

SPECIAL REPORT

THE SPRING BEAR HUNT

Ontario
OUT OF
DOORS

THE HUMAN
COST OF THE
CANCELLATION

A TALE OF
MONEY AND
POLITICS

HISTORY OF
THE HUNT

BLACK BEAR
BIOLOGY

THE QUESTION
OF ETHICS

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My grandfather was a hunter.
My father is an avid hunter,
and he shares his hunting
heritage with me.
Hunting is now very restricted,
and I am wondering if one day
I will be able to get my own gun.
Chances for me to pass on the hunting
tradition to my children now depend
on smart actions of grown-ups.



Browning Canada Sports Inc./Ltée, 5517 Chemin St-François, St-Laure, Québec H4S 1W6

The Bear Betrayal

By John Kerr

Storm clouds were darkening the horizon again. It was January 13, and weather forecasters were predicting more chaos in Toronto. While snow piled deeper, threatening to bury the city, another type of storm was brewing that would send Ontario's hunting and fishing community into shock.

A phone call that Wednesday soon made me forget sore muscles from two weeks of shovelling snow and fighting my way to the magazine office on a cranky public-transit system. The source said the provincial government was going to announce major changes to the spring bear hunt on Friday, perhaps even cancel it.

A call to Joy Williams, a communications spokesperson in Minister of Natural Resources John Snobelen's office, didn't clear the air. Her vague response of "can't agree or deny" and can't give you anything formal" were clues that indeed something was up.

A call to a spokesperson in Premier Mike Harris's office remains unreturned. I did find out later, though, that Harris was bolting to Florida.

In Peterborough, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) hadn't heard anything. Executive Vice-President Rick Morgan was on vacation in Mexico, so staff was spread thin.

At the Northern Ontario Tourist Operators' (NOTO) Thunder Bay office, research analyst Jim Ander said Executive Director Jim Grayston was on the road to a Chicago sports show, as were many bear-hunt outfitters to take bookings for this spring's hunt. Grayston stopped on the road and called me. He'd heard rumours too, but couldn't substantiate them either.

Even *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* (OOD) was under the gun. Having already missed one press deadline, we simply had to get our February issue to the printing plant by late Friday. If Harris waited

long enough, we couldn't get the news of any hunt ban or changes to readers for another month.

Everything was falling into line for Harris to dump the hunt. Those who would be most affected by it were in awkward positions to counter such a move or even inform the hunting community of the facts.

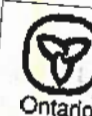
Thursday and Friday, snow descended on Toronto again. Many businesses simply told non-essential employees to stay home. By Friday morning, many office buildings were almost deserted. At OOD, myself, Editor Burt Myers, and Art Director Richie Tripp worked frantically to finish the February issue.

Late in the afternoon, most of our layouts shipped to the plant, the whirr of the fax machine was like a knife cutting the silence in our office. To bear hunters, January 15, 1999, in Ontario was to become known as Black Friday. The press release from Minister of Natural Resources John Snobelen said the government was cancelling the spring bear hunt.

With a campaign full of questionable claims and political intimidation, animal-rights groups had scored a major victory in Canada in their move to stop all hunting, fishing, and the use of animals in general. And it was a government perceived to be friends of hunters that had caved in. Snobelen might have been the messenger, but no one doubted that the decision to end the hunt came directly from Harris.

In an e-mail to Premier Harris on January 16, Longlac tourist outfitter Mark Stephenson said, "A severe breach of trust has occurred." Stephenson quoted Harris a statement that Snobelen had made last May: "The spring is in many ways the best time to hunt bears because it tends to target

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Ministry of Natural Resources
Ministère des Richesses naturelles

news release communiqué

January 15, 1999

Government To End Spring Bear Hunt

Natural Resources Minister John Snobelen today announced that the government intends to end the spring bear hunt in Ontario this spring.

The government made the decision to move to end the spring bear hunt because it will not tolerate cubs being orphaned by hunters mistakenly shooting mother bears in the spring.

"Many people have told us that the way the hunt is conducted and the inevitable loss of some cubs is unacceptable," Mr. Snobelen said. "We have reviewed current practices and considered modifications; but none provide assurance that young bears and their mothers would be protected as they emerge from their dens in the spring. Stopping the hunt is the only protection for the animals."

Mr. Snobelen will meet with the Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters Association to consider ways of assisting outfitters who have already invested resources in this year's hunt. The hunt would have begun April 15 and run until June 15 in most of the province. The Minister has directed MNR staff to post a notice of intention on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry decision.

"We realize this action will create problems for some outfitters," Mr. Snobelen said. "We will do whatever is reasonable to address the impact."

"We are also convinced that there are opportunities to broaden and strengthen economic development in the north through the further development of the



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males. Hunting during the spring reduces the chances of hunters encountering female bears with cubs because they are the last to emerge from their winter dens, and their travel and home ranges are very restricted while the cubs are young and vulnerable."

During a telephone interview with Snobelen on January 20, it became clear that conservation and the health of the bear population were not factors in the decision. He told OOD that "Our rationale here was tied to the orphaning of cubs in spring. Our tradition with other large game in Ontario was to hunt in the fall. Bears were the exception." He said somewhere between 100 and 300 cubs were orphaned by hunters each spring, but couldn't say where those statistics came from. "Data on that is very, very hard to quantify."

The actual number probably wouldn't have mattered. Animal-rights groups had said that one orphaned cub was one too many. This was all about emotion, not sound wildlife management.

Harris was between a rock and a hard place. An election is likely this year, perhaps as early as late spring, and anti-hunters were shooting at him from all directions.

Their efforts to end the spring bear

hunt were shrugged off until 1996 when businessman and philanthropist Robert Schad got involved by funding groups such as Toronto's Animal Alliance, the Ontario Federation of Naturalists, World Wildlife Fund, and others, many of them under the umbrella name Bear Alliance. Schad funnels 5 per cent of his Husky Injection Moulding System's net profits through the Schad Foundation he set up to support "eco-environmental projects." The spring bear hunt, baiting for bears, and the use of dogs have been his pet peeves. He feels that stalking bears is the only sporting way to hunt them.

Last fall, after Bear Alliance and its cronies failed to get the spring bear hunt stopped, Schad put his backing fully behind the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), which was key in ending the East Coast seal hunt.

In a meeting last October, the Schad Foundation told MNR, NOTO, and OFAH it would launch a two-million-dollar media campaign against them if they didn't agree to end the spring bear hunt. NOTO's Jim Grayston told OOD that he and OFAH's Rick Morgan decided to discuss changes to the hunt to delay further action by Schad until after the next provincial election. But the gloves were off.



Mike Harris

In November, the IFAW targeted eight key swing ridings held by Progressive Conservative MPPs in the Hamilton to Niagara Falls area. In an intense billboard, newspaper, radio, and door-to-door flyer and video-handout campaign reported to have cost \$100,000, Premier Harris was demonized for supporting spring bear hunting, allowing hunting in some provincial parks, and the apprentice programme that allows 12-year-olds to hunt under supervision of a mentor.

"Your MPP voted to give guns to our kids," screamed one billboard featuring a scraggly youngster in oversized hunting garb with a rifle in his hand.

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The spring bear hunt: the facts

Ontario has an estimated 75,000 to 100,000 black bear. According to Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) biologists Martyn Obbard and Maria De Almeida, the bear population can withstand a 10 per cent harvest without adverse effect. Presently, this averages approximately 8 per cent, even when using the lowest population estimate. Of that, no more than 40 per cent of the total harvest should be females if the population is to sustain its numbers. In a 7-year averaging of harvest statistics ending in 1996, the figures came in at 29 per cent in spring and 31 in fall. The population is healthy, the biologists conclude.

The closure of the spring hunt is based on the emotional issue of orphaned cubs. Yet, according to Steve Bowcott of MNR's enforcement section, "There has been only one conviction regarding the shooting of a sow with cubs in the last five years. This happened in 1995. The amount of charges laid have been insignificant." They are proof that hunters and outfitters are diligent in their efforts to avoid sows with cubs.

So where are all the alleged "hunter-orphaned cubs" coming from? No formal study has ever been done. Much-quoted figures are all supposition (see News section of OOD's recent winter issue for their origin). Obbard calls the 274 figure from now-retired MNR biologist Ken Morrison "an extreme high-end estimate derived strictly from demographic data, ignoring the fact that females with cubs are protected by both the spring hunt and differences in behaviour."

Cancelling the spring hunt is likely to increase cub loss. Male bears are notorious cannibals. In the 1996 spring hunt, 2,534 boars were shot. Obbard notes, "The incidence of cannibalism among bears is three to five times higher in unhunted populations and affects bears of all ages. Unhunted populations have a higher population of healthy adult males, the main predators." As cannibalism is a significant cause of natural mortality among bears, it follows that not harvesting boars in spring might be detrimental to the population as a whole.

- by Steve Gulea



Winchester Ammunition has always encouraged and supported the legal and ethical pursuit of the hunting traditions.

Black Bear populations have been, and will continue to be, healthy and stable through sound game and natural resource management practices.

Winchester Ammunition is pleased to help bring the information in this issue of "Ontario Out Of Doors" to your attention.



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History of the hunt in Ontario

Prior to 1961: Black bears were considered varmints. Bounties were placed on them from 1793 to 1796 and 1942 to 1961. Bear-hunting licences were not required.

1961: The Department of Lands and Forests and concerned hunters asked for bears to be classified as game under the Game and Fisheries Act. The first open season was from September 1 to June 30 of the following year, and a licence to hunt bear was required.

1960s and 1970s: Bears receive little pro-active management, except through adjustment of open-season dates.

1980: Bears were placed under a separate licence for the first time. To this point, bear licences were combined with moose, wolf, deer, and small game, in several different configurations. Bear have never been considered fur-bearers, although they could also be taken on a trapper's licence.

1987: Provincial policy and programmes for bear were established. Regulations introduced included: no shooting on crown land within 440 yards (400 m) of a designated public waste-disposal site; a prohibition on shooting bears in dens and sows with cubs during the spring; restrictions on the use of dogs during spring. A moratorium on bear-hunt operators was implemented. Operators applied for placement in a closed system, and non-residents were required to use an authorized tourist operator to hunt bear.

1989: Bear management areas were implemented. There are 1,984 in the province. Users pay approximately 77 cents per square mile (\$2 per square kilometer) of crown land. Operators have paid approximately \$400,000 annually to support these areas.

1992: The moratorium was lifted, allowing new operators into the system.

1996: An omnibus bill amended the Fish and Game Act. New rules affecting the bear hunt included limiting hunters to one bear licence per year and extending authority over the commercialization of wildlife, improving the ability to control the trade of bear parts, regardless of origin. According to the MNR, 9,699 resident and 12,913 non-resident licences were sold in 1996 and hunters had an overall sales impact of \$43 million on the province. In addition, 25 per cent of bear hunters purchased a 7-day angling licence. These hunters harvested 5,688 bears. Of that, 3,661 were taken in spring.

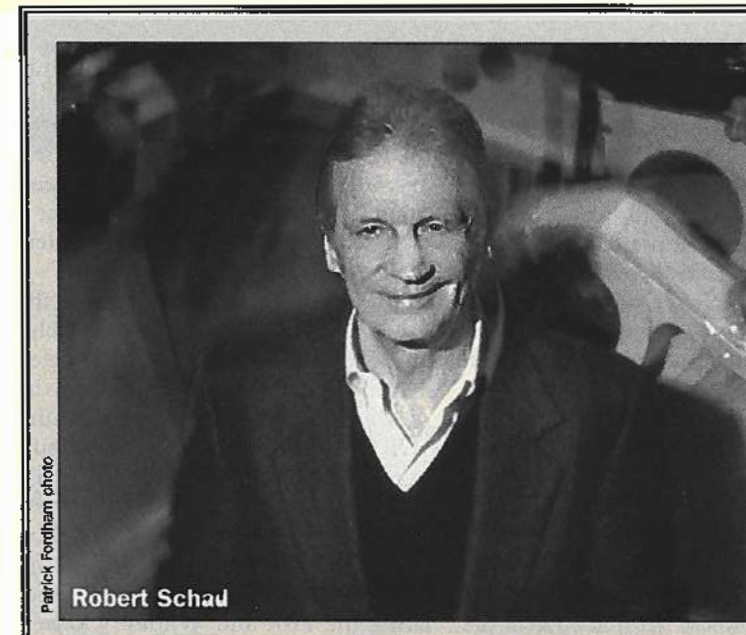
January 1, 1999: The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act was implemented. It included a prohibition on destroying or interfering with bear dens, mandatory licensing of bear dogs, the reporting of nuisance bears, and increased penalties for the commercialization of wildlife. Shooting a swimming bear and hunting within 440 yards (400 m) of any waste-disposal site were also prohibited, and possessing a bear gall bladder that had been removed from the carcass became illegal. Penalties ranged up to \$100,000 and/or 2 years in jail.

January 15, 1999: The Ontario government announced it will end the spring bear hunt.

— by Steve Galea



Bill Vaznis photo



Patrick Fordham photo

Robert Schad

Robert Schad founded Husky in 1953. Its first product was a snowmobile, the Husky-mobile, but it failed to sell. In 1958, Husky built its first mould for coffee cups. Since 1961, the company has specialized in injection moulding. It's now one of the world's largest suppliers of injection-moulding equipment, products, and services. Husky Injection Moulding machinery is used to produce everything from soft-drink bottles to auto parts. Husky has offices in 25 countries. Husky's Bolton plant alone employs 1,600 people. (Source: Canadian Institute for Legislative Action.) The *Toronto Star* reported on February 6 that Husky sales had hit \$1.1 billion last year. No red meat is served in the company cafeteria. Low-priced vegetarian dishes, subsidized by Husky, are offered, along with chicken and fish.



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Posters, handouts, and other media messages claimed that hunters orphan 300 bear cubs each spring, and there were tear-jerk photos of tiny bear cubs.

IFAW spokesman Rob Sinclair claimed opinion polls showed women are especially opposed to allowing 12-year-olds to hunt and to the spring bear hunt. "We're going to create for the Conservatives their biggest fear, a gender gap," he was quoted as saying in the *Toronto Star* on November 27. "Women aren't going to vote for them." If Harris didn't end the spring bear hunt, IFAW would take its campaign province-wide. "This election is going to be the most knuckle-busting

down-and-dirty campaign in Ontario history," said Sinclair.

Ironically, Sinclair was a senior aide to Snobelen when he was minister of education and he once ran for the post of seventh vice-president of the provincial Conservative executive, but lost.

Affected MPPs put up a brave front. Niagara Falls MPP Bart Maves, whose seat was deemed vulnerable, said the IFAW was trying to take advantage of southern-Ontario voters who are less familiar with hunting than are those in the north. (The Harris government doesn't hold any seats north of the premier's North Bay riding.)

While the anti-bear-hunt campaign went on in southern Ontario, NOTO invited the Schad Foundation to speak at the group's

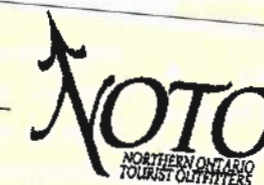
annual convention in Thunder Bay in November. NOTO members then passed a resolution to discuss changes to the spring hunt with the foundation, which offered to put up money for bear outfitters to switch to eco-tourism. (Details were in the News section of *OOD's* winter issue.)

The bear issue slumbered through December. Then, in the first week of the new year, Robert Schad talked to Premier Harris in a meeting room at Pearson International Airport. Sources say Schad told Harris he would spend one-hundred million dollars on the issue during the next election if he didn't cancel the hunt, although the premier now denies this.

On January 15, Snobelen announced he intends to cancel the spring bear hunt and indicated there would be tax dollars available to compensate tourism operators who faced losses. "We are also convinced that there are opportunities to broaden and strengthen economic development in the north through the further development of eco-tourism," he added.

The Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board (FWAB), a public watchdog set up to advise the minister of natural resources on fish and wildlife issues and Special Purpose Account expenditures (angling and hunting licences, fines, and other income) was incensed. Although Snobelen had consulted in the past with the board on how to modify the spring bear hunt, it

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NEWS RELEASE

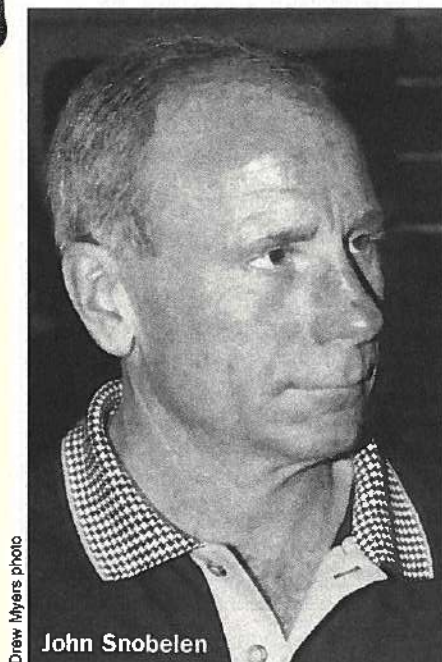
February 4, 1999
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOTO SETS THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON SPRING BEAR HUNT

NORTH BAY - The Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters Association (NOTO) is setting the record straight today about a rumoured relationship with the Schad Foundation, a leading opponent of Ontario's spring bear hunt.

The rumours, which NOTO Executive Director Jim Grayston characterizes as "absolute rubbish", imply that NOTO has agreed to support an end to the spring bear hunt in return for a \$2 million dollar contribution from the Schad Foundation. The rumours began circulating after several foundation representatives attended a NOTO convention last November.

"We want to make two things perfectly clear. First, our association supports the spring bear hunt."



Draw Myers photo

John Snobelen

Continued from page 7

claimed he didn't tell members that he was suddenly ending it.

On January 27, the FWAB filed its objections to the hunt closure through a public process. The minister's intentions and reasons for closing the hunt had to be posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry (number RB9E6001) for a mandatory 30-day public-comment period, set to end February 20. Only after this process can Snobelen enact legislation to eliminate the hunt. For his own advisory board to have to use the EBR process seems unprecedented and embarrassing.

Morgan's group also urged hunters to send comments to Snobelen through the EBR process. Animal-rights groups, though, did the same thing with their supporters.

Two FWAB members, Bryan Dykstra and Duncan Sinclair, quit in protest over the hunt closure. "The thought of having the government make such a monumental, arbitrary decision to end the hunt with no process or consultation is abominable," Dykstra told Snobelen in a formal resignation letter on January 28. "I cannot continue to work under a government that has misled the people...Shame on you all!"

The FWAB claims that the province's fish and wildlife programmes face a two-million-dollar

shortfall because of the hunt cancellation. That's how much was brought in through licence fees and Bear Management Unit revenues, it says.

The backlash continued. A public rally for the hunt took place January 31 at Lindsay's Moose Hall. The 400-seat facility quickly filled to overflowing. When OFAH's Rick Morgan asked for a show of hands in support of a two-bear limit and a longer fall hunt to compensate for lost spring opportunities, the 700 or so in attendance soundly rejected the ideas.

Morgan said OFAH wants "nothing less than the return of the spring hunt. That is what we are fighting for and what every single person who hunts or fishes should support. The loss of the spring bear hunt is the thin edge of the wedge. If antis with money can win here, any other hunting or fishing activity could be next."

Morgan added that OFAH had created a Hunting and Fishing Heritage Fund to fight for the return of the spring bear hunt and long-term to "position hunting and fishing as the important cultural activities which they are, so non-users understand and, therefore, accept them."

While hunter organizations face a tough legal challenge, any lawsuit launched by tourism operators for compensation is almost sure to succeed, Morgan told OOD

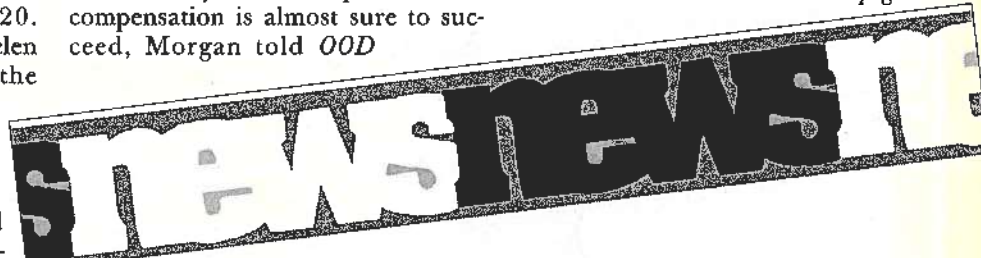
that same day. He said the federation had lawyers studying the issue.

Despite the lack of support for them, Snobelen announced on February 4 that he would expand fall bear-hunting seasons and areas and that a "harvest increase for resident hunters will be considered."

On February 5, on behalf of the OFAH, the firm of Danson, Recht, and Freedman delivered to Snobelen a formal request to fully review the decision to end the spring bear hunt. "Of necessity, this will require a suspension of any decision in this regard, so that proper and fair review can be undertaken," said the law firm. It threatened to take the Ontario government to court for violating the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights. "If our evidence and facts are correct, then your decision to terminate the spring bear hunt constitutes an unconstitutional exercise of government power."

On February 7, NOTO toughened its stance. "It (Snobelen's offer of longer fall bear seasons and a bigger harvest) appears to be an attempt to put a band-aid on the industry's broken arm." The tourism group is launching "a full-scale attack on this politically, not biological"

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OFAH FILE: 405/842
February 5, 1999

To Selected Media

For Immediate Release

Fall bear hunt won't replace spring hunt

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters does not believe a week or two extension to the fall bear hunting season can replace the spring bear hunt. The loss of weeks of spring hunting and the economic returns to outfitters and guides cannot be replaced in the fall.

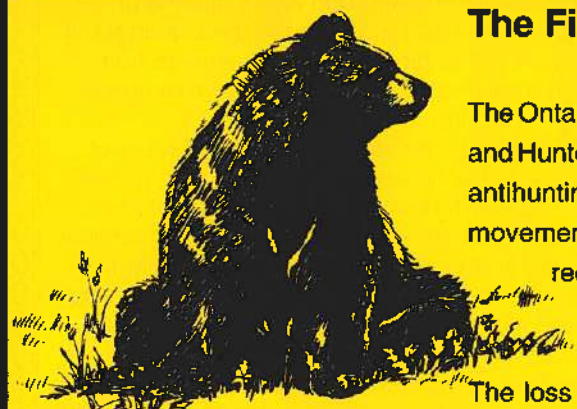
In addition, nuisance bear problems for northern communities and agricultural losses in central and eastern Ontario communities will increase.

"Let's face it, there are going to be at least 4,000 more bears around every summer," said O.F.A.H. Executive Vice President, Rick Morgan.

The O.F.A.H. is insisting on a complete review of the government's decision and reinstatement of the spring bear hunt.

...prove Ontario's bear population is large, healthy and ...there was no biological, or

The 'Antis' have attacked -- The O.F.A.H. is fighting back!



The Fight:

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters has been fighting the antihunting and animal rights movement for years and, in recent times, the fight has escalated.

The loss of the spring bear hunt has galvanized the hunting community and the O.F.A.H. is taking the lead role in the fight to **BRING BACK THE HUNT.**

To fight for our right to hunt, the O.F.A.H. has:

- launched a massive information campaign to counter the antis' rhetoric

- O.F.A.H. lawyers have sent a letter to the Minister of Natural Resources demanding a return of the spring bear hunt or face court challenges

- participated in rallies in support of the bear hunt, provided thousands of copies of the Environmental Bill of Rights, and drafted letters to the Minister of Natural Resources

- undertaken a long term strategy to eradicate negative stereotypes placed on hunters and anglers

- established a new **Fishing and Hunting Heritage Fund** to support our efforts against "anti" groups

The Future:

Our fight is far from over. The O.F.A.H. will, as Ontario's largest, most respected conservation organization, continue to fight to protect hunters' and anglers' rights to participate in responsible outdoor recreational activities.

If every hunter in Ontario belonged to the O.F.A.H., no government would dare make unwanted, arbitrary decisions affecting anglers and hunters.

We need YOU now.

Add your voice to ours and help us **BRING BACK THE HUNT.**

Join the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters today.

For membership information call: **705-748-6324**

or visit our web site at **www.ofah.org**



P.O. Box 2800
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 8L5

Black bear biology

Latin name: *Ursus americanus*

Black bears inhabit forests and swamps from central to northern Ontario. These opportunistic omnivores adapt to environments ranging from isolated boreal forest to rural Ontario dumpsites. They tend to be elusive. Bears that discover human garbage are the exception. In the wild, bears feed on grass, fruit, berries, roots, fish, carrion, and occasionally each other. Generally they are not predators, but they take deer fawns, moose calves, or any small animal that presents itself. Males (boars) in the prime of life are notorious cannibals, often preying on cubs.

In Ontario, male black bears reach average weights of about 350 pounds (159 kg). They can reach heights of 36 inches (91 cm) at the shoulders. Females average 125 pounds (57 kg) and are generally less than 32 inches (81 cm) tall at the shoulders. The weight of individual bears varies seasonally. They are heaviest in the fall before hibernation, as they have built up a layer of fat to carry them through winter. They are lightest in July.

Hibernation begins in late fall and ends in early spring. Dens consist of anything that provides shelter and concealment. This varies from caves to blown-down trees. Bears emerging from hibernation feed intensively to gain weight.

They are solitary creatures, except for females with cubs. The sow allows her cubs to stay with her for about 18 months. Females of breeding age (5 1/2 years in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region to 7 years in boreal-forest habitat) mate every second year from early June to July. They give birth to as many as five cubs, but most often two or three during hibernation in early January, after a 4-month

period of delayed implantation and 2 months of active gestation. Cubs weigh about three-quarters of a pound (.34 kg) at birth. When they emerge from dens with their mothers, they have grown to about five pounds (2.3 kg).


Cubs in boreal habitat average survival rates of 50 per cent in the first year and 57 per cent in the second. Cubs with their mothers in Great Lakes-St. Lawrence forest habitats have a 75 per cent survival rate in their first year and a further 75 per cent in their second. In an unpublished study by noted bear expert and biologist George Kolenosky, orphaned-cub survival rates were listed as 35 per cent in spring and 80 per cent in fall. This study took place in Great Lakes-St. Lawrence habitat in the 1970s, utilizing orphans from nuisance bears, MNR-shot sows, road kills, and other sources.

Boars have nothing to do with their progeny after conception. Although mature sows breed every second year, if their cubs are lost before the next breeding season they will come into heat again.

Cannibalism, poor forage, and wolves are major contributors to natural mortality.

Bears rely on excellent hearing and a keen sense of smell. MNR biologist Martyn Obbard says their vision is good as well, contrary to popular belief. They're also surprisingly fast sprinters, good swimmers, and skilled tree climbers.

Boars are wanderers, having home ranges as large as 590 square miles (1,528 sq km). They often sire several litters. Sows have smaller ranges, averaging about 9.65 square miles (25 sq km), which often overlap. Neighbouring females are often related.

— by Steve Galea 



James Markou photo

United We Stand!

Preserving the Right to Hunt

We're Safari Club International, one of North America's largest hunting and wildlife organizations. We're fighting to preserve the freedom to hunt in Ontario and across this great nation.

- *Freedom means the ability to freely hunt for game in an ethical manner.*
- *Freedom means the ability to hold your head high in society as a hunter and have people acknowledge you as a powerful contributor to our conservation effort.*
- *Freedom means the acknowledgement by government that your right to hunt should not, and cannot be eliminated because of the opinions of vocal minority groups.*

The proposed banning of the Spring Bear Hunt in Ontario is an assault on our freedom of choice as hunters. ALL anti-hunting organizations openly acknowledge that their goal is the elimination of all hunting in this country. They openly state they will not cease until they have realized their vision. Safari Club is committed to not let that happen.

To learn more about
Safari Club International,
and how to become a
member of this growing
worldwide organization
call your local chapter today.



Safari Club Ontario:
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Continued from page 8

ly, based on the move by the Ontario government.

"We've tried talking common sense, but now it's time for a revolution," said NOTO's Grayston. The group has also started a trust fund to raise money for the fight to reinstate the spring hunt.

On February 13, bear hunters followed Premier Harris to his home town of North Bay. Hundreds of hunt supporters filled the Capitol Centre on Main Street to listen to a long list of speakers. And their war-chest got bigger.

Oakville businessman Thomas Pigeon unveiled a cheque for \$100,000, donated by Safari Clubs International, OFAH, NOTO, the Ontario Bear Hound Association, the Northwestern Ontario Sports-

men's Alliance, the Ontario Black Bear Association, and concerned citizens. Pigeon, who owns Thomas Pigeon Design Group, had already pledged 5 per cent of his company's pre-tax profits to defend the bear hunt. The collective fund is for MNR to do an in-depth study on the orphaning of bear cubs. "Facts and data will be collected and, if it seems that changes need to be made for next year's hunt, then we will have good, solid information on which to make reasonable and proper decisions," Pigeon said in North Bay.

He was in Toronto on February 15, trying to arrange a meeting with Snobelen to hand him the cheque. Late that day, Pigeon told OOD the catch is that Snobelen would have to allow spring bear hunting this year in

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The IFAW

What is the International Fund For Animal Welfare? What is its agenda, and where did it come from?


The IFAW started with Brian Davies in 1966 during the height of the anti-seal-hunt campaign. It was officially founded in New Brunswick in 1969. Because of Canadian regulations restricting the amount of money that could be spent lobbying government officials by a group holding Charitable Organization Tax Deductible Receipt status, it moved to the U.S. It was officially incorporated there on February 26, 1985. Four years ago, it returned to Canada and set up branch offices again. It has, according to Dr. Rick Smith of the Ottawa IFAW office, grown to include 18 national corporations in 12 countries. They are not deemed to be a charitable organization in Canada.

Rob Sinclair at the Toronto IFAW office reported that the organization has approximately 1.5 million supporters, of which about 100,000 are Canadians. Their total annual donations are about 50-million dollars, which means by extrapolation that almost 3-million Canadian dollars flow into their coffers each year. Between 125 and 150 full-time employees are on the payroll throughout the world. That is big business.

Jean E. Kinloch, a Canadian living in New Brunswick, is listed as president in the application for Certificate of Authority to Transact Business in the State of Illinois that was filed on December 3, 1993, and her name and position still appeared on the annual report filed to that state on January 5, 1999. The annual report also declared that IFAW has no employees, and that a management fee is charged by another organization for that purpose. When I contacted Ms. Kinloch as the president of the corporation, she seemed confused, declaring that she was only a trustee.


Where is IFAW going with its agenda as far as hunters are concerned? When asked, Dr. Smith declared, "We're not opposed to all hunting. We're opposed to unethical hunting, which is why we feel strongly that other unethical hunting practices have to cease. Like hunting with dog packs. Like bear baiting. And we are certainly going to campaign against these practices in other jurisdictions. In the short term, obviously, we will be campaigning in other jurisdictions to end spring bear hunts (there)."

Hunters in Canada have not heard the last word from the IFAW.

— by Steve Cooke 

Bear attacks

Since 1978, black bears have killed six people in Ontario. All of the attacks occurred in remote regions with little or no hunting pressure. Five of them took place in Algonquin Provincial Park, another north of Lake Abitibi. The bears involved were healthy boars in the prime of life. These attacks are thought to have been unprovoked and predatory in nature.

— by Steve Galea 

Continued from page 13

several hundred of the nearly 2,000 bear-management areas to conduct the study. Pigeon predicts it would provide jobs for several hundred students. "If more money is needed, we'll get it," he added. "This is just a start." It could be Harris and Snobelen's "out," Pigeon added — a chance to get the real facts on orphaning of cubs in spring, rather than toss about hypothetical numbers.

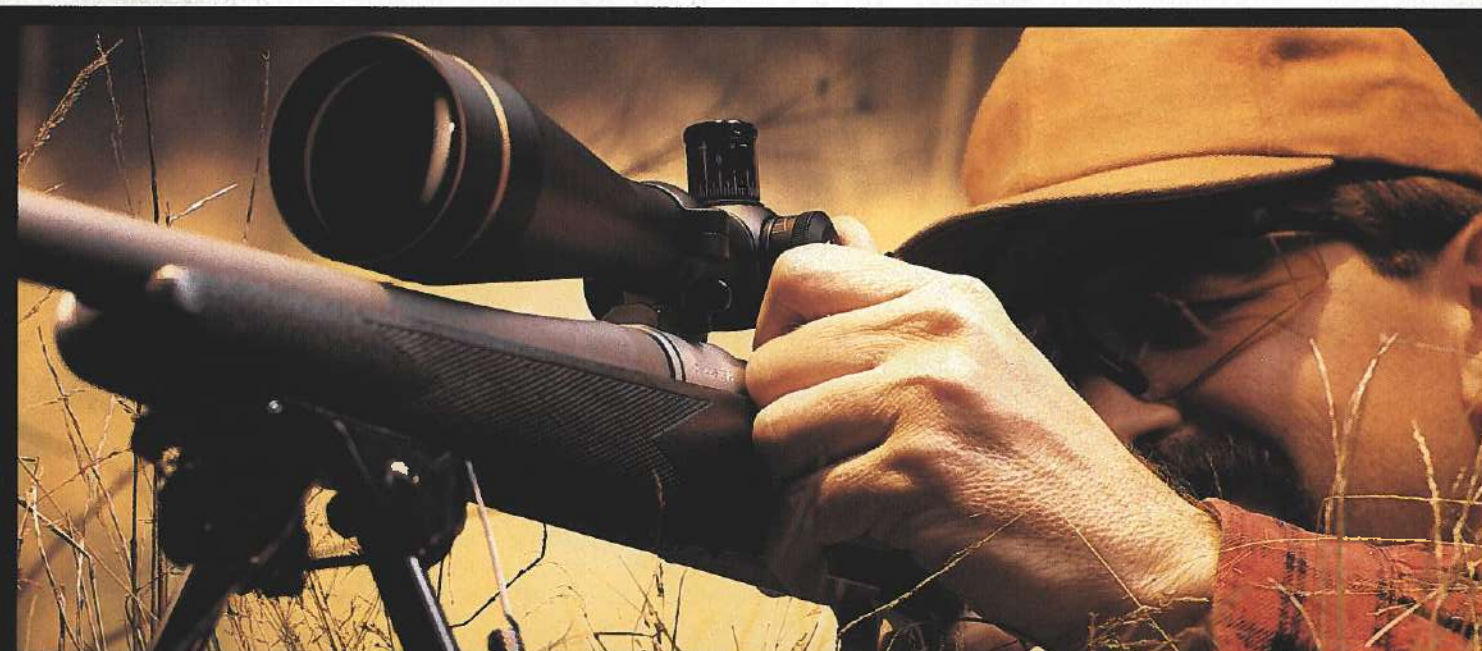
As this publication goes to press, another rally to support the spring hunt was being planned for Sault Ste. Marie. Even the Canadian Sportsfishing Industry Association (CSIA) had joined the fray, challenging Premier Harris,

Robert Schad, and the IFAW to "provide immediate and full compensation to the hundreds of families who are facing the loss of their businesses..."

"We believe that outdoor sporting goods retailers hurt by the cancellation of the hunt should also be compensated," said CSIA President Tom Brooke.

The possibility of lawsuits and having to hand out millions of tax dollars in compensation to those affected by a hunt ban hangs over the Ontario government like a winter blizzard.

The next move is up to Premier Harris. The bear issue seems set to stalk him right into the next election. ●



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Ethics:

Robert Schad, president, CEO, and controlling owner of Husky Injection Moulding Systems Ltd. of Concord, Ontario, has been quoted as saying that he believes the spring bear hunt to be unethical and, to coin an old phrase, "he's willing to put his money where his mouth is."

His critics have said it's unethical for him to pay others to be his mouthpieces and destroy the livelihood and traditions of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of the province's northern residents, while hiding in his Brampton headquarters. A request by this magazine for an interview with Schad was denied.

No one seems to disagree that Ontario's bear population is not in danger. While exact numbers have been hard to determine, population estimates by some of Ontario's most respected biologists suggest that numbers are either stable or rising. Ironically, the mandatory reporting system in place for non-resident hunters might be the best way for biologists to get a handle on the province's bear populations. However, by basing their arguments on a question of ethics, and not biological facts and data, the supporters of the government's decision to ban the spring bear hunt have effectively moved Ontario's wildlife professionals out of the picture.

In a letter to Natural Resources Minister John Snobelen in January of 1998, Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board Chair Phil Morlock stated that it was wrong of the caucus natural resources committee to question the ethics of spring bear hunting. "Were the caucus committee to review this under the auspices of 'ethics' it could lend credibility to an illegitimate question and imply a problem where none exists."

Snobelen responded that, "the issues now being raised about bear hunting are not about conservation, rather they focus on differing societal values. I believe the increased attention focused on ethics in hunting, especially bear hunting, is not likely to abate. Fur-

Continued on page 16

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Continued from page 15

ther, it is my view that Ontario's hunting community has a responsibility to consider resolutions to this matter and should be given the opportunity to do so. As a result, the ministry will not be conducting a review of the matter at this time."

The politicians had thrown the question of bear-hunting ethics back into the hands of hunters to debate. It hasn't happened, at least not on any formal level.

Hunting organizations, the OFAH included, have been reluctant to wade into what they see as a minefield of differing opinions. It's partly out of fear of providing fodder for the anti-hunting community. Up until

the last half of this century, almost all discussion of hunting ethics took place within the ranks of hunters. Aldo Leopold and Theodore Roosevelt, both hunters, were key figures in the debate. And, while measures such as the Hunting Heritage Hunting Futures initiative are attempting to recapture some of the lost ground, most of the discussion on ethical hunting during the last five decades has found its roots in the anti-hunting community.

The question remains, is bear hunting as it is practised in Ontario unethical, even if cubs are never killed?

When asked that question in a recent interview with this magazine, Premier Mike Harris skirted the

question. He's not alone, and to be fair, it's not an easy question.

Both baiting and hound-hunting are relatively new traditions, actively promoted in the late 1960s and 70s by what was then the Department of Lands and Forests to deal with a growing nuisance-bear problem. In communities such as Marten River in the north and cottage country in the south, bears were becoming bolder each year. Back then, black bear were seldom hunted by residents, who had little knowledge of bear baiting techniques and who discouraged deer hounds from trailing bears. Stalking bears in the heavily forested terrain of Ontario is for the most part impractical.

Most members of the hunting community would agree that modern hunting is not a "sport," it's a recreation of our past. "In fact, zoologists, anthropologists, evolutionary and sociobiologists trace hunting back two-million years or more to man's ancestor *Homo erectus*, the harbinger of humanity." (see *The Hunter*, Gord McIntyre, *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* February 1999).

If hunting is not a sport, it is irrelevant whether one method is more "sporting" than another. Most responsible hunters would agree that so long as a hunter has earned the right to take an animal by his or her skill and sweat, not simply by their pocket book, and that if at the moment they release the arrow or touch off the fatal shot they have made a decision to kill the animal they pursued, are confident that the shot will be a good one, and feel regret about taking an animal they respect, then they are hunting in an ethical manner.

It follows then that if bear hunting adheres to these guidelines, whether it be baiting, hound hunting, or stalking, it is an ethical activity.

Ninety-four per cent of Ontario's residents do not hunt. Most do not understand its traditions or value. In this environment it is essential that hunters themselves become actively involved in improving the conduct management, and image of their traditions. If they don't, someone else looking for a cause surely will.

— by Burt Myers



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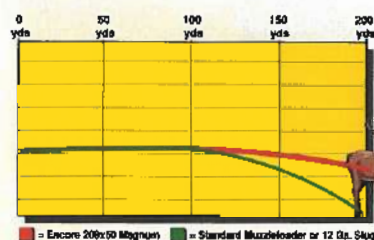
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The human cost

By Gord Ellis

The cancellation of Ontario's spring bear hunt means more than just the loss of tourism dollars to the provincial economy. It spells the end of a way of life for many northern-Ontario families.

"I've been in the outfitting business for 25 years and in the bear-hunting business for about 20 years," said Rob Brodhagen, of Rob's Bowhunting and Bear Creek Outfitters in Dryden. "My mother and father were the original owners, but it was always my wife's and my job to run the place. I developed the bow-hunting part of the business."

During an average spring they would host 50 to 65 bear hunters, most of them from the United States. The whole family, including Rob's wife, Sandy, and their children, would get involved in all aspects of the hunt. "My two boys and my nephew have been baiting bears since before they were 10 years old," said Rob. "In fact, during the last few years they've been basically running the hunt. My boy Dusty goes to Simon Fraser University, and that's how he made his money to go to school. But it's not just the money; the kids loved to do it. We all enjoyed helping other people get into the woods."

The cancellation of the spring bear hunt couldn't have come at a worse time for the Brodhagens. They were in the process of selling one bear-hunting business and had just bought another. Now they own a territory that is worthless. Rob is trying to stay optimistic, and the family plans to run a fall hunt to justify their investment, but the suddenly precarious future of the business has taken its toll. "It's put us under a lot of strain," he said. "The phone is ringing all the time, and I hardly even have time to talk to my wife. Emotionally and physically, it's been a huge strain. I had to go to emergency (hospital) because my heart's been doing flip-flops. The animal-rights people are attacking our heritage, our way of life."

The small town of Marten River in north-central Ontario is an example of how a single political decision can have an impact on an entire community. Phil and Gretel Cracknell own Marten River

Lodge, a medium-sized establishment that features nine cabins on 11 acres (4.45 ha) of land. The Cracknells moved to Marten River three years ago when Phil lost his job in southern Ontario. "We didn't want to go on welfare, so we thought we would make our own job and come here," said Gretel.

"We're a small outfitter, and we've been more into the fishing end of it," she added. "But this was the year that we invested heavily in overseas advertising about the spring bear hunt, so that we weren't quite so dependent on the fishing groups. We were reaching out to the European market to try something exciting." Gretel spent hours translating the company's English advertising into German, and they bought expensive advertising in German publications. They'd already received several hunt deposits when they got word the spring hunt was banned.

The government's promise of eco-tourism dollars to replace lost revenue from the bear hunt rings hollow

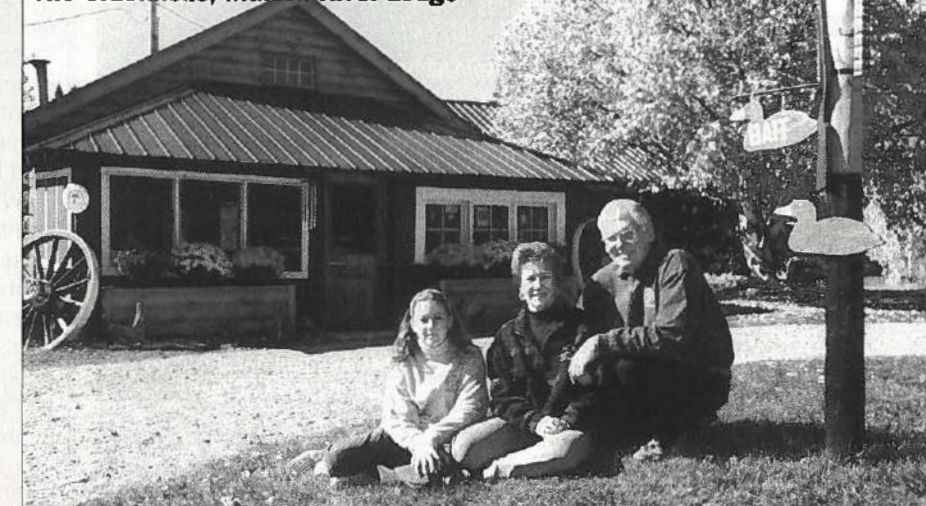
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Sandy, Rob, and Jeremy Brodhagen, Dryden



Bryan Meadows photo

The Cracknells, Marten River Lodge





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with the Cracknells. "We've offered an outdoor photo-shoot package for the full three years that we've been here, and we've never had any takers," said Gretel. "I'd like to see (eco-tourism) work out, but generally the people that camp and hike and bird-watch don't spend a lot of money up here."

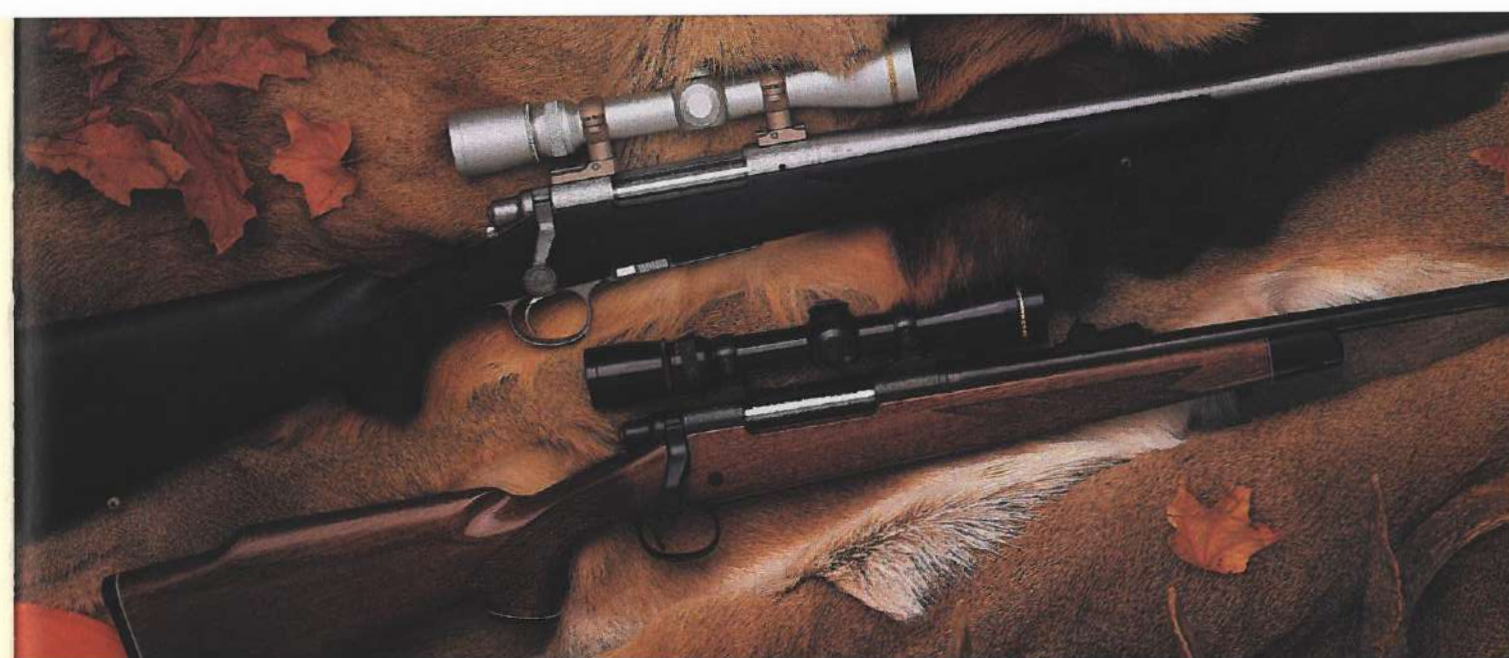
Rosemary Rose and her husband, Bill, own and operate Timberlane Cottage and Resort, a small camp, gas station, and gift shop in Marten River. Four years ago, the couple sold everything they owned to buy the business and, with two children in tow, left southern Ontario and headed north.

As part of the business, the couple sold about 200 bear export permits a year, as well as bear-hunting licences. Rose says spring bear hunters were vitally important to the bottom line of their business. "Traditionally the spring bear hunt has been the beginning of the season," said Rose. "American hunters would come into the store and buy trinkets for their families—they called them 'get-back-in-the-door gifts.' They... always spent a lot of money. Those sales were about 20 per cent of our yearly income. Although we don't have a hunt, we stand to lose more business because of the ban than some of the outfitters."

Rose believes Premier Mike Harris caved into animal-right groups in the south. She also questions the government's support for small business. She says that if the bear ban goes through, most retailers and operators in the Marten River area will be too strapped for cash to provide young people with seasonal employment this summer. "We can't afford to hire our two students this year," said Rose. "It's terrible."

With another child on the way and a bleak spring season ahead, Rosemary Rose and her family are contemplating their future in the north. "This town depends on tourism to survive, and our livelihood is being taken away from us," she said. "It seriously makes us doubt if we made the right move."

—by Gord Ellis



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