

2019 USP RAFFLE TICKETS

Members of USP

We are asking you to support our annual Cross Fork 2019 Ticket Drawing for guns, a hunting trip, and other prizes that are going to be held on June 30th during the Snake Hunt at Cross Fork (Potter County). We are sending you 7 tickets that you can purchase for \$5.00. Also, at the bottom of the page, there is an application for a USP membership that we would ask you to try to sign up a new member. If you would like, it can also be used to renew your own membership. But, if you can, we need new members. This is really the only fund raiser of the year. Yes we are at sportsmen's shows all over the state during the year spreading the word and signing up new members but this is the one time each year that we ask the membership for needed support. So, please buy up those tickets and help all of us to help each other.

The latest issue of W&W was packed with our current issues. The move to opening rifle deer season from the traditional Monday after Thanksgiving to Saturday has been another lightning rod to the hunting community. Check out the other page of this mailing written by our past Chairman Randy Santucci that was recently a paid ad in the Pa Outdoor Times. It gets right to the heart of the issue.

CWD. I saw where an expert in the field of hunting said we might as well except it is here and get over it. ARE YOU KIDDIN ME! In the latest issue of W&W, you saw our Position Statement. We are now in a partnership agreement with Dr. Frank Bastian. USP is working with legislators in Harrisburg and Washington to achieve long term funding for our 10-year CWD and human health program. USP is now funding a Dr. Bastian lab at the University of New Orleans. If you or anyone you know of would like to help fund the CWD program, please send it along with your ticket money and designate it to the CWD Fund.

It takes a lot of time and effort to make all these and other issues unfold for the benefit of not only sportsmen but for all. So, take time to pat yourself on the back and now keep the pedal down because we are headed full speed in the right direction. < Thanks to all >

USP Membership Application or join online at (www.gousp.org)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

COUNTY _____ PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP

Individual 1 Year \$20 _____ 2 Years \$35 _____ 3 Years \$50 _____ Individual Lifetime Member \$250 _____

Sportsmen's Club 1 year \$100 _____ Sportsmen's Club 2 years \$175 _____ Sportsmen's Club 3 years \$250 _____

Junior (under 10) - \$5 _____ Hunting Camp \$30 _____ Business \$50 _____ Total \$ _____

Print and mail this application to USP Membership, 530 4th Ave, Sutersville, PA 15083

**Page 2 & 3 following is an AD in May 24, 2019 Pennsylvania Outdoor News
Paid for by Hunters Opposed to this Mistake**

Hijacking Our Monday Opener!

Written by Randy Santucci

Pennsylvania hunters need to know why our 71-year traditionally Monday opener was irresponsibly changed. The PGC commissioners ignored the facts, hunter input and data. This decision should be reversed immediately and there is still time. When the PGC board of commissioners changed the deer opener, they vacated their fiduciary responsibility to hunters and their constituents. They have a responsibility outlined in their "policy manual" to do "critical analysis" and educate themselves regarding the resource and the people it represents – hunters. This includes: Reviewing reports and other materials prepared by PGC staff, Studying concerns of hunters, and Discussions with elected officials.

During the January meeting of the PGC board, they based their approval for the Saturday opener on four assumptions which are easily disproven:

The first assumption by the BOC is lapsed hunters would return by implementing a Saturday opener. PGC staffer, Dr. Coren Jagnow human dimension specialist, surveyed 2025 hunters from 12,000 sent, and there was a 95% confidence level from this data. Only 24% responded a Saturday opener would cause them to buy hunting license again. Dr. Jagnow advised the BOC, that the 24% figure would be significantly lower based on previous survey determinations. She also told me it could be as low as half (12%). As a result, the theory that lapsed hunters would return due to a Saturday opener is unfounded, based on the data.

The second assumption was that college students wouldn't miss class with a Saturday opener. Dr. Jagnow presented questionnaire results from 18 to 25-year-old current hunters, which included college students. They were asked to choose their preferred deer opening day from 4 possibilities. The majority preferred Monday! She stated they likely would miss class for lesser reasons than the deer opener.

The third assumptions for the Saturday opener was limited personal time as the major reason for hunters dropping out of the sport. Dr. Jagnow presented another hunter survey result listing 19 potential reason why hunters may have lapsed. The results were so evenly distributed, and statistically close to each other that Dr. Jagnow commented further there was "no stand out reason, and a variety of factors affect hunters lapsing, not just time".

Note: All hunter surveys and opinions were randomly solicited, with no differentiating between camp and non-camp hunters. The results were a legitimate state-wide hunter representation.

Finally, the PGC board solicited input from their Hunting Outreach Specialist, Derek Stoner. His job, in part, is to evaluate information for recruiting, reactivating hunters and assess hunter opinion. He stated that a Saturday opener would not positively impact younger hunters, based on the input he received. He also stated any perceived gains from a Saturday opener would be offset from conflicts for non-resident hunter openers in their home states, and camp hunters that strongly oppose this change.

Yet there is even more data why a Saturday opener is not a good idea.

The PGC 2017 deer hunter survey came back 65% opposed to changing the Monday opener. More recently, 1,152 hunters contacted the agency, and 81% opposed the Saturday opener. In addition, the two largest statewide sportsman's organizations, The Unified Sportsmen of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen and Conservationists, who at times disagree, both opposed the Saturday opener. The Allegheny County Sportsman's League and the Pennsylvania State Camp Association also stated their strong opposition to changing the opener. I personally polled 275 hunters at a meeting in the East Freedom Firehall, Blair County, Altoona, PA and stunningly 262 of them voted to NOT change the opener! So much for the PGC honoring the hunter opinion!

And don't forget, small game and turkey hunters lose a popular Saturday out of their seasons. Pheasant hunters, already have to buy a \$25 permit and now they lose a Saturday from their season.

The weekend following Thanksgiving represents one of the busiest travel periods of the year, and a Saturday opener would only complicate the matter. Families travel to spend Thanksgiving with loved ones, and these visits do not end on Thursday evening. The Transportation Safety Administration and AAA identify Sunday as the busiest travel day of the year. Black Friday begins the busiest retail shopping weekend of the year, followed by Small Business Saturday. Simply put there is a lot going on that will be in direct competition with a Saturday opener. Northern tier businesses will suffer from the Saturday opener. Camp hunters that spend money in transit to their camps for supplies, and various entities through the weekend will no longer do so. I spoke with dozens of northern tier county commissioners that acknowledged this negative economic impact. Rural non-profits, like volunteer fire departments and churches, took advantage of the multitude of hunters that weekend with hunter breakfasts, raffles, dinners, gun bashes etc. This would be lost.

PGC Commissioner Jim Daley began the movement for a Saturday opener, but his position changed after hearing PGC staff reports and hunter opposition. He tried to convince the other commissioners this was a mistake. Board President Tim Layton and Commissioner Mike Mitrick joined Daley in a move to keep Monday in place. Layton later stated in the April 26 Pa Outdoor News “overwhelmingly the surveys that we’ve done in the past have shown that the majority of hunters do not want the deer rifle season to change”. Commissioner Daley tendered his resignation effective June 1st stating in the Erie Times: “When people won’t look at the data in front of them, and come up with a logical decision, I don’t want to be a part of it” (referring to the 5 commissioners still supporting the Saturday opener).

This is the chaos that results when you do not follow policy and guideline specifics to make a decision.

Representatives Bill Kortz and Keith Gillespie, who are the leaders of the House Game and Fisheries Committee, responded immediately to the facts and hunter outrage. They recalled the PGC commissioners to Harrisburg on Monday April 22 to get them to reconsider their vote, but they didn’t.

How can this happen you may be wondering? And what can I do to stop it?

It is NOT too late. Phone contacts to the governor’s office have been constant, as I was told by Governor Wolf’s Deputy Chief of Staff, Sam Robinson. We must continue these contacts ten-fold. The PGC digest can be amended if necessary, it has been done before!

Maybe ask Senator Dan Laughlin from Erie, who seems to be a player in this controversy and openly supports changing the opener to a Saturday. Such support is irresponsible knowing the PGC’s own data does not support the Saturday opener reasoning. As the Republican Chairman of the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee, he certainly knows the House Game and Fisheries Committee chairman both adamantly opposed the change. Senator Laughlin showed up at the PGC headquarters on April 8th supporting the Saturday opener, which was the day before the final Saturday vote. This is the Senator who recently led the charge to get Sunday hunting passed out of committee. Are things starting to add up? Doesn’t implementing a Saturday opener without Sunday hunting seem inappropriate? It can certainly be viewed as short sighted, as well as a tactical move to provide leverage and pressure for Sunday hunting, and that’s what I believe is the real reason behind the Saturday opener.

For or against Sunday hunting, it should not be done in a manner hurting some groups to benefit others. How about the irresponsible aspect for non-resident license holders? There are approximately 47,000 non-resident license buyers, who spend \$120 for a license to travel here and hunt. They now must be here Friday after Thanksgiving to hunt the opener, and can only hunt Saturday. The time and travel dilemma for non-resident hunters posed by a Saturday opener will almost certainly result in a drop-in license sales and revenue.

The Saturday opener eliminates the premier weekend from our traditional deer camp hunters. These hunters dedicate their time and money maintaining a camp that is shared with family and friends. They use their camps often to introduce new and youth hunters to our sport. This is hunter mentoring at its finest! The camp experience will be lost with a Saturday opener.

If you like the Saturday opener, please understand that the majority of hunters spoke through agency contacts, statewide hunter surveys and PGC staff data. The Monday opener kept the biggest opening day of Pennsylvania hunting out of the family and social conflicts of this holiday weekend. We will get Sunday hunting soon enough, but I for one do not condone backroom deals or grossly irresponsible board decisions that fly in the face of the facts. Democratically speaking, the Monday opener should have never been changed when the evidence was tallied. We as Pennsylvania sportsmen should expect and demand better and more truthful representation than what has unfolded. This was not a decision made for wildlife management. It was an unnecessary decision made for the wrong reasons.

May I strongly recommend making call to all of the following, as well as your local legislator and tell them you want the Monday opener back. Paid for by hunters opposed to this mistake.

The Office of the Governor –
Harrisburg – 717-787-2500

Senator Dan Laughlin
Harrisburg – 717-787-8927
Erie – 814-453-2515

Senator Joe Scarnati Pro Tempore of the Senate
Harrisburg – 717-787-7084
Brockway – 814-265-2030
Wellsboro – 570-724-5231