hunting is started at a younger age, it becomes part of a tradition and your way of life. I don't think that you can determine that every single person would be responsible enough to hunt at any particular age. But I do think the mentor program would give kids that wouldn't normally get the opportunity to hunt a chance to be a part of a safe hunting experience without having to invest lots of money into it before they're sure they want to begin hunting. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

Julia Corliss

Julia Corliss



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. My name is Justin Fobes. I think that Children should be allowed to hunt with a mentor at the age of eight. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "JF", written in a cursive style.

Justin Fobes



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. My father hunts, both of my grandfathers hunted, my mom hunts, I hunt, and my brother is going to hunt next year. I have been at the shooting range since I was born. I have been taught shooting from my dad. I sat through the hunter's safety program with my mom the year before I could take it. I took it the spring I turned twelve and I have taken hunter's safety with River Crossing last year.

Hunting is very important for the ecosystem and the environment. There are all these people who don't like hunting because they think it is hurting the animals, but really if you think about it you are hurting the animals more when you don't hunt. If there was no hunting the animals, let's say the deer, they would just grow in population and then they would eat all the plants, which may kill all the rabbits. Then the fox population will decrease from lack of food and the coyote population will increase because of their abundant food source. Then when the deer's food sources disappear then they will deplete. Then the coyotes will have to go and find a new food source of food. Then they may invade our cities. Then they may come and use our cats, dogs, or other domesticated animals. This would become a very big problem. This is a big reason why we need youth hunting because for every 100 that leave hunting, only 53 come in. We need youth hunting very badly for these reasons. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Manda Halatek".

Manda Halatek



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding the mentor program. I feel that the mentor program is needed for kids like me who want to hunt but can't because they have no one to go with. I feel that it will get more kids involved in the outdoors. This may solve the obesity in our world. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andy Ley".

Andy Ley



River Crossing
Environmental Charter School

January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing support bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. I want to hunt, I think it would be a great experience, and it would get me more active but I have not had a chance to go hunting yet. So I think it is great that we get to take hunter safety in River Crossing. I think it would have been good for me to go with an experienced hunter when I was 8 instead of waiting to take hunter safety. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

Andy Linscheid
Andy Linscheid



January 04, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School in Portage. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding the mentor program for youth hunting in Wisconsin. I think that a mentor program is just what Wisconsin needs to boost interest in hunting from kids. There are plenty of kids who will never go hunting because they don't think they will like it, but when introduced to the sport by a mentor, this may change their opinion. There are also plenty of kids that go through the hunter safety class and then soon realize that hunting doesn't appeal to them. The mentor program can allow kids to get the experience of hunting before they go through hunter safety so they don't make that mistake. I have been hunting for a year now with my father who has been hunting ever since he was my age. I have been fortunate enough to have someone to go hunting with, but I know many kids who have no one to go hunting with. This mentor program can give kids the opportunity to explore the outdoors while participating in the sport of hunting. Again, I strongly agree with the bill AB-586. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Caitlin Luebke", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Caitlin Luebke



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. Personally, I am an anti-hunter and I will never ever go hunting, but I feel that it is important for other people to have the chance. I also think that there should be an application process for the person wishing to hunt with a mentor because we can never be too safe. Even though I strongly disagree with hunting I know it is necessary for survival. Thanks you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nina".

Nina



January 4, 2006

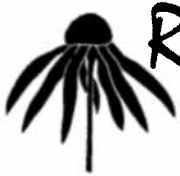
Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student in River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. I am completely in support of this bill. I like that it can be the parents' decision when the child can go out hunting. It is also good that this bill accepts all ages for the mentor program. I think there should be a website with the list of all the mentors and have a background check on the mentors before they qualify. I also think there should be a special mentors tag. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Peterson".

David Peterson



River Crossing
Environmental Charter School

January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. I am a hunter safety graduate. I think giving kids above at the age of 8 the opportunity to hunt would help replace the people who stop hunting. I also think that if we get more kids into hunting earlier in life they will keep hunting for a longer period of time and will keep buying permits, licenses, and ammunition. I hope you will take my thought into mind. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Redd". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dennis Redd



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. I am a hunter safety graduate and I would like this bill to pass because I do not have anybody to hunt with. So if this bill was passed I could have someone to hunt with. The only thing I do not like about this bill is that age eight is young for a hunter. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dominic Potter".

Dominic Potter



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. I believe hunting is important for kids. Starting at age 8 is a good idea because it introduces the outdoors at a young age. Hunting and being outdoors may be a good idea to get more kids off the couch and away from television so it may prevent obesity from happening with some people because they are getting more exercise and are enjoying the outdoors at the same time. Hunting is good because it keeps the population of animals low so they don't disrupt the food chain. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harley Soerfass".

Harley Soerfass



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental charter school. I am righting in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth Hunting. I have been hunting since I was able to go out in the woods with my dad and uncles and Grandpa. I think it is a good idea that we have hunting for kids that want to hunt with a mentor or the parents. For the longest time I waited to be able to hunt to shoot a deer or ducks as I saw my Father do so many times before. I would like this bill to go through for my little brother so can we can go as a family not just mom, Dad, sister and me and now we could go as a family if this is approved. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Talley", written in a cursive style.

William Talley



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. I am a hunter myself and I think it would be nice if kids could get out hunting at age 8 but I think that kids age 8 and 9 would go out and watch the mentor when he or she hunts and they would be able to decide if they think that hunting is for them and at age 10+ they could actually handle a gun with the mentor within arms reach. I have taken hunter safety 2 times and I'm going to do it a 3rd and the 2nd and soon to be 3rd where here at school and I think that is really nice because some of the kids don't have the time at home or the money in some cases to actually take hunter safety but when it's in school they do it as a curriculum and they don't have to hunt after they take it but just to have it incase they want to some time in their life. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kaitlen Watson".

Kaitlen Watson



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. I just want to say that this is the best idea ever. I think that people should know what they are getting into before they spend money on something they don't like. I say that kids should be able to have a chance at hunting or the population of many animals will rise to high to be unsustainable. P.E.T.A should not be able to stop people from something that they find is right. If they want to be vegetarians, fine, but they shouldn't drag us into their affairs. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Wentz", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

John Wentz



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie,

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing in support of bill AB-586 regarding youth hunting. I would like every child to have the chance to try hunting before they get too involved in sports. Some of them could probably be a bit older than eight because they could be irresponsible. I don't have any hunting background, and no one in my family hunts. I would really like to be able to learn to hunt because it sounds like a lot of fun. I would hope that many people will get involved with hunting and that no one will ruin it before my children have a chance to try it. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

Sincerely,

Maggie Wolf

Maggie Wolf



January 4, 2006

Dear Senator Kedzie

I am a student at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. I am writing about bill AB-586. I like the idea of the mentor but the age of 8 doesn't seem right, that's why I think it should be up at least to age of 10. I have seen kids at the age of 8 that never act mature and at age of 10 they will at least be a little more mature. Besides they can wait two more years. Thank you for all you do for kids and conservation.

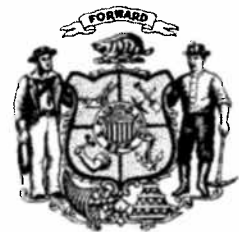
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Damien Zamzow".

Damien Zamzow



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





"Dedicated to the Conservation of
Wisconsin's Waterfowl and Wetland Resources"

WISCONSIN WATERFOWL ASSOCIATION, INC.
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(262) 369-7813 (Fax)
www.wisducks.org

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Transportation
Chair Neal Kedzie
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

1/9/2006

Dear Chairman Kedzie and Committee members,

The Wisconsin Waterfowl Association is pleased to support AB 586. We believe that it is a good *first* step in promoting hunting in Wisconsin. Hunting, fishing and trapping provide billions of dollars in annual revenue for our State. In addition it is a healthy, safe, family oriented activity.

With the conventional family structure struggling, kids being bombarded with activities that compete for every minute of their time, the role of mentors becomes far more important.

I feel that the success of the program will be dependent on connecting mentors and students. A state sponsored mentor clearing house matching local kids and adults with local mentors would cost very little and significantly increase the effectiveness of this program.

In addition I would like thank both the Senate and Assembly Committees for expanding the mentor provision to include adults.

I implore the committee to continue it's efforts to support fishing, hunting and trapping by examining equally critical issues, the unwarranted exclusion of hunters, trappers and anglers from public property, and unnecessarily complex regulations.

In the end we only conserve what we love;
We will love what we understand;
And understand only what we have been taught.(Dioum)

This level of learning, loving and understanding will never occur by watching a television, or computer screen.

Sincerely

Jeff Nanta



Does hunting and fishing have a future?

BY JEFF NANIA

I am a hunter, an angler and a conservationist. I was taught by my father and others. I have learned that killing something is an inevitable part of hunting. That the feeling of elation for my success and sadness for the fate of my prey has nothing to do with weakness of character.

When I fish or hunt and harvest something I become part of the natural circle of life and death. I do not wear a T-shirt that features dead deer and says "shoot 'em and stack 'em." You can if you want, but that's not the message I want to send. I have had the privilege of helping many

non-hunters become hunters. I do not get in the face of non-hunters. However, when confronted by anti-hunter rhetoric, I am not the least bit shy about speaking up.

To me, our outdoor traditions are not so much sport as a way of life. It is reflected in my home decor, the books on my shelves, the kind of car I drive. I enjoy outdoor activities and the company of hunters and anglers year round.

I have taught my kids to hunt and fish and preached the inseparable relationship between mankind and our natural resources. Over the years they have all

served their penance as part of my field crews: burning, surveying, muck up to their knees. As real memories fade they may even look back fondly on these times.

Somehow, even among some members of the conservation community, it has become less and less acceptable to be a hunter. It is hard to understand when you consider, even the most vocal anti-hunter hunts. The only difference is the method of harvest and weapon of choice. I use a shotgun or fishing rod — they use check or credit card. I go to the marsh or lake — they go to the grocery store. It appears to



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me they feel the chicken or fish they buy, killed by someone else, already packaged, removes them from the natural circle. It doesn't. Also please don't try to exempt the vegetarians. I have joined in their annual pursuit of morel mushrooms and wild asparagus and they may be the most dedicated hunters of all.

There is one big difference between types of hunters. Some of us buy hunting and fishing licenses, some don't. Those who do are the lifeblood of conservation, contributing hundreds of millions of dollars every year to our state economy and natural resources, plus, add to that the incalculable value of hunter/angler-funded habitat restoration projects.

Hunting and fishing is big business. So it is no wonder that flat or declining license sales have been a major issue of concern, especially for those that depend so heavily on these revenues. Bureaucracy has responded as expected, asking for increased license fees and exploring new taxes as an alternative funding source.

These changes may be good ideas, but

the reality is, asking fewer to pay more is a short-term solution. If this were any other viable big business in decline, the government would be jumping in with both feet, finding out why, doing everything it could to make sure that no jobs were lost.

General tax revenues would be shifted to provide economic support. Sound bites from our elected officials would rally the state to the cause. Why no outcry for our outdoor traditions?

Change is long overdue. This state needs to stop taking the support of hunters and anglers for granted and be reminded at every opportunity of our contributions. Here are some thoughts on how we might get started.

- Our state government needs to aggressively support and promote hunting and fishing, if for no other reason than the revenue it produces.
- When lands are purchased and/or supported with public dollars, there should be open, meaningful, public input into the compatible uses for that property. I treasure the protection of

our north country and the hunter/angler opportunity it provides, but involving people in hunting and fishing requires quality opportunities close to home. In one southeastern county, over 7,300 acres of public land is closed to all hunting. The stated reason was safety concerns. However, when open for hunting there was never a recorded hunting-related safety problem. In addition the county land manager freely admits that over half that land could be opened for hunting with no ill effects. Should all publicly supported land be open for hunting and fishing? Of course not, but where appropriate it should be allowed.

- We need to promote, invest in and expand our hunter safety programs. This volunteer program is absolutely the key to the future. Let's add to that an effective statewide, organized, sanctioned mentor program.
 - The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) needs to
- (Nania, Continued on Page 44)

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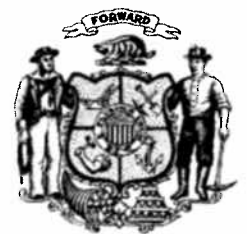
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WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



TESTIMONY ON AMENDED ASSEMBLY BILL 586

January 11, 2006

Chairman Kedzie and members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Ralph Fritsch and I live in Kaukauna, WI. I am here to represent the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the state's largest conservation organization which is comprised of 110 hunting, fishing and trapping clubs and organizations. I am the Chairman of the Federation's Wildlife Committee, a past president of the organization and a member of the Board of Directors for over twenty years.

The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation is a strong supporter of youth hunting, fishing and trapping in Wisconsin and throughout our country. The Federation has been working to lower the youth hunting age in our state for over one and a half years now. This issue has been the topic of discussion at numerous Wildlife Committee meetings and at more than four of the Federation's 51 person Board of Director's meeting.

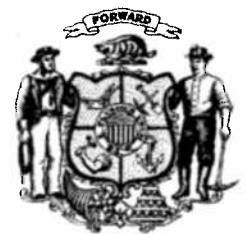
We come before you today to state our strong support for the amended AB586 Youth Hunting Bill. In AB586, as originally proposed, the 10 year age requirement was acceptable. With the attached amendment bringing the age to 8 years old, we feel we can accept that change due to the safeguards incorporated in the amended bill. With these safeguards, we feel a true safe mentoring situation can be accomplished. An adult mentor must be with the youth at all times and there is only one firearm in use.

The Wildlife Federation requested that the bill be modified to 1.) Require the D.N.R. to provide written information to the youth and mentor on safe firearm usage, including the principles of Hunter Education and 2.) Require the D.N.R. to report in two years as to how the youth hunting and mentoring program is proceeding, including safety information.

This bill as presented today will hopefully introduce a safe hunting experience to our State's youth. This bill will enable them to participate in a sport that has been handed down from generation to generation at an age where they can experience the tradition of hunting and learn to appreciate the natural resources of our state.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





NRA-ILA

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

11250 WAPLES MILL ROAD
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030-7400

January 11, 2006

Senate Natural Resources Committee Members
Wisconsin State Senate
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator:

I am writing to request that you support AB 586, regarding youth and mentored hunting. As research from the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance and National Wild Turkey Federation has shown, hunter retention rates are critically low in Wisconsin. AB 586 promises to increase hunter retention while *improving* on Wisconsin's already outstanding hunter safety record.

Currently, for every 100 hunters who are lost to old age or other factors, only 53 replace them. At this rate, Wisconsin's rich sporting heritage will be in great jeopardy after the passage of only a few generations. While hunting is absolutely essential as a means of managing the state's natural resources, it also instills individual responsibility and respect for the outdoors in our youth and bolsters family relationships like few other activities can. Hunting must be preserved and encouraged through all means available.

The primary reasons cited for Wisconsin's low hunter retention rate is the high minimum age of 12 years-old and lengthy training requirement that must be met prior to potential sportsmen having the opportunity to determine whether hunting is right for them. AB 586 addresses both of these problems by allowing younger children, and adults who have not completed hunter safety, to get out and hunt as long as they are mentored by an adult who meets the hunter safety requirement.

Evidence from other states shows that mentored hunting is the safest form of what is already one of the safest recreational activities that Americans enjoy. This stands to reason when taking into account that two minds, instead of one, are present to make every decision in the field. A key factor is that the knowledge gained through experience or the hunter education program is always present with the youth or novice hunter who is being mentored.

AB 586 empowers parents to make the decision as to when their children are mature enough to hunt. Parents, not the state, know what is best for their children and their families. Wives and adult friends of seasoned hunters will be able to "try it before they buy it." In other words, they will be able to determine whether they enjoy hunting before investing the valuable time and energy associated with completing hunter safety education, something that often deters interested adults from making their trial run.

Nearly all of the organizations representing hunters and gun owners in Wisconsin strongly support this legislation. There are one or two who claim that it will somehow endanger safety. It is important to understand that they have no evidence whatsoever to substantiate their claims. Many states have virtually no regulation of youth hunting. These states have safety records that are comparable to the states like Wisconsin with extensive regulations. AB 586, while providing comprehensive solutions to a serious problem, does not provide for anything close to "unregulated youth hunting."

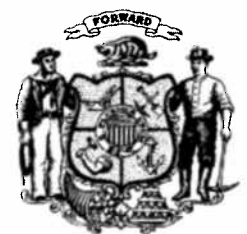
Thank you for your consideration of this legislation that is so important to the future of hunting in Wisconsin. Please call me at (703) 267-1207 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Darren LaSorte
NRA-ILA
Wisconsin State Liaison



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



**Comments by the Wisconsin Outdoors Alliance regarding A.B. 586
before the Natural Resources Committee of the Wisconsin Senate
January 11, 2006**

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to address the Natural Resources Committee. The Wisconsin Outdoors Alliance (WOA) represents a diverse membership that seeks to unify the voices of hunters, trappers, anglers and conservationists to demonstrate both the overwhelming importance of resource stewardship and economic power of Wisconsin's outdoors industry.

A principle concern of the WOA is to help recruit and promote hunting, particularly among Wisconsin's youth. The WOA's commitment is such that the Board created a separate, but affiliated Foundation. The WOA Education Foundation's primary mission, at this time, is to develop, promote and manage the Wisconsin Outdoor Education Expo for 5,000 fourth and fifth graders in May 2006. This background information is critical to understanding why the WOA is here today.

In February 2004, the WOA became the first statewide organization to endorse lowering the hunting age. Our position was:

- Lower the age from 12 to 10
- Require a youth hunter to be "within the grasp" of a mentor
- Require the mentor to have hunter safety education certification
- One firearm between mentor and youth

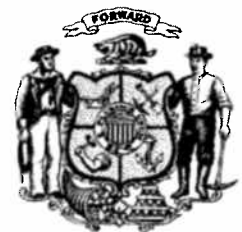
This position was based upon facts presented about hunter recruitment and participation. The most compelling evidence reviewed by the Board was a study presented by Responsive Management. Responsive Management was commissioned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to study the participation of youth 18 and under in the outdoors. This decade-long study found that youth who not exposed to hunting by age 12 were unlikely to continue actively hunting as adults. This finding has wide-ranging implications for conservation funding and the well-being of future generations. It was the final piece of the puzzle necessary for the WOA Board.

The WOA has been so committed to lowering the hunting age that we produced, funded and aired over 700 radio commercials, statewide, to educate the public about the issue. In addition, editorials and columns in publications such as the *Wisconsin Sports Weekly* have been published regularly since 2004.

The WOA supports A.B. 586 and urges you to pass this important legislation.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



AB
586

YOUTH HUNTING REPORT

The Success of Youth Recruitment

The Impact of Youth Hunting Restrictions

**The Future of Hunting, Conservation and the Shooting
Sports Industry**

The Safety Record of Youth Hunters

Research compiled by

*Silvertip Productions, Southwick
Associates and the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance*

for the

National Shooting Sports Foundation

and

National Wild Turkey Federation

Introduction

There is a growing concern about the ability to increase youth participation in hunting. These concerns are shared by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) and the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance (USSA). It is the position of the three organizations that recruitment efforts are hampered by state laws and regulations that restrict youth hunting. This position is reinforced by the findings reported in this paper.

It is the intent of the three organizations to educate the general public, elected officials and sportsmen about the need to lower barriers to youth hunting. Further, the organizations are launching a campaign to work in the states with local sportsmen to enact legislation or regulations to achieve that goal.

Purpose of this Report

This report examines the success of youth recruitment, compares the impact of youth hunting restrictions, projects future hunting numbers, and looks at safety statistics for youth hunters. The majority of the research was compiled by Silvertip Productions. Projections on hunting numbers and expenditures were provided by Southwick Associates, Inc. The report was written by USSA, Silvertip and Southwick. The findings were peer reviewed for statistical validity by the Triad Research Group. The research was funded by NSSF. The project, Families Afield, is a collaborative effort between NSSF, NWTf and USSA.

Finding #1: The Need For Aggressive Recruitment Is Urgent

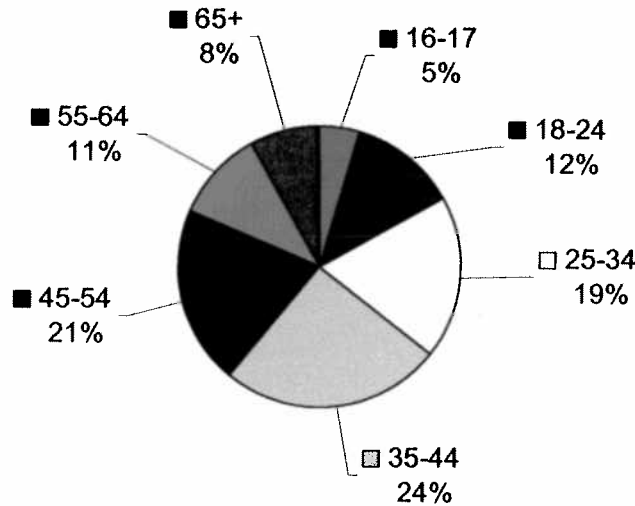
While all agree that youth recruitment efforts must increase, the time to act is now. The reason: hunters ages 35-54. This segment of hunters represents a disproportionate share of the U.S. hunting population (45.8%). The younger age segments are considerably smaller. If attracting new hunters is indeed a high priority, it is imperative to take advantage of this large group of hunters.

Why are 35-54 year old hunters so important? People in this age group are more likely to have children that are old enough to introduce to hunting and mentor them throughout their youth. For this report, this group will be called the *teaching class*.

The 25-34 year old age group is 25 percent smaller than the 35-44 year old group. In other words, the *teaching class* of tomorrow will be significantly smaller than the current group. Fewer teachers will result in fewer pupils.

What these statistics tell us is that steps must be taken now to maximize future hunter numbers or even hold the line on current numbers.

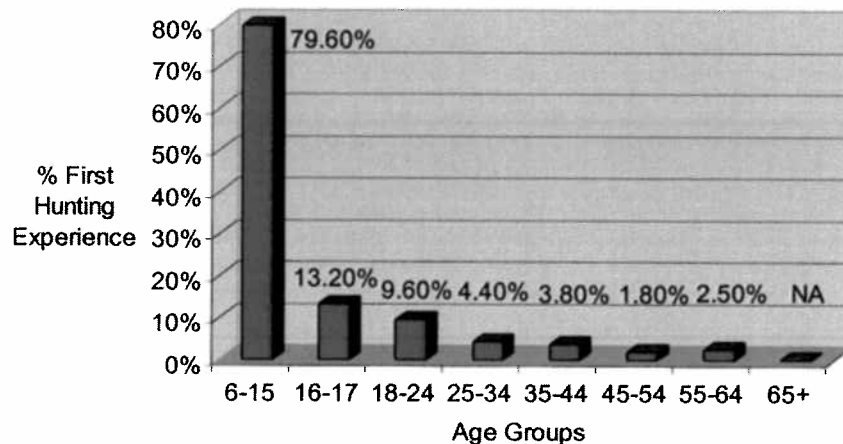
ADULT HUNTERS YEAR 2000



Source: National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation. (2001)

Youth must continue to be the primary focus of hunter recruitment efforts. This is the age group when the overwhelming majority of first time hunting experiences take place.

**RATE OF FIRST HUNTING EXPERIENCE
Sorted by age group**



Source: National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation. (2001)

Growth Rates by Age Groups

Hunter numbers in general have fallen over the past 15 years in every age category except 65+. Participation rates are declining the fastest in the youngest age groups.

AGE	ANNUAL GROWTH RATE, 1985-2001
16-17	-2.77%
18-24	-3.50%
25-34	-2.60%
35-44	-1.89%
45-54	-1.31%
55-64	-0.42%
65 Plus	0.18%
TOTAL	-2.27%

Source: Southwick Associates, Inc. (2005)

Finding #2: Youth Participation Rates Are Not Keeping Pace

There are strong indicators that youth participation rates will not be sufficient to replace current hunters.

At the age of 16, most states allow youth to hunt with the same privileges as adults provided they complete a hunter education course and purchase a license. For that reason, youth hunters will be defined as a hunter between the ages of six and 15.

National Figures

4.23 percent of Americans age 6-15 hunted in 2000.

6.15 percent of Americans 16 + hunted in 2000.

Dividing the youth participation percentage by the adult participation percentage provides a ratio of the total population of youth who hunted compared to the total population of adults who hunted during the year 2000. We call the resultant number the national hunter replacement ratio.

While current data is insufficient to pinpoint a ratio that will sustain the current numbers of hunters into the future, we believe that a ratio higher than 1.0 is needed for the following reasons:

- Most adult hunters started hunting at a very young age.
- New adult hunters are more likely to desert hunting.
- Demographics point to an aging population: populations of younger Americans are smaller, so even if we maintain the same percentage of youth compared to adults, total numbers of hunters will likely drop.
- Some youth become temporary or permanent dropouts when they go to college, join the armed services, or move away from home.

The national hunter replacement ratio for 2000 is .69.

State by State

We then sorted the results by state.

- State ratios ranged from .26 – 1.16.
- Seven states are performing at a level above one.
- Eleven states are at a level of .9 or above.

State By State Hunter Replacement Ratios-2000

State	Population Ages 6 - 15	Hunters Ages 6 - 15	Percent Hunters	Population Ages 16+	Hunters Ages 16+	Percent Hunters	Hunter Replacement Ratio
Missouri	809,000	92,000	11.37%	4,206,000	413,000	9.82%	1.16
Oklahoma	498,000	51,000	10.24%	2,587,000	241,000	9.32%	1.10
New Hampshire	182,000	11,000	6.04%	954,000	53,000	5.56%	1.09
Rhode Island	144,000	2,000	1.39%	765,000	10,000	1.31%	1.06
Delaware	106,000	3,000	2.83%	599,000	16,000	2.67%	1.06
Arizona	806,000	28,000	3.47%	3,700,000	124,000	3.35%	1.04
Mississippi	438,000	54,000	12.33%	2,111,000	257,000	12.17%	1.01
Alabama	618,000	56,000	9.06%	3,427,000	316,000	9.22%	0.98
West Virginia	233,000	37,000	15.88%	1,447,000	235,000	16.24%	0.98
Indiana	874,000	51,000	5.84%	4,558,000	284,000	6.23%	0.94
Florida	2,159,000	43,000	1.99%	12,171,000	270,000	2.22%	0.90
Illinois	1,833,000	60,000	3.27%	9,244,000	340,000	3.68%	0.89
Maryland	778,000	21,000	2.70%	4,078,000	124,000	3.04%	0.89
Iowa	413,000	33,000	7.99%	2,201,000	203,000	9.22%	0.87
California	5,239,000	46,000	0.88%	25,982,000	277,000	1.07%	0.82
Tennessee	790,000	48,000	6.08%	4,317,000	320,000	7.41%	0.82
Vermont	83,000	10,000	12.05%	479,000	75,000	15.66%	0.77
Georgia	1,224,000	58,000	4.74%	6,096,000	377,000	6.18%	0.77
North Carolina	1,171,000	47,000	4.01%	5,918,000	314,000	5.31%	0.76
Ohio	1,637,000	69,000	4.22%	8,645,000	482,000	5.58%	0.76
Texas	3,276,000	175,000	5.34%	15,445,000	1,126,000	7.29%	0.73
South Dakota	112,000	13,000	11.61%	559,000	90,000	16.10%	0.72
Kansas	392,000	28,000	7.14%	2,017,000	202,000	10.01%	0.71
Colorado	623,000	23,000	3.69%	3,215,000	168,000	5.23%	0.71
Virginia	977,000	38,000	3.89%	5,471,000	309,000	5.65%	0.69
Kentucky	557,000	32,000	5.75%	3,121,000	273,000	8.75%	0.66
Wyoming	71,000	8,000	11.27%	377,000	65,000	17.24%	0.65
Hawaii	160,000	2,000	1.25%	916,000	18,000	1.97%	0.64
South Carolina	553,000	26,000	4.70%	3,080,000	232,000	7.53%	0.62
Pennsylvania	1,656,000	96,000	5.80%	9,303,000	867,000	9.32%	0.62
New Mexico	285,000	15,000	5.26%	1,337,000	114,000	8.53%	0.62
Nebraska	248,000	15,000	6.05%	1,266,000	128,000	10.11%	0.60
Alaska	112,000	11,000	9.82%	454,000	75,000	16.52%	0.59
Utah	384,000	26,000	6.77%	1,554,000	178,000	11.45%	0.59
Minnesota	733,000	68,000	9.28%	3,688,000	582,000	15.78%	0.59
Maine	170,000	12,000	7.06%	1,005,000	123,000	12.24%	0.58
Montana	132,000	18,000	13.64%	699,000	171,000	24.46%	0.56
New York	2,597,000	65,000	2.50%	14,201,000	642,000	4.52%	0.55
New Jersey	1,192,000	13,000	1.09%	6,300,000	125,000	1.98%	0.55
North Dakota	89,000	9,000	10.11%	483,000	92,000	19.05%	0.53
Wisconsin	778,000	60,000	7.71%	4,059,000	591,000	14.56%	0.53
Massachusetts	848,000	7,000	0.83%	4,837,000	78,000	1.61%	0.51
Arkansas	373,000	28,000	7.51%	1,999,000	309,000	15.46%	0.49
Connecticut	478,000	4,000	0.84%	2,536,000	46,000	1.81%	0.46
Washington	869,000	20,000	2.30%	4,516,000	231,000	5.12%	0.45
Louisiana	677,000	27,000	3.99%	3,306,000	314,000	9.50%	0.42
Idaho	206,000	13,000	6.31%	972,000	151,000	15.53%	0.41
Oregon	476,000	15,000	3.15%	2,630,000	235,000	8.94%	0.35
Nevada	302,000	3,000	0.99%	1,454,000	48,000	3.30%	0.30
Michigan	1,498,000	37,000	2.47%	7,587,000	725,000	9.56%	0.26
Totals	40,859,000	1,727,000	4.23%	211,872,000	13,039,000	6.15%	0.69

Source: National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation. (2001)

Finding #3: Youth Recruitment Is Less Successful In States With Higher Youth Hunting Restrictions

We classified all 50 states according to the level of restrictions on youth hunting opportunities. Criteria included the age at which youth may hunt and hunter education requirements. Due to the shift over the years from small game hunting to big game hunting, we weighed heavily whether or not youth are permitted to hunt big game. Because of the population shift from rural to urban areas, access to public land was also weighed heavily. The states are placed in three categories: very restrictive states, somewhat restrictive states and least restrictive states.

We then sorted the states into the three categories and examined their hunter replacement ratios.

Very Restrictive States

Twenty states have very restrictive regulations or laws. These restrictions include minimum age requirements for youth hunting for those under 13 and high hunter education requirements before most participation is permitted.

Sixteen of the 20 states performed at a level lower than the .69 national average.

Rating (Regs)	State	Ratio
Very Restrictive	Rhode Island	1.06
Very Restrictive	California	0.82
Very Restrictive	South Dakota	0.72
Very Restrictive	Colorado	0.71
Very Restrictive	Wyoming	0.65
Very Restrictive	Pennsylvania	0.62
Very Restrictive	Nebraska	0.60
Very Restrictive	Utah	0.59
Very Restrictive	Maine	0.58
Very Restrictive	Montana	0.56
Very Restrictive	New York	0.55
Very Restrictive	New Jersey	0.55
Very Restrictive	North Dakota	0.53
Very Restrictive	Wisconsin	0.53
Very Restrictive	Massachusetts	0.51
Very Restrictive	Connecticut	0.46
Very Restrictive	Idaho	0.41
Very Restrictive	Oregon	0.35
Very Restrictive	Nevada	0.30
Very Restrictive	Michigan	0.26
Subtotals		0.53

Somewhat Restrictive States

Thirteen states have some restrictive regulations or laws. These include requiring hunter education certification prior to permitting many youth hunting opportunities.

Five of the 13 states performed at a rate lower than the national average.

Rating (Regs)	State	Ratio
Somewhat Restrictive	Delaware	1.06
Somewhat Restrictive	Arizona	1.04
Somewhat Restrictive	Indiana	0.94
Somewhat Restrictive	Illinois	0.89
Somewhat Restrictive	Maryland	0.89
Somewhat Restrictive	Ohio	0.76
Somewhat Restrictive	Kansas	0.71
Somewhat Restrictive	Virginia	0.69
Somewhat Restrictive	Kentucky	0.66
Somewhat Restrictive	Hawaii	0.64
Somewhat Restrictive	South Carolina	0.62
Somewhat Restrictive	New Mexico	0.62
Somewhat Restrictive	Minnesota	0.59
Subtotals		0.74

Least Restrictive States

Seventeen states have regulations or laws that 1) permit youth hunting largely at the parents' discretion and 2) hunter education requirements that largely permit youth participation before passing hunter education tests.

Only four of the 17 performed at a lower rate than the national average.

Rating (Regs)	State	Ratio
Least Restrictive	Missouri	1.16
Least Restrictive	Oklahoma	1.10
Least Restrictive	New Hampshire	1.09
Least Restrictive	Mississippi	1.01
Least Restrictive	Alabama	0.98
Least Restrictive	West Virginia	0.98
Least Restrictive	Florida	0.90
Least Restrictive	Iowa	0.87
Least Restrictive	Tennessee	0.82
Least Restrictive	Vermont	0.77
Least Restrictive	Georgia	0.77
Least Restrictive	North Carolina	0.76
Least Restrictive	Texas	0.73
Least Restrictive	Alaska	0.59
Least Restrictive	Arkansas	0.49
Least Restrictive	Washington	0.45
Least Restrictive	Louisiana	0.42
Subtotals		0.80

Summary

The average hunter replacement ratios for least restrictive states and somewhat restrictive states are .80 and .74. The ratio for restrictive states is .53.

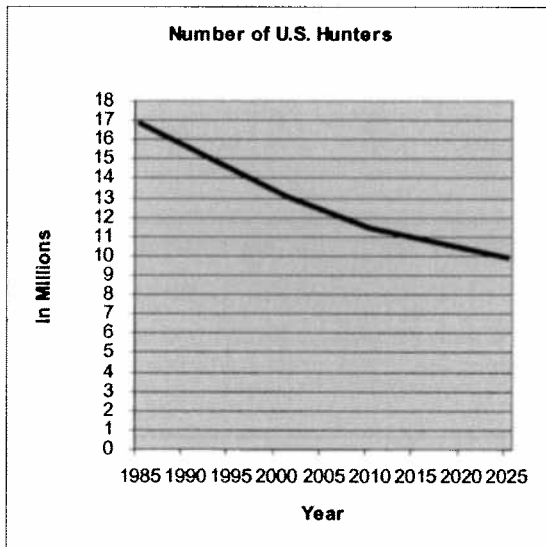
- Four of the seven states performing at a ratio above 1.0 are least restrictive states.
- Two of the seven are somewhat restrictive states.
- Twelve of the 15 worst performing states were classified as very restrictive.

Clearly regulations that limit youth participation have an impact on a state's ability to attract new hunters.

Restrictions on youth hunting are not the only variable that may affect a state's hunter replacement ratio. Urbanization and access to public land are also barriers among others.

Barriers must be lowered to facilitate youth participation. Lowering or eliminating youth restrictions are an area where this goal is attainable.

Finding #4: Without Changes, The Future of Hunting is Bleak



Source: Southwick Associates, Inc. (2005)

Unless changes are made to address poor hunting replacement numbers, the future of hunting, conservation, and the shooting sports industry is in jeopardy.

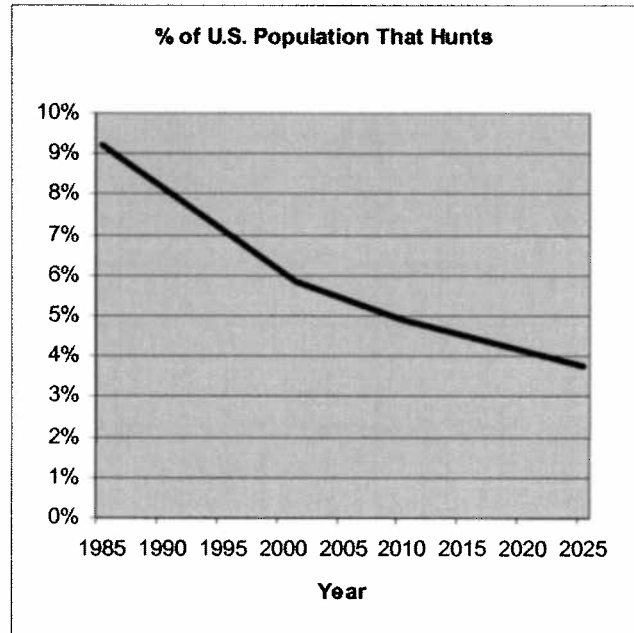
Hunter Numbers

The overall hunter population peaked in the mid 1980s with 16.8 million in 1985. By 2001, hunter populations had dropped 23 percent. By 2025 numbers are expected to drop another 24 percent to 9.9 million.

Hunters as a Percentage of U.S. Population

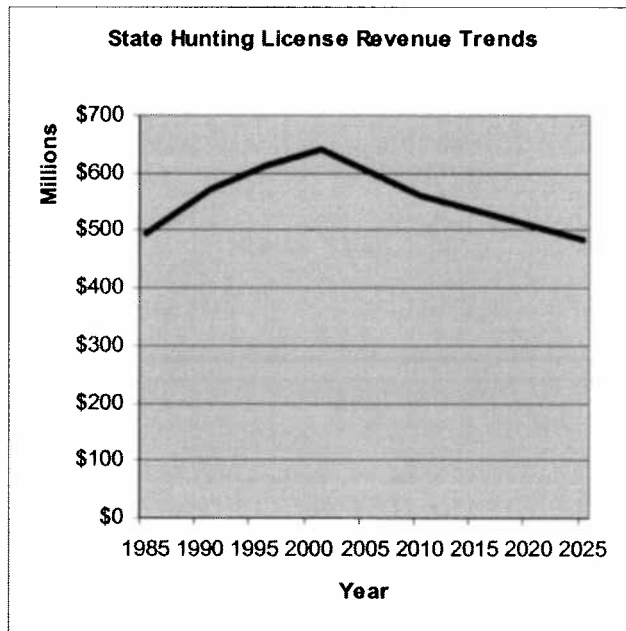
This chart shows the percent of the U.S. population that is projected to hunt. In 1985 9.23 percent of Americans hunted. By 2001 it had dropped to 5.85 percent. Projections indicate that it will drop to 3.78 percent by 2025.

The decrease of hunters as a percentage of the population bodes ill for the future of hunting. Politically, numbers make the difference. Elected officials, the large majority of whom do not hunt, have been reluctant to challenge hunting in many instances for fear of alienating such a large potential voting bloc. As the hunting demographic decreases as a percentage of U.S. population, so does the political strength that has been key to its defense.



Source: Southwick Associates, Inc. (2005)

The Impact on Conservation

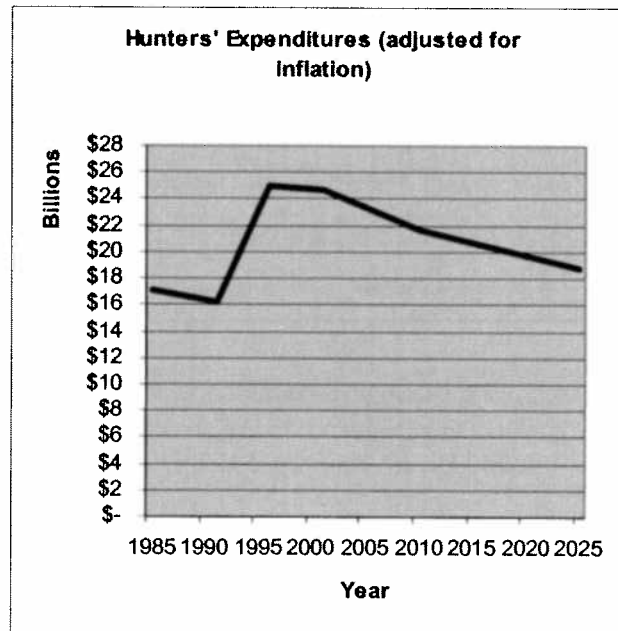


Source: Southwick Associates, Inc. (2005)

If state wildlife management agencies are unable to implement additional means of collecting increased revenues from hunters, their long term revenues are expected to decrease as hunter numbers decrease. A trend towards increased prices and specialty licenses from 1985 to 2001 were the suspected driving force behind revenue increases during that time frame. By 2025, revenues could drop 25 percent compared to 2001 levels, thus impairing wildlife management efforts. The effects will be magnified beyond the simple percentage change in revenues because of increased workload demands on state wildlife agencies, and increased personnel, land and regulatory costs.

The Impact on the Hunting Economy

Basically, any given industry can only squeeze a limited amount of revenues per customer. This chart represents recent and expected future trends regarding hunter expenditures. From 1991 through 2001, an expanding economy and a trend towards increased purchases of specialized, higher-priced items actually increased hunters' dollars while the number of hunters decreased. This trend is not expected to continue. By 2025 expenditures are expected to decrease 24 percent from 2001 levels, impacting sales and earnings for nearly all companies in the hunting industry.



Source: Southwick Associates, Inc. (2005)

Finding #5: Hunting Is Safe

For some members of the public and opinion leaders (elected officials and media) however, the question about youth hunting is safety. Before hunters, the public or elected officials will consider lowering these barriers, they must be assured that youth hunters are safe.

Statistically, the numbers of people injured or killed in hunting-related shooting incidents are similar to the number of people injured or killed by lightning strikes.

In the year 2000, hunters enjoyed over 243 million days of hunting. In 2002, forty-five states reported 623 non-fatal hunting related shooting incidents and 66 fatalities. The International Hunter Education Association estimates approximately 700 non-fatal injuries, and 75 fatal shootings occurred in 2002 if non-reporting states were included. This provides an estimate of one non-fatal injury for roughly every 347,000 days of hunting activity, and a shooting fatality rate of one for every 3.2 million days of hunting.

Few sports or other forms of outdoor recreation can match this record of safety. It is a testament to the passionate focus hunters and wildlife agencies have placed on hunter safety in the last 50 years.

The relative risks of all sports injuries compared to hunting is illustrated in A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF SPORTS INJURIES IN THE U.S. published by American Sports Data, Inc. This extensive study examined more than 100 sports and activities. Hunting ranked 29 on the list in terms of injuries per 100 participants.

Rank	Sport/Activity	Injuries per 100 Participants
1	Football (Tackle)	18.8
2	Ice Hockey	15.9
3	Boxing	12.7
5	Soccer	9.3
6	Cheerleading	9.0
7	Basketball	7.6
10	Baseball	5.8
14	Football (Touch)	4.4
16	Volleyball	3.1
21	Tennis	2.5
24	Horseback Riding	1.8
25	Aerobics	1.7
28	Roller Hockey	1.3
29	Hunting	1.3
30	Mountain/Rock Climbing	1.2

Source: A comprehensive study of sports injuries in the U.S. (2002)

Even when factoring in all injuries that occur during hunting such as twisted ankles, cuts, broken bones etc., hunting is remarkably safe. In 2002, the researchers reported 207,000 injuries during 250 million days of hunting (a rate of one injury for every 1,207 days of hunting).

Finding #6: Youth Hunters Are Safe Hunters

Experienced hunters know that hunting is a safe activity but most are diligent in their efforts to make it even safer. All 50 states and all Canadian provinces offer hunter safety education programs. Nearly 70,000 adults volunteer time to help agencies teach basic and advanced courses. The National Shooting Sports Foundation reports that hunting related shooting incidents have declined by 31 percent in the last 10 years.

Youth hunters are indeed safe. In 2002, with 1.7 million young hunters spending over 15.3 million days in the field, there were 77 hunting related shooting incidents reported.

This information is backed up by comments returned to Timothy J. Lawhern, the Hunter Education Administrator with the Bureau of Law Enforcement, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Lawhern surveyed state wildlife agencies about youth hunting ages and found that thirty-five states permitted some hunting before age twelve. Thirty-four of the thirty-five agencies responded that they had no safety concerns.

Supervised youth hunters have a remarkable safety record.

Further analysis of youth hunting shooting incidents shows that the major factor affecting youth hunting safety is the presence of an attentive, responsible adult hunter to supervise youth. Most of the 2002 incidents happened in the absence of an adult supervisor, or during a lapse in the adult supervision. With 1.7 million young hunters spending more than 15 million days in the field, the number of hunting related shooting incidents dropped to 20 when the hunter was supervised.

Recommendation:

It is the conclusion of NWTF, NSSF and USSA that barriers must be lowered to facilitate more youth participation. The three organizations recommend that all states examine the institutional impediments that may prevent increases in youth participation. In the short term, efforts will be implemented to address the states in which the hunter replacement ratio is alarmingly low.

It is our strong conviction that permitting parents to decide at what age their children can hunt, and permitting youth to participate in hunting before obtaining a hunter education certificate will result in positive gains.

Sources:

National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation. (2001) - U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. Youth data collected via screening survey. Adult data based on full survey.

Compilation of State Youth Hunting Laws and Regulations. (2004) - Specifically youth hunting ages and hunter education requirements. U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance and Silvertip Productions, Ltd.

A Comprehensive Study Of Sports Injuries in the U.S. (2002) - Published by American Sports Data, Inc. American Sports Data, Inc. (ASD) is a specialist in consumer survey research for the sporting goods, fitness and health club industries.

The Hunter Incident Clearinghouse (data from 2002) - A project of the International Hunter Education Association in association with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Wildlife Restoration Act, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, National Wild Turkey Federation, Silvertip Productions, Ltd.

The Future of Hunting [projections on hunting numbers and the hunting economy.] (2005) - Southwick Associates for U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance.

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