



Serving the Public Interest Since 1925

December 15, 2015

Dear Montgomery County Delegation

Last evening, the Montgomery County Civic Federation voted by a substantial majority to support the following resolution:

“Be it resolved that the Montgomery County Civic Federation urges our state delegates and senators to introduce and pass legislation in 2016 allowing Sunday archery hunting for deer in Montgomery County on all Sundays during the season.”

This followed on our more expansive resolution passed almost unanimously in 2012:

“Whereas the Deer Management Work Group has been in effect since 1993, and managed hunts in selected parks have taken place since 1999, and

“Whereas the County’s population of white-tailed deer has increased despite these management efforts, and

“Whereas upward trends in deer population coincide with increased Deer Vehicle Collisions, pervasive destruction of natural habitat in parks and stream valleys and landscaping in private yards, and increasing incidents of Lyme disease including sufferers living in suburban areas,

“Be it resolved that the Montgomery County Civic Federation urges our county and state officials to expand funding and to work collaboratively towards liberalizing appropriate regulations to extend the hunting season for deer and facilitate controlled and safe hunting on both public and private lands.”

Archery hunting with bow and arrow is one of the safest sports in the U.S. It is also silent, discreet and does not adversely effect the peaceful use and enjoyment of the public and private properties where it is carried out. The Montgomery County Parks Department has annually expanded their managed hunts and sharpshooter programs in a growing number of parks, and these programs have been very successful in culling the herds. Despite this, and despite Delegate Luedtke's bill which allowed the county to change the “safety zone” from 150 to 100 yards, we still have far too many deer in many suburban neighborhoods. Hunting on private property still remains difficult in the downcounty where lot sizes are small and the necessary written permission from the requisite homeowners is difficult to obtain.

Maryland's Department of Natural Resources recognizes bow & arrow hunting as a safe, humane and effective method of decreasing the overpopulation of deer, and strongly supports Sunday hunting for deer. Another plus: private hunters who do this as a civic duty cost the taxpayers nothing.

Because many hunters have jobs that keep them from hunting on weekdays, adding Sunday hunting

to that permitted on Saturdays effectively doubles both the number of days when they may hunt and their potential take. Maryland allows each county to decide whether Sunday hunting will be permitted on all Sundays or on limited Sundays. Since 2006, Montgomery County has allowed bow and arrow hunting for deer on only one Sunday during each season. Keeping this restriction seems like a throwback to the old, religiously based "blue laws". Our Constitution calls for the separation of church and state. A prohibition based on the "protection" of the Christian sabbath makes no sense in our modern society. Hunters willing to engage in a sport with a compelling civic benefit should be able to do so on both days of the weekend throughout the entire hunting season.

We ask that you join together to pass legislation in the coming session to allow Sunday hunting.

Sincerely,
Peggy Dennis
Past President, MCCF