



New Brunswick Wildlife Federation
Fédération de la Faune du Nouveau-Brunswick

PO Box/ B.P. 549, Moncton NB E1C 8L9

www.nbwf.ca

March 12th, 2020

Ms Darling and Ms Sanders,
Quiet NB Forests

Thank you for your letter. I think my letter would be more easily understood if I address your points, as numbered in your letter.

First, before I start, please note that we are very easy to reach. The NBWF website has all the information for each and every one of our directors, including myself, with email and phone number indicated. As a future reference, our website is www.nbwf.ca.

Maybe the press conference was misconstrued, but the comments you stated were loud and clear.

1. Again, something is misunderstood here. The NBWF is advocating for all Sundays, not 11 total. The Minister is looking at adding 8 more to the 3 we already have. The reasoning of it, being in the fall, is because that is when the majority of the hunting season happens, due to conservation and biological reasons. Rifle season for small game runs from October 1st to December 31st for grouse, and from October 1st to February 28th for hare. The hunting season for deer runs from the 4th Monday in October and runs for 4 weeks, less one Sunday. The rest of the year is bear in spring/early summer and coyote all year except for 2 weeks during moose season. This is the reason they decided on the dates they did, because it would be beneficial to the hunters, while being aware of conservation and biological issues like the rut season.

2. We agree that all outdoor activities have importance; we do not agree that they need to be separate. Separate spaces are already addressed: any private property, Transcanada Trail, NB Trails, Scout/Guide camps, provincial and federal parks, historical sites and Class 1 PNA's are all closed to hunting. Quite a large list and a large area, don't you agree?

3. Again you speak about incompatibility but never have any of our clubs brought forth complaints about other user groups. On a few occasions, anti-hunters would illegally try to disrupt hunters, but authorities were called in and charges were laid. We are not taking Sundays away from anyone, but your group seems intent on not sharing with us. Your figures are quite skewed, perhaps unintentionally, but they still are. You cannot count a group of 5000 canoeists and 5000 bird watchers as 10,000 unique individuals. Many times, one individual can be part of many groups, and sometimes,

those are hunters as well. For example, not every hiker is a hunter, but almost every hunter considers themselves a hiker. I hunt, fish, kayak, hike, camp, canoe, wake board, paddle board, bird watch and do wildlife photography...so by your numbers, I actually represent 10 different people? So, if we take into account that all 120,000 hunters in this province probably have spouses and kids, and other family members who are not hunters or not yet, and we add this to the total numbers of hunters, does that mean that we might be more in the 500,000 person range? Or more?

How come, all outdoor groups in all other provinces can get along and we can't? Why is Sunday hunting more of an inconvenience in NB than anywhere else in Canada?

4. How is Minister Holland behind hunters only? Yes, wildlife management and hunter opportunities are part of his job, but are you even aware of the Path to Canada Target 1 Initiative he is working on? To increase the conservation forest and protected natural areas in this Province from 4.6% to 10% by 2021? That he is working on a new forestry plan to help private woodlot owners in this Province? And minimize industry cuts on our Crown Lands? That Minister Holland announced in October 2019 that 700 acres on Shepody Mountain was going to be set aside as Conservation forest? That he just opened 84 more lakes for ice fishing in winter? How come your group is not against fishing on Sundays? Or trapping on Sundays? Or ATV'ing on Sundays? Or snowmobiling on Sundays? And you state that you are not anti-hunters?

The population of New Brunswick is 776,827. Our last study, which was done about 10 years ago, states that 120,000 people in NB consider themselves hunters. This can also be verified by the fact that over 120,000 unique individuals have applied at least once for a moose license in the last 10 years, which means that 1 in 6.5 people are hunters. Please stop saying that hunters are one group and the outdoor community is another group. We are ALL outdoor groups.

I don't see what the Minister's salary has to do with anything. The license fees (conservation fees) that every hunter, fisherman and trapper pays when they buy a license goes to the NBWTF to be re-distributed to non-profit groups who have presented projects and programs to enhance our province's woods, waters and ecosystems. Do hikers, campers, bird watchers, canoeists or kayakers contribute to this fund? No.

5. First part addressed above. Roland Michaud was there when Minister Stiles announced the three day Sunday hunting addition and it was stated at that time, that this would be a pilot project and would be re-examined if complaints were received or not. None came about after 12 years. In my live feed, I admit that I misstated a point on this issue. I said there were no complaints and issues when this was proposed in 2008. What I meant was that there were none since then. So the pilot project became reality.

Season does matter and we are not taking anything away. We just want to be allowed to join you 8 additional days.

I refuse to believe that from the last Tuesday in September to the 31st of December, that no one hikes, canoes, camps or rides horses except on Sundays, and I refuse to believe it, because hunters also do those activities as well, and do it all week, whether they are hunting or not at the same time.

The Minister believes he has compromised by only allowing us 11 Sundays total, when we wanted 50. We believe that all users can share Sundays.

You mention that hunting is on the decline? Let me share with you the stats received directly from DNRE yesterday:

Number of licenses sold from 2008 to 2019:

- 2008: 81,111
- 2009: 79,819
- 2010: 79,219
- 2011: 80,379
- 2012: 84,524
- 2013: 88,156
- 2014: 88,684
- 2015: 88,311
- 2016: 82,026
- 2017: 86,362
- 2018: 82,781
- 2019: 81,840

Those stats prove that hunting is stable, and not on the decline as you state.

I will not speak to the First Nations other than to say Elder Alma Brooks is very respected in her community, but she was there last year when members of her community did a weekend hunt, Sunday included, to gather meat for the elders. Now, taking a stance against Sunday hunting would be hypocritical.

Now let's look at the points you want to make (bottom of page 2) :

- A) « If the season doesn't matter, then the hunters can take their pick of the remaining 43 Sunday, and leave us in peace with our current 13 (taking back the three we lost in 2008) »
 - The season does matter; those dates are set as they are for obvious conservation and biological facts.
 - Leave you in peace?? Taking back the 3 you lost in 2008? Quite a rude comment to make, don't you think? I'm sorry, but since when does your group OWN the province? I thought the province belonged to everyone? We pay our taxes just like everyone else, and in all fairness, hunters, anglers and trappers put a lot more money back in our conservation programs than anyone in NB.
- B) « But if the season does matter, then do not pretend the Community has no right here. In fact, please acknowledge that it had the historic prior right, and recognize the Bill is acutely unreasonable. Negotiate a compromise. »
 - Yes, the season matters, as stated above.
 - We never said that the outdoor community had no right. You, however, said that we cannot co-exist in the outdoors, at the same time, that we should leave you in peace, that our sports are incompatible with ours, so that one side or the other is often irritated. We have never been irritated by anyone who wishes to practice their sports in the outdoors, as we are. And we can co-exist during the week, so why not on Sunday?
- C) « Currently in the prime season for the outdoor community, the 13 weeks from October 1st to December 31st : The Outdoor Community owns 10 Sundays and 0 Saturdays; the Hunter community owns 3 Sundays and 13 Saturdays. »

- Again, interesting for you to say you want to try to compromise. You are the one dividing us (Outdoor Community, Hunter Community)- in my mind, we are all ONE outdoor community, practicing the sports we love.
 - Now again, YOU do not own the right to the outdoors in this province, neither do WE. So stop saying you own those Sundays, you do not, and neither do we. But we should be able to enjoy the outdoors, as one community, respectful of one another.
- D) « After Bill 19, this goes to : Outdoor Community 2 Sundays and 0 Saturdays; Hunter Community 11 Sundays and 13 Saturdays »
- Well the way we see it, after Bill 19 passes, here is what it's going to look like : 12 weeks with Sunday hunting allowed; 40 weeks without. Quite a good compromise if you ask me.

6. Consultation: I can say that the Department did consult with the NBWF, and we voted in favour of having those extra 8 Sundays. To say that the outdoor community was not consulted- again, we are part of the outdoor community.

You say that the outdoor community (hikers, photographers, riders, naturalists, geocachers) are now represented by QNB? Excuse me, but I'm a hiker, photographer, rider, geocacher and QNB does not represent me.

I have no idea where you take your numbers from, but paying twice as much taxes for the upkeep of the F&W section, including the Wildlife preservation officers, because the Outdoor community outnumbers hunters 2:1? Where did you come up with this one? I think this was addressed in Point 3 above.

Extra Sundays will not affect the deer population as we are already allowed to hunt the 3 Sundays during deer season, and if Colleen really had hunted until her father's passing, she would be aware of this.

We have tried to join your group on Facebook, but were rejected every time. We wanted to state our views on this issue, but your group does not want to hear us. As you mention in your letter, you say « you have been threatened by hunters, and have not made the assumption that all hunters are like them. » So why make the assumption that we will be like them, and not be respectful on social media?

Quiet Forest NB has been around for 6-8 weeks?

The NBWF has been in existence for 95 years and has its roots in the wildlife protection and preservation. The NBWF has met routinely with governments for many years and as a non-profit incorporated body support outdoor programs such as Becoming an Outdoor Woman and Master Angler.

Some groups are trying to convince others that a hunter in the woods equals fear, and if you see one, hide or run away. We are much the opposite. Hunters have found more lost people in the woods, know the area, usually are prepared for the conditions, and usually are the outdoor sportsperson - prepared for anything. We feel safer with hunters in the woods. We are not bad people. Please walk up to us and say hello and let us know you are there, and above all, if you need help, we're there for you. We are everyday people.

We're also farmers, paramedics, law enforcement, volunteers on search & rescue, woodlot owners, conservationists and the same people you see in the mall, and by having us in the woods, it keeps everyone a whole lot safer.

We are who you want to see.

We might have worn a bright yellow jacket yesterday when we responded to you in distress at your place of residence or work. Today, you fear us because we wear orange.

We are the same people. Your perception of us changed due to the colour you see. "We" are the everyday New Brunswicker.

Where do we stand?

The NBWF is standing behind the hunters in this Province and we will continue to advocate for Bill 19. We are not trying to take anything away from anyone, but your group wants to take away from us.

Can't we all just get along?

Thank you for allowing us to share our concerns with you.

Respectfully,

Nathalie Michaud
President
NBWF