

A Wolf In Sheep's Clothing

By Kurt Bahti – retired Arizona game warden

We all know that there are anti-hunting groups out there and we may have dealt with them in the field before. One of the most dangerous groups, or maybe the most dangerous, is the Humane Society of the United States, HSUS. I remember having to work a hunt in Arizona north of Tucson where a group vowed to harass hunters. The 'harassers' were woefully unprepared to follow hunters in the rough terrain, which was actually quite entertaining to us, BUT they got their moment of fame by coverage on the nightly news which is what they wanted. I don't recall the name of the group but that was the start of my education about anti-hunting groups.

When Arizona hosted the 2012 NAWEOA summer convention we were offered some monetary support from HSUS. I was on the committee when this was presented and I spoke strongly against them as I had done research on the organization and their activities. A couple officers supported taking their donation as we needed monetary support. In the end we turned them down and for dang good reasons.

The HSUS took their name purposely as it sounds just like the many 'humane societies' that are based on helping dogs and cats as well as other animals. This makes it easy for people to donate money to the HSUS cause as they believe HSUS to be the same as the others of similar name. It is far from the truth. A recent poll by ORC International found that **82%** of Americans wrongly believe HSUS represents or is part of the group that represents the many thousands of humane societies in the U.S. Now that statistic should scare you.

In the HSUS fundraising efforts it advertises the fact that millions of dogs and cats are euthanized every year in shelters across the US and uses dogs and cats in about 85% of their commercials. Their tax returns show that less than 1% of the \$131 million raised in 2011 was contributed to pet shelters but at the same time propped up their own pension fund by \$2.4 million. Can you say 'priorities'?

The CEO, Wayne Pacelle, was leader of Fund for Animals (another anti-hunting group) that has now merged with HSUS. Pacelle has been involved in radical activism for many years and first shows up in arrest records in 1986 as a student at Yale. The arrest was for harassing hunters. "Animals are no one's property, and they have the right not to be 'taken', 'harvested', or 'culled' or any other euphemism for murder that the wildlife managers use," said Pacelle. Another telling quote of his reported by Associated Press was, "...if we could shut down all sport hunting in a moment we would." Pacelle also established a vegan office policy. I think you see where I'm going with this. More importantly, I hope you see where they are going with this.

The HSUS has the avowed and intended goal of ending hunting, fishing, animal agricultural and other uses of animals. They have a huge war chest to meet these goals. They are underhanded in their fundraising by duping people in believing they are 'saving' pets from euthanasia each year when their true goal is to end any consumptive use and even other uses (pets?) of animals INCLUDING wildlife!

In 2014 HSUS and other anti-hunting groups submitted a petition to the Secretary of the Interior to ban lead-ammo on more than 160 million Acres of land managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. A HSUS handbook says this is the first step in, "ending the use of lead ammunition for hunting purposes." Many see this as a thinly veiled attempt to outlaw lead ammo and force hunters in to buying non-lead ammo at a much higher price, thus forcing some to quit hunting due

to cost restraints. This would also end target shooting on federal lands as most ammo is lead based. HSUS also states that if this petition passed then, "...additional petitions for BLM and other federal holdings would follow." Can you say National Forests?

HSUS filed a 2014 suit in Maine that would stop Maine wildlife officials from making any comments of a proposed HSUS ban on bear hunting. It was turned down by a Superior Court judge but HSUS vows to have a bear-hunting ban initiative on the 2016 ballot. At least the professional wildlife biologists will be able to speak factually about the initiative and not be shut down by HSUS.

Would you support a group like HSUS with your money? Well, I hate to say it but you already do with your tax money. In 2007 the federal government had to pay HSUS \$280,000 after their lawsuit stopped the delisting of wolves in Minnesota from the Endangered Species Act. In the last 10 years the federal government has been sued over 1,100 times by anti-hunting groups and had to reimburse these groups for legal fees to the tune of approximately \$34 million. Now you see how they get some of their operating funds. YOUR MONEY!

This is where hunters and fishermen need your help. In the past few years HSUS has approached wildlife agencies in the US to masquerade as supporters by donating reward money for the agency anti-poaching efforts. I know that some agencies have fallen for this ploy. If there was ever an example of letting the camel's nose under the tent this is it. I find it hard to believe that an agency would not research the HSUS. I find it even harder to believe that if they are aware of the true objectives of HSUS that they would 'get in bed with them'. Shame on them in any case! HSUS wants to finagle a place at the table to be a decision-maker on wildlife management across the U.S. and Canada. DON'T GIVE IT TO THEM!!!!

The US and Canadian wildlife agencies support the North American Model of Wildlife Management and are supported monetarily primarily by hunters and fishermen. In allowing HSUS in to their midst the agencies accepting HSUS money are thumbing their nose at those they are supposed to represent. I urge you to check with your own agency to see if they have taken HSUS up on their offer. If they have not, congratulate them and make sure they keep the course. If they have, start an action to have them reject HSUS funding and condemn HSUS openly. I encourage you to look at the HSUS website to familiarize yourself with HSUS. They are our enemy. The old saying about knowing your enemy applies here.