

APHA's Staying On the Tracks

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Welcome to the July APHA newsletter. Hopefully this finds you enjoying memorable and successful days afield, in pursuit and protection of all the things you value and promote.

IMPORTANT SAFETY RECALL

Should it apply to any members or your clients, CZ-USA is voluntarily initiating a recall of its CZ Model 600 rifles. The interchangeable caliber barrels, if improperly installed, could still fire the rifle but may result in a serious, possibly fatal injury to the shooter. CZ regrettably can only correct this issue by permanently installing a barrel. If this solution is unsatisfactory, they will issue a full refund upon presentation of a valid purchase receipt. To determine if a rifle is affected by this recall, visit <https://www.cz600recallcom>. If applicable, email CZ-USA at cz600recall@cz-usa.com.

LEGISLATIVE HAPPENINGS IN JULY:

In the Crosshairs:

In America, the House Interior Appropriations Bill, HR 8294, that was discussed in the June newsletter and in an action alert email sent to all APHA members in July, was unfortunately passed by the House, on July

20th, on a 220 to 207 vote. It now moves on to the Senate for approval, who will vote on it in September.

Section 439, which prohibits funding the USFWS to review and issue lion and elephant permit imports from Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia for the 2023 fiscal year is still in the bill, as Senator Duncan's amendment to strike that language was not approved. The sentiment from Washington is that the Senate does not like the prohibitive language in Section 439, so there's still hope. However, it would be wise of and valuable to any concerned Americans you know, clients or otherwise, to still contact their congressional representatives and voice their concerns. They needn't be eloquent or lengthy, even just stating – please vote no on HR 8294 unless the Duncan amendment to Section 439 is approved, counts. It's easy, only takes a few moments, and is an act that can help strike this harmful language from the bill.

Erica Tergeson, the recently hired DSC Government Affairs Director has been very helpful and willing to explain these proceedings. She greatly appreciates that APHA members want to stay informed on, and are willing to encourage their hunters and contacts to effectively act upon, these issues. In the Summer 2022 issue of DSC's Game Trails, she states that she went to Washington not because she loves its atmosphere, but because she loves fighting for our traditional hunting heritage and the conservation funded by it.

I can appreciate that. I became a biologist because I want to work in nature, not in a courtroom. Just as I'm sure none of you chose to be a PH so you could be engaged in legislative issues instead of guiding

hunters. But unfortunately if we wish to maintain hunting, nowadays we must also be active in such matters. If we aren't, there is definitely a very active anti-hunting contingent eager to seal hunting's demise. Erica invited APHA members to contact her at erica@biggame.org with any questions. She is also going to keep me abreast of important happenings which I will pass on to all members.

Here's a little additional insight, which I summarized from her article. Funding bills, like HR 8294, are used as a tool to stop activities in government that someone personally doesn't want. They used to be an annual event wherein the President presented his budget to Congress. They'd review it, have hearings, and then write their own modified bills, with additions and subtractions. The House and Senate would usually pass different bills and then hash it out until they agreed on a final version which the President signed.

Congress used to have to follow 'regular order' procedure, which required hearings in appropriate committees wherein members/senators could ask questions and suggest amendments. Then a second opportunity for offering amendments occurred when it went to the floor for a full vote by each chamber. But now, there is no regular order process. Spending bills are passed at the last minute with insufficient time for Congress to consider what's in them.

Our democracy system makes it very difficult to pass laws, as in a stand alone law that would ban trophy imports. But, spending bills like these are very easy to attach policy riders to, like defunding the USFWS's ability to process these permit applications. Erica gave the example of

how most Americans think there is a ban on raising horses for meat in the USA. Not true. The necessary USDA processing facility inspectors were de-funded several years ago, which makes it a de facto ban as the meat can not legally be processed now.

Whilst explaining governmental procedures doesn't make for the most compelling reading, it is important to foster more understanding and factual representation of these crucial matters. Many social media posts, for instance, are claiming this is already a ban, which is not true. A current untruth that could impact your own business, and the hunting industry in general, if perpetuated, as any client unwilling to hunt unless they can have a chance at importing their trophies, might just prematurely scrap the idea of booking a hunt entirely if they believed it.

ON THE STICKS:

Situations arise, just like in hunting, where you must decide to take the shot or pass. Here's one such opportunity for your consideration.

A recent controversy on Twitter discussed a soon to be released film called Beyond the Trigger that was made by a vegan who hosts a podcast in the UK. In the film, he supposedly visits several Namibian communities and conservancies to feature their opinions on trophy hunting. He is sponsored by Leica Sport Optics, which of course not only manufactures hunting-related optics, but is a major sponsor of hunting shows and conventions in various countries, has a hunting blog, and posts hunting-related content on social media.

Anti-hunting critics of this sponsorship pointed to Leica's hunting connections and their Global Hunting Policy, drawn up by their Board of Directors, which contains, in part, the statement that, "Leica does not support nor endorse trophy hunting and condemns all illegal and unethical hunting." The full version of this policy is attached for your consideration. I initially assumed it was a recently written policy, but, interestingly enough, it was initiated in 2018 after an owl researcher in the UK turned down Leica's sponsorship offer on the grounds of their ties to hunting disqualifying them from being a "cruelty free" company.

Non-hunting scientists as well as pro-hunting people of various professions who advocate for the conservation benefits that well-managed trophy hunting can provide, have repeatedly asked Leica's various Twitter accounts recently what their policy definition of trophy hunting is. We have all been met with silence.

We are asking the question because this policy is written in a manner that could easily misguide people in regards to what trophy hunting is and how it can contribute to conservation. And the policy's multiple references to ethics (or the lack thereof) is confusing, as ethics, due to their need to be specified, can vary within and between situations, individuals, groups, etc. (Further discussion on ethics upcoming in the next issue of this newsletter).

Some may say that in light of the need for funding hunting advocacy groups, this issue should not be brought up with Leica. Some may say that it's no big deal, only perhaps problematic wording. Some may be

angry if they stand by Leica products and also trophy hunt. Varying perspectives and priorities is why I titled this section as I did. It's your call to take the shot or pass.

I myself fired off two emails. Initially I sent one to Leica in general. It redirected me to choose a specific option. How strangely not fitting that a company who states they don't endorse or support trophy hunting had an option for credentialed professionals working as a guide/outfitter to contact someone for discounts. That option redirected my email to Leica Sport Optics Marketing Director, Ryan Trenka, in Montana, a biologist who sent me a very confusing, contradictory, and inaccurate reply, essentially stating that it was too difficult to define trophy hunting. And in most everywhere but the USA game is owned and hunting is the privilege of the few. But Leica supports the legal, ethical practice of hunting because hunting IS conservation. Lots of muddy waters to wade through there, so to speak! I responded and am awaiting another reply or redirection to speak to someone about my concerns with this policy and its ramifications. If you would like to voice your own opinion, send an email to ryan.trenka@leicasportoptics.com.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION/OVER A SUNDOWNER:

Many of you have no doubt read Brian Herne's classic, beloved book, White Hunters: The Golden Age of African Safaris, chock full of colorful, tough characters who pioneered professional hunting in East Africa. Here's a story Brian wrote about the legendary Charles Cottar. Perhaps

enjoy around the flickering light of a campfire, reading out loud to your hunters to muse and marvel about with, under a starry sky.

<https://sportingclassicsdaily.com/the-legends-of-bwana-cottar/>

PARTING SENTIMENTS:

Aldo Leopold, from the USA, was a founding father of wildlife ecology, who particularly emphasized the importance of wildlands -to both people and nature. He was a hunter and angler whose passion for the pursuits shaped his innovative conservation mindset. He famously quipped:

“There are some who can live without wild things and some who cannot.” - A Sand County Almanac, 1949.

Indeed, hunting professionally requires wild things. Wild things that need wild places. May that forever be so.