

Jan. 7/2006
 E. Van Blaricom
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 Joseph, OR 97846-0206

Sandra Froman, Pres.
 National Rifle Ass'n
 Fairfax VA

Dear President Froman,

I was pleased with your President's Column in last October's American Hunter where you stated that the NRA exists to defend not just the 2nd Amendment but the entire Constitution and Bill of Rights.

So what took me so long to commend the NRA for expanding on its mission Statement? Let me explain. I write this letter as a voice for hundreds of cattle ranchers in Oregon who own hundreds of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat and have permits for controlled grazing on million of acres of federal and state lands.

I have paid my dues into NRA for about 45 years and am a frequent contributor to NRA's appeals for special funds. Every single cattle rancher I know is a gun owner, but I have no statistics on how many are members of NRA. I think I know a way to expand on this membership.

I suppose you are thinking this is just another letter from a group who has an axe to grind, but I think it fits in with NRA's efforts to keep land open to hunting.

As ranchers, we are caught up in a struggle to defend our property rights and livelihoods, all because of the re-introduction of wolves into our neighboring states of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Wolves have been exterminated from Oregon for 60 years, but they are just beginning to leak into this state from Idaho.

The Oregon Dep't of Fish & Wildlife has developed a "management plan" to accommodate these wolves when they arrive, but there are no provisions for ranchers to use lethal controls to protect our livestock. The ODFW held hearings where they gave equal weight to emotional animal rightists who get their jollies listening to a wolf howl.

A group of ranchers in the eastern part of this state are going to close their extensive ranchlands to hunters as a way to protest the ODFW's indifference to the rancher's concerns. This could be a PR disaster for the ranchers who otherwise have no quarrel with hunters. We would hope the hunters will realize that they stand to lose if wolves come here under the full protection of the ESA.

So why am I asking the NRA to get involved? Just this: Would you consider allowing a feature article in the American Hunter complete with photos and explaining the devastation that will occur on big game herds using examples of what has already happened in our neighboring states?

Or is this too contentious for NRA to get involved in?

We will wait for your reply.

Signed, long time hunter and supporter of NRA,

E. Van Blaricom

E. Van Blaricom is a resident of Wallowa County