

Community Comment – September 14th, 2015

By Jon Sapper

The Fall Season

What a wonderful time of year! The days are warm. The salmon are running up the rivers and the deer are ready to be chased around the hills by in-shape and out-of-shape hunters.

You can tell the out-of-shape ones pretty easily. They're wearing the Cabela's camo shirt that is two sizes too small exposing a four inch band of belly above their waistband. That's not a pretty sight. But at least it's a better than watching them trying to tie their bootlaces. Now, I'm completely opposed to excessive government intervention, but that should be outlawed. Tying bootlaces is a major effort for these out-of-shape, four day a year outdoorsmen resulting in the first sweaty shirt and red face of the hunting season.

But, hunters are going to be facing a new foe in the coming years. In our area when you ask a hunter what they feel is their greatest threat, they may say the anti-hunting groups or government folks who are more interested in preserving the resource than managing it. That shift occurred in California a few years back when the name of the department was changed from California Department of Fish and Game to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. A small change eliminating the word game and substituting it with wildlife, but the underlying change in philosophy of the department couldn't have been clearer. Words mean things.

But the new foe I was talking about may take a few years to realize. It's the wolf that has made its way into Northern California. Now, if you're a conspiracy theorist, you might say the authorities planted a male and female adult wolf. You might be right. And guess what happened then, low and behold, we now have five baby wolves running around. You know, those cute loveable puppy dog looking animals that run in packs, can take down and rip apart a full grown elk with ease and are largely responsible for decimating the elk and deer populations in several Rocky Mountain states. By the way, wolves don't run away from people like coyotes or black bears. So over the next several years, if you like to hike in the Northern California forests without a firearm, enjoy yourself, but be sure to wear those funny little glasses with mirrors so you can see behind you.

As the old saying goes, you don't have to outrun a wolf. All you have to do is outrun the person you're with. And once the wolf is established, maybe the folks that want the Grizzly Bear back in California will be successful. When that happens, I think I'll limit my hunting to just wearing my Cabela's shirt, trying to tie my bootlaces while sitting on the sofa and watching the Outdoor Channel.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.