

PRESS RELEASE

Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association

June 13, 2007



Hunter's Rights Coalition Motives Questionable

The Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association (WDHA) board of directors recently voted unanimously to not join the recently formed Wisconsin Hunters Right Coalition (HRC). While we support many of the same causes, such as youth hunting and increased public access, the way this group operates is very disconcerting. Despite their appealing name the HRC is, in reality, a deceptive political trick being played on hunters. Unlike the states largest conservation alliance, the WI Wildlife Federation, the HRC has no governing board and only consists of a loose association of a few organizations with former State Senator Bob Welch as a lobbyist. There is no process for organizations to vote on issues. It's apparent the HRC was formed to garner support for controversial issues opposed by other organizations to the benefit a few legislators, who want to bypass the well-established public process and set hunting rules based on politics.

The HRC, though their spokesperson Greg Kazmierski, has also repeatedly misrepresented the positions of their members. This came to light during a hearing on banning the use of bait for deer hunting. The HRC testified that all of their member organizations opposed rules to ban deer baiting and feeding. However, when contacted, the SCI, QDMA and the NRA never gave their endorsement to such a claim. In fact, there has never been a documented membership vote by any of these organizations to join the HRC and oppose a deer baiting and feeding ban.

The HRC also misrepresents the size of their membership. For example, the WI State Chapter of the Wild Turkey Federation consists of only 13 members, yet the HRC includes all the associated chapters as members. A vast majority of these chapters never heard of this political group, let alone consented to joining. Members of the SCI, QDMA and NRA have never been told of joining the HRC either or consented to many of their controversial positions.

Wisconsin's hunting and conservation organizations have worked tirelessly to remove politics from resource management. However the HRC, through misrepresentation and political maneuvering, is set to dupe hunters and completely reverse that trend. This was obvious last year when hunters turned out in huge numbers to defeat several supposedly pro-hunting legislators who opposed a deer season framework change developed in cooperation with the states hunting organizations for purely political reasons. These legislators have very close HRC ties and want to let well funded outside interests with completely unjustified claims set hunting regulations.

The HRC was created to divide the hunting community for political purposes. There is a well established public process for enacting new hunting regulations that doesn't involve taking away decision making from hunters and placing it entirely in the hands of politicians. Because of these factors the WDHA respectfully declines to become a member, as have an overwhelming number of other hunting organizations.

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 to 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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