

CONCERNED HUNTERS COMMITTEE RESPONSE (Jaakko Pöyry)

The Concerned Hunters Committee would like to address these hearings regarding the centre piece of these proceedings - the Jaakko Pöyry Consulting report as it relates to hunters and specifically what we term the big 3 - moose, deer and bear.

The hunting community in general has for far too long been a splintered assortment of various interest groups, each with its own narrow view and all with their own agenda. Our committee cannot therefore claim to be the only voice of hunters. However, with this being said we do believe through consultation with numerous hunters throughout the province that we are at least representative of big game hunters and therefore we must let our concerns regarding the Jaakko Pöyry report as it relates to the 3 big game species.

After reading the Jaakko Pöyry report and then quickly rereading it to try and find any real reference to wildlife in general and moose, bear and deer in particular, I did find on page 31 entitled "Finland Lessons Learned - "changes in the forest has put pressure on some game animals, but favored others." Was this report so underfunded that it could not even name the animals pressured or favored? Also on page 34 - entitled "Protected Area Benchmarks - stating "New Brunswick Wildlife Management has been successful. Consistent with neighboring regions, populations of most species are viable with few endangered bird or terrestrial mammal species. However, deer populations are below historical levels in parts of the province. New Brunswick has a current yield of 1.5 animals/1,000 ha/year, with a peak of 4.5 in 1985. **The reasons for declining populations are unknown.** However, deer populations can be maintained within intensively managed forest environments. Finland and Sweden have harvest levels of 2.5 and 7.3 animals/1,000 ha/years respectively. Management to create conditions suitable for deer is an important aspect of the DNRE's objectives for Crown Land."

The report states that “New Brunswick’s wildlife management has been successful.” The Concerned Hunters Committee finds this debatable. In fact, we view DNR’s Management Plan for increasing the deer herd to be one of complete mismanagement. However, we do believe that the deer populations are below historical levels in ALL parts of the province, with the exception of Grand Manan Island. Jaakko Pöyry states that the reasons for declining deer populations are unknown. We can only assume that they asked DNR this question and apparently DNR does not know the reasons we are having declining deer populations. The Concerned Hunters committee suggests that clear cuts, chemical sprays to kill hardwoods, plantations due to know diversity of plant species and lack of winter cover in these plantations. Absolutely no planning with respect to deer traditional migration pattern and the destruction of deer yards as well as too many access roads. All of these industrial related forest issues come a close second to coyote predation as the reasons for a devastated herd in the north and a stagnant herd in the south.

Also on page 54 entitled “Scenarios - Private Lands Conservation Values - states “We believe there should be a process to establish a form of voluntary conservation designations on private industry lands (and woodlots) that could provide a level of assurance of management intent that would allow DNRE to relax constraints on equivalent areas with the Crown Lands.”

Does industry agree with Jaakko Pöyry’s statement?

We the committee describe this as the old rob Peter to pay Paul method of land conservation management. Lets examine that issue. Lets say for example some kind soul is willing to donate a private woodlot for the soul purpose as a voluntary conservation designation. Lets say that 100 acre lot is on the outskirts of Moncton. Would this be a good reason for DNR to relax constraints of 100 acres of prime deer yard or moose calving area, or for that matter 100

acres containing various bear den sites. I don't believe good old Yogi Bear would appreciate being disturbed from his sleep by a tree harvester cutting into the tree he had hollowing out for his winter nap! This trading off of good big game habitat for gravel pits, alder swamps, and bogan holes certainly doesn't seem like a good deal for wildlife in this Committee's opinion. We wonder do these examples dovetail with industries vision of big game wildlife in New Brunswick? Does industry believe wildlife management has been successful in New Brunswick? Does industry realize that the deer herd is in serious jeopardy in vast areas of New Brunswick for reasons apparently unknown? And do they care? Does a small population of moose, deer and bear simply mean less competition for industries insatiable desire for more wood fibre.

The Concerned Hunters Committee has observed over the years that the lumbering industry have always included pictures of moose, deer and occasionally bear in their literature describing their stewardship and management of NB forests. However, anything of a monetary value to support programs involving these three species rarely receives support from industry. The Committee believes hunters and big game outfitters have always been viewed by industry as an orange coated inconvenience to be tolerated for a few months every year but certainly not viewed as a partner sharing the natural resources of this province.

This is not the time for posturing, whether it be an industry leader sounding like chicken little with his own version of how the sky is falling and that the pulp and paper industry is suddenly going to disappear from this province. We believe something a little more conciliatory that the President of the Forest Products Association stated that Jaakko Pöyry "is not the be all end all". This is a little more appropriate from the industry's side. I do not want to

sound like Moses himself delivering the tablets containing the ten commandments of wildlife management. Rather than each interest group standing with their arms folded in front of them and their backs to each other - it's in all our best interests to present a realistic approach and viable alternatives.

The Committee makes the following recommendations:

- 1) First and foremost, conduct a comprehensive study to see the effects on wildlife with the implementations of Jaakko Pöyry.
- 2) If industry is going to dramatically change or expropriate a species from a particular area, then a percentage of stumpage fees should be dedicated to the species affected.
- 3) An end to herbicide spraying.
- 4) Access roads to be limited as much as possible to winter roads and longer yarding distances to limit road incursions into sensitive areas.
- 5) A study to investigate the effect of forestry disruptions to traditional deer migration patterns.
- 6) A study to determine if deer can actually live year round in plantations as they exist today.

This province is at a crossroads. The direction we take from here will dictate how we live work and enjoy recreation in the forests of this province. Once we decide to change the basic landscape, both figuratively and literally, there will be no going back! Once changed, its gone forever. All we are asking industry to do is step back for a moment and look at the forests without the dollar signs in your eyes and see for the first time what the rest of us have always seen. Try and look beyond the trees and see a kid deer suckling its mother or a buck hooking a

sapling to mark his territory or a majestic bull moose in all his splendor with steam rising from his form on an early fall morning or a mother bear herding her cubs from the den for the first time. This is what the hunting community sees when we look at the forests and we have the utmost respect and admiration for this wonderful gift of natural beauty. If we the people involved in these proceedings do nothing else, let us consider the consequences of destroying in one generation what mother nature has taken a millineum to give to us.

Thank you.

Concerned Hunters Committee

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