



Eric C. Nuse February 19, 2009 at 10:31 AM

Tantillo makes some good points concerning where do you draw the line on how much should be utilized and should it be a regulation or left up to the individual hunter. In the proposed Vermont rule we explicitly stayed away from forcing utilization. We did require making a reasonable attempt to find and retrieve any animal that you attempted to take. And required that the animal be made part of your bag and taken from the field. Exceptions were made here for animals killed doing damage. Once you get the animal home it is your property and you can use it as you see fit. Just as you could by a pig and eat it or feed it to your dog - no difference under this regulation.

We also made it illegal to abandon carcasses on public or private land. (This part of the draft rule needs to be clarified as to what is a carcass, the eatable parts, bones, guts, etc?) Currently if you throw out animal parts on your neighbors lawn it would not be a littering violation, if there was a scrap of paper it would be. We talked about amending the littering law but that is a statute and would have to go to the legislature.

The issue of whether harm has been done is critical to deciding if certain behavior should be made illegal. The concept of harm v offense is what has to be decided. Just because someones actions are offensive is not enough to make it illegal. In a democracy we put up with lots of offensive things. If the actions do harm then it does justify law making. The other question is who is being harmed? In the case of a hunter shooting at a buck, not bothering to walk over and see if he hit it or not, or not taking the time to try and blood trail it - I would say other hunters are harmed. I would also say if this behavior becomes known to the public it harms the future of hunting through loss of support by the non-hunting public.

How much weight to put on cumulative harm or harm that may come from today's actions sometime in the future is tricky. It seems to me that we do have to give up some individual choice for the greater good or even to lower the odds of future problems.

Bottom line to me is it is our responsibility to draw the bottom line for behavior. Drawing it as low as we can with out appreciable harm is better than being overly restrictive. In the Vermont situation there is a political reason to act. If we don't pass a rule the word is the legislature will take it up and pass a law that they feel will be best. It seems to me we hunters and trappers can do a much better job than our mostly non-hunting trapping legislators can do.

In defense of my friend and colleague Jim Posewitz, his books and writings have served very well to raise the awareness of hunter ethics and has served as a beacon for responsible behavior. I don't believe anywhere that he advocates for more regulation. He does advocate for more education and understanding of natural systems and the place of hunters in that system.

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