

PRESS RELEASE

Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association

April 5, 2007



Turkey Federation's Politically Motivated Stance on Deer Baiting and Feeding

The Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association (WDHA) was stunned to learn that the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF-WI) came out in support of deer baiting and feeding at the Natural Resources Board hearing on April 3, 2007. State chapter President Scott Maves confirmed this position during a recent phone call. Why a turkey hunting organization would get involved in a deer hunting issue is highly suspicious given that baiting is illegal for turkeys and their website has an article opposed to feeding turkeys.

Mr. Maves told the WDHA that the NWTF-WI board voted on January 14 to join the "Wisconsin Hunters Rights Coalition", a small and relatively unknown political group that supports deer baiting and feeding. However this vote was not recorded in the meeting minutes and appears to have been conducted in a closed session, presumably to keep this from the membership. The opinions of NWTF members were never solicited at the annual convention in January either.

It appears the real reason the NWTF-WI took such a bizarre position is entirely political. It's no secret that Assembly Natural Resources Committee Chair Scott Gunderson is desperately seeking support for his pro deer baiting and feeding stance. It appears a few of his allies have managed to coerce some hunting group leaders into taking positions without consent of their membership and in conflict with their mission statements. This apparently includes manipulating the NWTF-WI for political gain.

Rep. Gunderson fails to understand that there is now tremendous support to ban deer baiting and feeding. The boards of virtually all the state's major hunting organizations came out in overwhelming support of a statewide deer baiting and feeding ban. This includes the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and the Conservation Congress. The Natural Resources Board unanimously voted in favor to end baiting and feeding for deer. In addition agricultural, dairy, cattle and forest industries all support a ban. There is little doubt that a vast majority of NWTF-WI members would also support a deer baiting and feeding ban.

However this isn't the first time Rep. Gunderson ignored the wishes of deer hunters. Just last year because of outside political influences he opposed a deer hunting framework developed in cooperation with all the states hunting organizations.

It's a sad day for all Wisconsinites when natural resource management is thrown away in favor of political ideology. The NWTF-WI is yet another victim of legislative meddling for political gain.

The WDHA is a statewide group of conservation minded deer enthusiasts whose mission is to promote scientific and ecological based deer management in Wisconsin. Our philosophy is do what's best for the deer herd, as we believe that is ultimately what's best for the deer hunter.

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