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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
PUBLIC MEETING
ON RESIDENT CANADA GOOSE POPULATIONS
April 1, 2002
Dallas, TX

A P P E A R A N C E S

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Facilitator:
Phil T. Seng, Vice President
DJ Case & Associates
607 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana 46544

Presenter:
Ron Kokel, Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division on Migrating Bird Management
Arlington, Virginia

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. SENG: Well, good evening. I'd
3 like to welcome you to tonight's meeting on
4 Resident Canada Goose Management.

5 My name is Phil Seng. I'll be the
6 facilitator at tonight's meeting. I work with
7 DJ Case & Associates, a communications consulting
8 firm based up in Indiana, and when I was talking to
9 someone this afternoon about this meeting tonight
10 and they found out that I was from
11 Indiana, they said: Well, you're probably really
12 going to ramrod that meeting and speed it up so you
13 can go see Indiana University play for the national
14 championship in basketball tonight. But I had to
15 be quick to point out that as a Purdue graduate, I
16 really have no love for Indiana University, although
17 I must admit that now Bobby Knight has come down to
18 Texas, it's much harder to hate them than it used
19 to be.

20 But in any case, there's really no
21 conflict of interest --

22 VERNON BEVILL: And he's doing a fine
23 job, I might add.

24 MR. SENG: -- we'll take as much time
25 as we need to.

1 We were contracted by the Fish and
2 Wildlife Service to facilitate 11 of these public
3 meetings around the country to take public input on
4 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that the
5 service has developed on management of resident
6 Canada geese, and tonight is the first of these 11
7 meetings.

8 Following tonight's meeting, we will
9 go to Palatine, Illinois; Waupun, Wisconsin;
10 Franklin, Tennessee; Bloomington, Minnesota;
11 Brookings, South Dakota; Richmond Virginia;
12 Danbury, Connecticut; New Brunswick, New Jersey;
13 Denver, Colorado; and we will finish on May 30th in
14 Bellevue, Washington, in Washington State.

15 The procedure tonight is very
16 straightforward. We are going to have a brief
17 slide presentation by Ron Kokel, who is a wildlife
18 biologist with the Division of Migratory Bird
19 Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, on the Draft
20 EIS, and then we're going to turn it over to the
21 public for your input.

22 When you came in, you should have
23 received a numbered card like this. We will just
24 take public comment in this order, starting with
25 Number 1 and going till there's no cards left. And

1 also, if you choose not to make public comment
2 tonight, but you think of something later you'd
3 like to say, there's an address on back, both snail
4 mail and e-mail addresses where you can send
5 comments. And the current deadline for public
6 comment is May 30th, and that's written on here as
7 well.

8 When it comes time for public
9 comment, I would ask that you come to the floor
10 mike here in the center for two reasons: Number
11 one, so everyone can hear what you have to say; and
12 also, so that our court reporter, Jamie, can make
13 sure we get everything verbatim that you had to say
14 as well.

15 I would ask when you come to the mike
16 if you would state your name and spell your name,
17 unless it's immediately obvious how to spell it,
18 also state whatever organization you represent, if
19 any, and where you're from.

20 And the meeting -- as most of you
21 know, the meeting is designed for the Service to
22 take input. It's not -- the format is not set up
23 for a give-and-take or debate discussion, so please
24 keep that in mind as you come to the mike.

25 And I'll reiterate some of these

1 things when we come back to the public comment
2 period. We have signup sheets that I will pass
3 around while Ron's talking.

4

5

6 DAVE CASE: If you're
7 confident that you'll get the Final
8 EIS, you don't need to sign up. This is for
9 people to get the Final DEIS.

10 MR. SENG: There's a check box
11 on there that says you're already on the mailing
12 list or you're not. So if you've gotten a copy of
13 the Draft EIS, which looks like this, and you're on
14 the mailing list, you'll get a copy of the Final
15 when it's done.

16 If you haven't gotten a copy and
17 you'd like one, please check the appropriate box.
18 Or if you'd like to be taken off the list and
19 you've got one and you don't want the Final, write
20 something to that effect in there and we'll take
21 you off the list.

22 With that, Ron Kokel, wildlife
23 biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

24 MR. KOKEL: Thanks, Phil.

25

1 Good evening. Again, my name is Ron
2 Kokel. I'm a wildlife biologist with the Division
3 of Migratory Bird Management with the Fish and
4 Wildlife Service, stationed in Arlington, Virginia.
5 And on behalf of our director, Steve Williams, I'd
6 like to welcome all of you to this public meeting.

7 If I could get the lights and the
8 slides.

9 This is the first of the 11 public
10 meetings held across the country for the purpose of
11 inviting public participation and input into our
12 process of developing an environmental impact
13 statement for Resident Canada Goose Management.

14 The Draft EIS was developed in full
15 cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture
16 Wildlife Services.

17 Why are we here? Well, we're here to
18 explain the DEIS, its proposed action and to listen
19 to your comments. The Draft EIS considers a range of
20 management alternatives for addressing expanding
21 populations of locally breeding Canada geese, and
22 as such, we're here to listen to you and invite
23 your comments on the Service's recommended management
24 of these birds.

25 First, a brief explanation of

1 NEPA. NEPA requires the completion of an EIS to
2 analyze environmental and socioeconomic impacts
3 that are associated with any significant actions.
4 And second, NEPA also requires public involvement,
5 which includes a scoping period before the draft
6 and a comment period after the draft.

7 We began this process in August of
8 1999 when we published a Federal Register notice
9 that announced our intent to prepare the EIS.

10 Then in February of 2000, we held
11 nine public scoping meetings designed to seek
12 public input into the process. Scoping ended in
13 March of 2000. In response to scoping, we received
14 over 3,000 comments, and we had over 1,250 people
15 attend the nine public meetings.

16 During scoping, we found that the top
17 issues of concern were property damage and
18 conflicts, methods of conflict abatement, sport
19 hunting opportunities, economic impacts of resident
20 Canada geese, human health and safety concerns and
21 the impacts to Canada geese.

22 NEPA also outlined a specific format
23 for EIS. There's a purpose and need section, an
24 alternative section, the affected environment, and
25 finally, the environmental consequences.

1 The purpose of the EIS is to evaluate
2 alternative strategies to reduce, manage and
3 control resident Canada goose populations in the
4 U.S.

5 Second was to provide a regulatory
6 mechanism that would allow state and local
7 agencies, other Federal agencies, and groups and
8 individuals to respond to damage complaints or
9 other damages.

10 And third, it was to guide and direct
11 resident Canada goose population management
12 activities in the U.S.

13 The need for the EIS was an
14 increasing resident Canada goose population,
15 coupled with growing conflicts, damages and
16 socioeconomic impacts equal to reexamination of the
17 Service's resident Canada goose management.

18 Alternatives. The Draft EIS examined
19 seven management alternatives.

20 There's Alternative A, which is no
21 action; Alternative B, nonlethal control and
22 management, which includes nonpermitted activities;
23 Alternative C, which is lethal control and
24 management, including permitted activities;
25 Alternative D, expanded hunting methods and

1 opportunities; Alternative E, integrated
2 depredation order management; Alternative F, State
3 Empowerment, which is the proposed action here; and
4 Alternative G, which is general depredation order.

5 Under the "No Action" alternative,
6 there would be no additional regulatory methods or
7 strategies. We would continue the use of all
8 special hunting seasons, the issue of depredation
9 permits and the issuance of special Canada goose
10 permit.

11 Under the second alternative, the
12 nonlethal management, which includes nonpermitted
13 activity, we would cease all lethal
14 control of resident Canada geese and their eggs.
15 Only nonlethal harassment techniques would be
16 allowed. No permits would be issued, and special
17 hunting seasons would be discontinued.

18 Under Alternative C, the nonlethal
19 management, which would include permit activities,
20 we would cease all permitted lethal control of
21 resident Canada geese; we would promote nonlethal
22 harassment techniques; there would be no
23 depredation or special Canada goose permits issued.
24 Egg addling would be allowed with permit, and
25 special hunting seasons would be continued.

1 The fourth alternative, expanding
2 hunting methods and opportunities, we would provide
3 new regulatory options to increase the harvest of
4 resident Canada geese. These would include
5 authorizing additional hunting methods, such as
6 electronic calls, unplugged guns and expanded
7 shooting hours. These seasons would be operational
8 during September 1 to 15 period; they could be
9 experimental during September 16 to 31; and they
10 would have to be conducted outside of other open
11 seasons.

12 The fifth alternative, we termed it
13 Integrated Depredation Order Management. This
14 alternative consists of an Airport Depredation
15 Order, a Nest and Egg Depredation Order, an
16 Agricultural Depredation Order, and a Public Health
17 Depredation Order.

18 Implementation would be up to the
19 state wildlife agency. Special hunting seasons
20 would be continued also, as would the issuance of
21 depredation permits and special Canada goose
22 permits.

23 The Airport Depredation Order would
24 authorize airports to establish a program which
25 would include any indirect and/or direct population

1 control strategies.

2 The intent of the program would be to
3 significantly reduce goose populations at airports.
4 Management actions would have to occur on the
5 premises.

6 The Nest and Egg Depredation Order
7 would allow the destruction of resident Canada
8 goose nests and/or eggs without a permit. The
9 intent of the program here would be to stabilize
10 breeding populations.

11 The Agricultural Depredation Order
12 would authorize land owners, operators and tenants
13 actively engaged in commercial agriculture to
14 conduct indirect and/or direct control strategies
15 on geese depredating on agricultural crops. Again,
16 the management actions would have to occur on the
17 premises.

18 The last depredation order is a
19 Public Health Depredation Order, which would
20 authorize state, county, municipal or local health
21 officials to conduct indirect and/or direct control
22 strategies on geese, when recommended by health
23 officials that there's a public health threat.
24 Again, management actions would have
25 to occur on the premises where there was a public

1 health threat.

2 The sixth alternative is our proposed
3 action, which we termed State Empowerment. Under
4 this alternative, we would establish a new
5 regulation which would authorize state wildlife
6 agencies or their authorized agents to conduct or
7 allow management activities on resident goose
8 populations.

9 The intent here would be to allow
10 state wildlife management agencies sufficient
11 flexibility to deal with problems caused by
12 resident geese within their respective state.

13 We would also authorize indirect
14 and/or direct population control strategies, such
15 as aggressive harassment, nest and egg destruction,
16 gosling and adult trapping and culling program.

17 We would also allow implementation of
18 any of the specific depredation orders, which we
19 just talked about in Alternative E.

20 Additionally, during special hunting
21 seasons, we would expand methods of take to
22 increase hunter harvest like we talked about in
23 Alternative D. These would be authorized:
24 additional hunting methods, such as electronic
25 calls, unplugged shotguns, expanded shooting hours.

1 Again, these would be operational
2 during September 1 to 15 seasons. It could be
3 experimental during the September 16 to 31 seasons,
4 and they would have to be conducted outside of any
5 other open season.

6 Additionally, this alternative would
7 establish a Conservation Order, which would provide
8 special expanded hunting opportunities during a
9 portion of the treaty closed period, that's
10 August 1 to 31, and a portion of the treaty open
11 period, September 1 to 15.

12 Under the Conservation Order, we
13 would authorize additional hunting methods such as
14 electronic calls, unplugged guns, expanded shooting
15 hours, and liberalized bag limits. And again,
16 these would have to be conducted outside of any
17 other open seasons.

18 Under this alternative, the Service
19 would annually inspect the impact and the
20 effectiveness of the program. There would be a
21 provision, though, for possible suspension of the
22 regulations, and that's only the Conservation Order
23 and/or the regular season changes when the threat
24 was no longer present.

25 We would also continue all special

1 and regular hunting seasons, continue the issuance
2 of all depredation permits.

3 And under this alternative, the only state
4 requirements would be to annually monitor spring
5 breeding populations and annually report any take
6 under any authorized activities.

7 The last alternative is the General
8 Depredation Order, which would allow any authorized
9 person to conduct management activities on resident
10 geese either posing a threat to health and human
11 safety or causing damage.

12 It would be available between April 1
13 and August 31. It would provide expanded hunting
14 opportunities as explained under Alternative D.
15 There would be continued use of special and regular
16 hunting seasons, and the issuance of depredation of
17 special Canada goose permits. And under this
18 alternative, the authorization for all management
19 activities would come directly from the
20 Service.

21 Affected environment. Under the
22 affected environment, we divided it into a
23 biological environment and a socioeconomic
24 environment.

25 In the biological environment, we

1 looked at resident Canada goose populations, water
2 quality and wetlands, vegetation and soils, wild
3 life habitat and federally listed threatened and
4 endangered species.

5 Under the socioeconomic economic
6 environment, we looked at migratory bird program
7 management. This includes both the sport hunting
8 program, the migratory bird permit program, social
9 values and considerations, economic considerations,
10 such as property damages or agricultural crop
11 damages, human health and safety and program costs.

12 Environmental consequences. The
13 environmental consequences forms the scientific and
14 analytic basis for comparison of the alternatives.
15 It analyzes the environmental impact of each
16 alternative in relation to the resource categories.
17 And the "No Action" provides a baseline for all the
18 analysis.

19 Under the "No Action," what we would
20 expect is the populations with continued growth.
21 We would expect the Atlanta Flyway to approach of
22 about 1.6 million in 10 years; the Mississippi
23 Flyway, 2 million in 10 years; Central Flyway, 1.3
24 million in 10 years; and the Pacific Flyway,
25 450,000 in 10 years.

1 We would also expect continued and
2 expanded goose distribution problems and conflicts,
3 increased workloads and continued impacts to
4 property, safety and health.

5 Under the proposed action, we would
6 expect a reduction in populations, especially in
7 problem areas; we would expect increased hunting
8 opportunities; we would expect a significant
9 reduction in conflicts; decreased impacts to
10 property, health and safety; initial workload
11 increase, but long-term workload decreases; and we
12 would maintain viable resident Canada goose
13 populations.

14 Some recent modeling suggests that to
15 reduce the four Flyways' population from
16 approximately 3 and a half million to 2.1 million
17 would require for 10 years a harvest of an
18 additional 480,000 geese annually; the take of an
19 additional 852,000 goslings annually; nest removal
20 of about 528,000 nests annually; or a combination
21 of additional harvests of 240,000 geese annually
22 and a take of 320,000 goslings annually.

23 We believe that the only way to
24 possibly attain these numbers is to give states the
25 flexibility to address problems within their

1 respective state; also to address population
2 reductions on a wide number of available fronts.
3 And since states are the most informed and
4 knowledgeable local authorities on wildlife
5 conflicts, the primary responsibilities and
6 decisions of the program should be placed with
7 them.

8 What comes next? First is the
9 development of a new regulation to carry out the
10 proposed action. This should be forthcoming in
11 April. Second, the public comment period on the
12 Draft ends May 30th, 2002. And third would be the
13 publication of the Final EIS and Record of
14 Decision, which we anticipate for fall of 2002.

15 As I stated, the public comment
16 period is open till May the 30th, and Phil has
17 already outlined the various methods that you can
18 use to submit your comments. These include any
19 oral or written comments that you may submit
20 tonight, or you may subsequently
21 send. The address, again, is printed on the back
22 of the card that you received when you arrived.

23 Additionally, we've set up an
24 electronic site where you can send e-mail comments
25 and access other information which is pertinent to

1 the EIS process. The Draft EIS should be available
2 on the website now.

3 On behalf of the Fish and Wildlife
4 Service, I'd like to thank all of you for
5 attending the meeting, and particularly, any of
6 those who provide comments.

7 Questions or comments?

8 MR. SENG: Thank you, Ron.

9 Well, now, the main thing we're
10 interested in is to hear what you have to say.
11 Again, I'll just reiterate quickly, we're going to
12 go in numerical order, one through however many
13 there were. Please come to the mike there in the
14 center, state and spell your name, organization you
15 represent and where you're from. And if you
16 don't care to comment, when I call your number,
17 just say "pass" so we can just move right along.

18 Card Number 1?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.

20 MR. SENG: Card Number 2?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.

22 MR. SENG: 3? Card Number 3?

23 (No response.)

24 MR. SENG: 4?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.

1 MR. SENG: 5?
2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.
3 MR. SENG: 6?
4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.
5 MR. SENG: 7?
6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.
7 MR. SENG: 8?
8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.
9 MR. SENG: 9?
10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.
11 MR. SENG: 10?
12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.
13 MR. SENG: 11?
14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.
15 MR. SENG: 12?
16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.
17 MR. SENG: 13? Come on, lucky
18 Number 13.
19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.
20 MR. SENG: 14?
21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'll pass.
22 MR. SENG: 15?
23 MR. VANDEL: Oh, I can't miss an
24 opportunity.
25 MR. SENG: Okay. We have a taker.

1 MR. VANDEL: No. I just think the
2 presentation was good. I have a lot of work to do
3 yet on the EIS to look into the details, but at
4 least from a state perspective, it does appear like
5 you gave the states what they asked for. So from
6 that standpoint, I guess pending further review,
7 I'd support the EIS and the preferred alternative.

8 THE REPORTER: Name. Name.

9 MR. VANDEL: George Vandal, South
10 Dakota.

11 MR. SENG: Can you spell it, please?

12 MR. VANDEL: V-a-n-d-e-l.

13 MR. SENG: Thank you.

14 Card 16? Card 17 -- 16? Did you --
15 no comment?

16 17?

17 (No response.)

18 MR. SENG: 18?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.

20 MR. SENG: 19?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.

22 MR. SENG: 20?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.

24 MR. SENG: 21?

25 (No response.)

1 MR. SENG: 22?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.

3 MR. SENG: 23?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No comment.

5 MR. SENG: 24?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No comment.

7 MR. SENG: 25?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pass.

9 MR. SENG: Okay. That's everybody.

10 That's all the cards we handed out.

11 Was there anyone that didn't have a

12 card that would like to make a comment? No. Okay.

13 Again, as Ron mentioned, the deadline

14 for comment is May 30th. The signup sheet -- where

15 is the signup sheet that went around? If

16 any of the new-comers haven't signed the

17 signup sheet and you'd like to receive a copy of

18 the EIS, please make sure you sign it and check the

19 appropriate box, and you'll get a copy of the

20 revised version when it comes out.

21 With that, we stand adjourned.

22 Thanks for coming out and enjoy the

23 game. Go IU.

24 (End of proceedings.)

25 - - - - -

1 THE STATE OF TEXAS X

2 COUNTY OF DALLAS X

3

4 This is to certify that I, Jamie K.
5 Israelow, a Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for
6 the State of Texas, Registered Professional
7 Reporter and Certified Realtime Reporter, reported
8 in shorthand the proceedings had at the time and
9 place set forth, and that the above and foregoing
10 pages contain a full, true, and accurate transcript
11 of the said proceedings.

12

13 GIVEN UNDER MY HAND on this the _____
14 day of April, 2002.

15

16

17 

18 Jamie K. Israelow, CSR, RPR, CRR
Texas CSR 3801
Expiration Date: 12/31/02
MillerParker, Inc.
19 100 Premier Place
20 5910 North Central Expressway
Dallas, Texas 75206

21

22

23

24 Job Sheet No. 5151M
Job Reference No. 02214

25