



KEYSTONE TRAILS ASSOCIATION

46 E. MAIN ST
MECHANICSBURG, PA 17055
(717) 766.9690
www.kta-hike.org

*Preserving Pennsylvania's
Footpaths
Since 1956*

Board of Directors

Wanda Shirk, President
Paul Shaw, Vice President
Ernest Werstler, Treasurer
Jim Foster, Secretary
Rob Altenburg
Kathryn Barker
Robert Best
Jack Hauler
Robert Merrill
Jeffrey Mitchell
Donna Thompson

Staff

Joseph Neville,
Executive Director
Sara Haxby,
Program Administrator

Member Organizations

Allegheny Outdoor Club
Allentown Hiking Club
Alpine Club of Williamsport
AMC—Delaware Valley Chapter
Asaph Trail Club
Batona Hiking Club
Berks Community Hiking Club
Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club
Butler Outdoor Club
Camp Swatara
Central Pennsylvania Conservancy
Chester County Trail Club
Cumberland Valley AT Club
Duncannon AT Community
Forest Coalition
Horse-Shoe Trail Conservancy
Lancaster County Conservancy
Lancaster Hiking Club
Lebanon Valley Hiking Club
Mason-Dixon Trail System
Mid State Trail Association
Mountain Club of Maryland
North Country Trail Association
NCTA—Allegheny National Forest
Chapter
NCTA—Butler Chapter
NCTA—Clarion Chapter
Philadelphia Trail Club
Pocono Outdoor Club
Potomac AT Club
Potomac AT Club-North Chapter
Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy
Responsible Drilling Alliance
Ridge & Valley Outings Club
Schuylkill County Conservancy
Schuylkill River Heritage Area
Sierra Club—Allegheny Group
Sierra Club—Otzinachson Group
Sierra Club—Pennsylvania Chapter
Standing Stone Trail Club
Susquehanna AT Club
Susquehanna Trailers Hiking Club
Susquehannock Trail Club
Warrior Trail Association
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Wildlands Conservancy
Wilmington Trail Club
Woodbourne Forest & Wildlife
Preserve
York Hiking Club

Good morning Chairman Scavello, Chairman Brewster and members of the committee. My name is Joe Neville and I'm the Executive Director of the Keystone Trails Association.

The Keystone Trails Association represents and advocates for the interests and concerns of the Pennsylvania hiking community.

We currently represent over 44 clubs and organizations as well as thousands of individual Pennsylvanians who hike and enjoy the Commonwealth's outdoor resources. We are NOT an anti-hunting organization but we oppose expansion of Sunday Hunting.

We are the voice of hundreds of thousands of people who use our state and local lands regularly. In fact, DCNR surveys show that upwards of 25% of Pennsylvanians consider themselves hikers. Sunday hunting would impact all outdoor recreation clubs, environmental educators, hikers, trail runners, bikers, trail maintainers and builders, birders, equestrians, and landowners. Our club members participate in thousands of hikes per year, and volunteer over 15,000 hours maintaining 3,000 miles of trails, including the Appalachian Trail.

The percentage of hunters in relationship to the general population that also enjoys being outdoors in Pennsylvania is minimal. Most of the Commonwealth's residents would like at least one day a week to stroll in our woodlands and forests without the fear of guns and hunters, and the perceived safety issues they create.

Many groups like ours organize hikes and other outdoor activities, specifically on Sunday, to avoid conflicts on other hunting days. Many of these people are simply not comfortable recreating in areas with active gun hunting, and their views have validity. Pennsylvania families and residents specifically plan their trips on Sundays to avoid conflicts with hunters and enjoy wild places with peace of mind knowing that they are safe.

We believe that non-hunters should be able enjoy our state lands peacefully for at least one day a week. It is as simple as that.

We're asking you to oppose any Sunday Hunting expansion because we believe there should be at least one day that people can go outdoors, hike, bird

watch, trail run, maintain public trails — or do whatever and not be concerned about hunting. We are not an anti-hunting group. We are hiker and a trail user rights group.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views with you today.

Sunday Hunting Points to Consider:

- The Appalachian Trail experiences 3-4 million people using it per year. Part of the trail runs through Pennsylvania and much of it is on public lands including State Game Lands.
- Appalachian Trail usage is expected to rise 30-60% in 2016.
- Hiking is enjoyed by 12% of the population over six years old. (American Hiking Society, 2013)
- Hunting has been steadily decreasing and makes up a smaller percent of the population than hikers and a much smaller percentage of overall outdoor recreation enthusiasts. Many hunters don't support Sunday hunting.
- By 2060, "hiking is projected to be the outdoor recreation activity that will demonstrate the most growth in adults", "...hunting at the low end". (USDA Forest Service Recreation Trends)
- MYTH: "Hunters will travel to camp to hunt if we have Sunday hunting". In fact, most hunters DO NOT travel to camp to hunt. Only 11% hunt from a camp. 71% hunt in the WMU in which they live. (PGC Deer Hunter Survey, 2014)
- The 2005 and the 2011 Legislative Budget and Finance Committee reports on the Economic impact of Sunday hunting do not estimate the loss of economic activity by the non-hunting public. (LBFC reports)
- "As for economic concerns, outdoor enthusiasts of all sorts bring money to local communities. If you substitute a shrinking number of hunters for the growing number of non-shooting recreationalists, the math doesn't add up for a financial argument to support Sunday hunting". (KTA member 2015)
- Tourist wildlife watchers in Pennsylvania exceed hunters in trip-related spending by more than 20 million dollars annually, a boost to our economy that would be compromised by allowing Sunday hunting.
- Trail maintenance will be impacted: "From mid-September to mid-January, the south-central region of the Pennsylvania Game Commission will not allow trail workers to do maintenance on hiking trails.....except on Sundays. Trails in central Pennsylvania, such as the Mid State and Standing Stone Trails have a large portion of their trails on game lands. If Sunday hunting is allowed, there would be no maintenance nor improvements for a period of four months a year. Our trail clubs have difficulty getting section maintainers to adopt trail sections on game lands now. Sunday hunting will make the problems worse. Under such conditions, I would envision the trail leaders to abandon trails on state game lands and regress back to state forests where they would push for numerous no-hunting zones for hiker safety". (KTA club leader 2015)

My Turn: Keep the ban on Sunday hunting

- Paul Shaw
- Feb 12, 2016

Sunday hunting, with a few exceptions for varmints, has been banned in Pennsylvania since 1873. Originally a “blue law” encouraging people to attend religious services, the Sunday hunting ban has helped nurture non-hunting outdoor recreation without hurting Pennsylvania’s hunting tradition. In the entire nation, only Texas has more licensed hunters than Pennsylvania.

Last summer, HB 1374 was introduced in the state house, a bill that would grant the Game Commission authority to lift the ban. In past years, similar bills have withered on the vine for lack of support, but this bill is different because of the active support of the NRA. Besides organizing a petition drive, the NRA is reputedly making this a scorecard issue to grade legislators. The bill is expected to be taken up in the house in the near future. Lifting the ban is not only bad for the multitude of Pennsylvanians who flock to the woods on Sundays for non-hunting pursuits, but in the end, it is also bad for hunting.

As an avid hiker and member of several hiking clubs, most of our activities during prime hunting seasons are focused on Sundays, days that are largely free of gunfire in Penns Woods. Safety is a paramount concern, especially when on any Sunday, many thousands of Pennsylvania hikers, backpackers, trail maintainers, mountain bikers, equestrians, trail runners, bird watchers, geocachers, wildlife watchers and their families are in the woods. Add hunters to this mix, and it is just a matter of time before tragic accidents occur. The Game Commission has made great strides in reducing shooting accidents from hunting, but Pennsylvania still averages about 30 shooting accidents per

year. Since 2008, 48 of these accidents were described by the Game Commission as mistaking victims for game including several where the victims were wearing fluorescent orange. In two separate incidents in 2002 and 2003, hikers were shot and seriously injured on the Appalachian Trail (not in Pennsylvania) when they were mistaken for deer. This is hardly reassuring to hikers and others who are being asked to share the woods with hunters the one day where there currently is no concern of being a shooting victim.

Outdoor recreation surveys conducted for DCNR indicate there are far more Pennsylvanians who enjoy hiking and other non-hunting outdoor pursuits than hunting. Only about 8 percent of Pennsylvanians are hunters. Surveys indicate that hunters are divided on Sunday hunting with about 50 percent opposed. So, about 4 percent of Pennsylvanians are strong proponents for Sunday hunting. It is unreasonable that such a small minority would demand that everyone else give up a day free of hunting.

Sunday hunting advocates claim that Sunday hunting is a panacea that will reverse declining numbers and will be an economic boon. Pennsylvania's hunting population peaked in 1983 and has since been in slow decline. This mirrors hunting participation in the rest of the country, including states that have long allowed Sunday hunting. Michigan, for example, has 100,000 fewer hunters today than 10 years ago. In reality, changing demographics, changing attitudes and loss of habitat are largely responsible for hunting's decline, not the Sunday hunting ban. This decline in hunting is unfortunate, and true remedies should be explored, but lifting the ban is not one of them.

Some proponents of Sunday hunting have made wildly optimistic claims that it could inject \$800 million into the state economy and create 7000 new jobs. However, any realistic economic gain from Sunday hunting would likely be offset from the economic loss of other user groups who would choose to stay home.

Hunters themselves are not united on Sunday hunting. Many fear the closure of private lands, where 80 percent of hunting occurs in the state. Other hunters are concerned about the added pressure on wildlife. There is also concern that Sunday hunting is a

divisive issue that will result in a loss of support for hunting. People currently neutral to hunting might well become anti-hunting as a consequence.

Hunting has a long and honored tradition in our state. Hunters, hikers, and other outdoors people all share a deep appreciation for Penn's Woods and all have a right to pursue their passion. With the continued ban on Sunday hunting, hunters are still free to hunt six days of the week as they have for 143 years and everyone will continue to have one day a week where they can enjoy the woods free from hunting pressure. Let's keep the ban on Sunday hunting.

Paul Shaw of Snyderstown is vice president of the Keystone Trails Association and the Outings Coordinator of the Otzinachson Group of the Sierra Club.

- Sunbury Daily Item

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the author to the editor of the journal. The letter discusses the author's interest in the topic and the reasons for writing the paper.

2. The second part of the document is the main body of the paper. It begins with an introduction that outlines the research question and the objectives of the study. The introduction also provides a brief overview of the literature on the topic.

3. The third part of the document is the conclusion. It summarizes the findings of the study and discusses the implications of the results. The conclusion also includes a list of references and a list of figures and tables.

4. The fourth part of the document is the appendix. It contains additional information that is relevant to the study but is not included in the main body of the paper. The appendix includes a list of abbreviations and a list of acronyms.

5. The fifth part of the document is the bibliography. It lists all the sources that were used in the study. The bibliography is organized alphabetically by the author's name.

6. The sixth part of the document is the list of figures and tables. It provides a brief description of each figure and table and indicates where they can be found in the paper.

7. The seventh part of the document is the list of abbreviations and acronyms. It provides a key for the symbols and abbreviations used in the paper.

8. The eighth part of the document is the list of keywords. It provides a list of terms that are used to describe the content of the paper.

9. The ninth part of the document is the list of authors and their affiliations. It provides the names of the authors and the institutions they are affiliated with.

10. The tenth part of the document is the list of acknowledgments. It provides a list of people and organizations that provided support for the study.

[Send to printer](#) [Close window](#)

Sunday hunting in Pennsylvania - the pluses and minuses

BY MARK NALE



Democratic Representative Frank Farina, of Lackawanna County, is introducing yet another bill to allow Sunday hunting in Pennsylvania. All past attempts have failed. This bill is supported by a host of organizations, including the Unified Sportsmen of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, the National Rifle Association, Hunting Works for Pennsylvania and others.

I was really surprised when the lawsuit to end the ban on Sunday hunting failed, but I am not a judge. The ban is a "blue law," with roots dating back more than a century. Most blue laws have been overturned, and most other states allow more Sunday hunting than what is allowed in the Keystone State. Is there a logical reason to prohibit it? Although my opinion regarding the entire issue wavers, I believe that landowners should be allowed to hunt on their own properties on Sundays.

There is not a logical, legal reason to restrict Sunday hunting, but I hate the smoke and mirrors being used by some proponents of the new bill.

Let's cut through the smoke clouding this issue. If just being allowed to hunt on Sundays is the issue, then it is a non-issue. You can already hunt on Sundays. In Pennsylvania, you can legally hunt coyotes 52 Sundays a year, and you can hunt crows on about 36 Sundays – July 3, 2015, through April 2, 2016, this license year. If you tell me that a law is preventing you from enjoying any hunting on any Sunday with your children, you are misinformed – it is not.

What some people really want is to be able to hunt deer, bears, small game and turkeys on Sundays. If you think that allowing the Sunday hunting of those animals will mean another dozen or so additional days to hunt deer, bears, turkeys and small game each fall, you will be mistaken. Pennsylvania Game Commission biologists have recommended season lengths based on available game and expected hunting pressure. Adding a high-pressure Sunday hunting day will increase hunting pressure and most likely subtract other days. The ratio will be at least two or three weekdays subtracted for every Sunday gained. This will lessen the hunting opportunity for some.

Please note that about half of Pennsylvania's hunters are opposed to additional Sunday hunting. That should tell you something. Also consider that the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is opposed to expanded Sunday hunting. Its members control thousands of acres of hunting land in Pennsylvania, and some of its members have threatened to post their property if Sunday hunting is expanded.

I am a licensed hunter, and I often choose to hike on game lands or state forest land on Sundays during the spring and fall. I do this to avoid disturbing hunters. Others hike on Sundays because they fear being accidentally shot by hunters. Allowing expanded Sunday hunting will change this parameter, which could result in the loss of support for hunting. People currently neutral to hunting might become anti-hunting as a consequence.

No doubt, expanded Sunday hunting would be good for people who work five or six days a week. It would also be good for students who are in school and might have sports or other extracurricular obligations on Saturdays. Would expanded Sunday hunting help recruit youth into hunting? Probably, although I would like to see the statistics from other states about that. Do other states with more Sunday hunting have a higher percentage of teens who hunt?

Something that really bothers me are false claims. Here's an example – "Allowing hunting on Sundays would add \$800 million to the state's economy and create 7,000 jobs." I would really, really like someone to demonstrate the accuracy of this claim and convince me of its basis through a logical explanation.

Years ago, a new grocery store opened in a nearby community. It was touted as a boost to the economy and a job creator. At the time, my oldest son worked at another nearby grocery store. Their sales decreased by 25 percent when the new store opened. Some employees were laid off, while others had their hours decreased. I suspect that the same thing happened at other food markets. Were jobs truly created for local residents? Did the local economy experience growth as a result?

People have only so much money and, in my opinion, most spend almost all that they make. Please explain to me how expanded Sunday hunting will boost the economy by \$800 million. If 100 residents hunt turkeys on a Sunday in November instead of trout fishing, the hunting economy might gain. If it does, then the "fishing economy" probably loses an equal amount. If a dad takes his son hunting grouse instead of spending money for other another kind of recreation, then the hunting economy might gain, but something else might lose.

I am retired and I have little personal stake in this issue. My favorite days to hunt or fish are Monday through Friday. Would I hunt on Sundays if I were allowed? Possibly. However, this isn't an important issue for me. I am happy to schedule other things for Sundays besides hunting.

What I want is for everyone to look closely at all sides of the issue – dissolve the smoke and mirrors – and consider all of the consequences.