

ARTICLE SUNDAY HUNTING

LET'S SHARE THE OUTDOORS

Wayne Campbell, President, PA State Grange

In Harrisburg, there is a renewed push by some that Sunday hunting should be permitted. The PA State Grange respectfully disagrees.

Even while disagreeing, we certainly understand the rationale. The PA Game Commission believes it will make more money from the sale of hunting licenses. Firearms manufacturers and those selling guns feel that Sunday hunting will help their economic bottom line. Others are worried about the decline of hunting by younger people because Saturdays are already crowded with non-hunting activities like soccer, swimming, etc. Personally, I come from the hunting culture of Pennsylvania. I am an avid hunter. I love to hunt. I love being outdoors. I cherish the opportunity to teach my grandchildren about hunting safety and the joys of a day in the woods..

I also believe that it is important for hunting to share the outdoors with others who also love being outside and who engage in recreational activities.

Independent of arguments about observing Sunday as a day of church, family, and rest, there are strong economic arguments that warrant keeping hunting Sunday free. Hunting's economic contribution pales when compared to non-hunting recreational activities.

Hunting is only a part of outdoor recreation. The U.S. Government's Bureau of Economic Analysis was directed to prepare an assessment and analysis of the outdoor recreation economy in the United States by the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016. (<https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>) Its summary report issued September 20, 2018, credited outdoor recreation for generating 2.2 percent of the Gross Domestic Product in 2016. The top six outdoor recreation activities were: Boating/Fishing \$36.9 billion; Game Areas such as golfing and tennis \$34.7 billion; RVing \$30 billion; Guided Tours/Outfitted Travel \$25.7 billion; Motorcycling/ATVing \$20.3 billion. Well down the list came Hunting (the category includes archery as well as non-archery hunting) which had \$13.9 billion in economic impact in the U.s.

What these statistics do is to document that hunting plays a significant role but is by no means the dominant part of outdoor recreation's contribution to the economy.

Breaking it down further, following U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis figures compare hunting with other forest and woodland recreational activities in terms of economic impact.

- Hunting (including archery) \$13.9 billion
- Equestrian \$10.6 billion
- Boating/Fishing \$36.9 billion
- Climbing/Hiking/Tent Camping \$7.5 billion

Government statistics are important but are they validated by other research? The U.S. Outdoor Industry Association provided more statistics which suggests an even greater contribution to U.S. economic activity.

This 2017 document shows hunting as a part, but not the dominant part, of the economic contribution to the United States from outdoor recreation. (https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/OIA_RecEconomy_FINAL_Single.pdf)

	Retail Spending	Jobs	State & Local Taxes
Camping	\$166.9 billion	1.4 million	\$11.3 billion
Fishing	\$35.6 billion	287,554	\$2.4 billion
Hunting	\$27.4 billion	194,973	\$1.7 billion
Trail Sports	\$201.5 billion	1,762,665	\$13.5 billion
Wildlife Watching	\$30.2 billion	235,825	\$1.9 billion

Note that the figures for hunting and fishing provided to the Outdoor Industry Association for this study came through agreements with the American Sportfishing Association and the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

What Does All This Have to do With Sunday Hunting?

Other outdoor recreational activities provide as much if not more economic activity than hunting.

Hunters get six days a week. Other users of the outdoors should get one day where the fear of hunting accidents (ricochets, etc.) does not put a damper on their enjoyment of the outdoors.

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The PA State Grange was founded in 1873 as an advocacy organization for farmers, families, and businesses that make up Pennsylvania’s rural communities.