

2404 E. Broadway, Alton, IL 62002

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**VOLUME 38 ISSUE 5**

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## **Illinois Spring Wild Turkey Harvest Totals 15,792 Second Largest Harvest for Illinois Turkey Season**



Hunters harvested a statewide preliminary total of 15,159 wild turkeys during the regular seasons conducted April 7-May 8 in the South Zone and April 14-May 15 in the North Zone. An additional 633 turkeys were harvested during the Youth Turkey Seasons conducted March 29-30 in the south and April 5-6 in the north.

## MWHI OFFICERS

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618-535-0151 (cell)

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Area Projects Chairman  
618-498-4724  
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618-465-5686

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, June 2, 2008

**MWHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
at 2404 E. Broadway, Alton at 6:15 pm

Saturday, June 7, 2008

**3<sup>rd</sup> RIVERBEND CATFISH TOURNAMENT**  
At Alton, IL Marina 6:00 am – 3:00pm  
Please call 618-465-6676 for more information.

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

**MWHI GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**  
at Alton-Wood River Sportsmen Club  
in Godfrey, IL at 7:00 pm

Monday, July 7, 2008

**MWHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
at 2404 E. Broadway, Alton at 6:15 pm

Saturday, July 12, 2008

**4<sup>th</sup> RIVERBEND CATFISH TOURNAMENT**  
at Alton, IL Marina 3:00 pm – 12:00 am  
Please call 618-465-6676 for more information.

## **MWHI 2008 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE RAFFLE**

Craig Sondker, Membership Drive Chairman

- Every new member who signs up for a membership is put into a drawing for a Benelli Nova.
- Sign up 3 new members (delinquent member, youth, and life memberships included) and your name goes into a draw for free one-day waterfowl hunts and your name goes back into the draw for every membership you get signed after that.
- Your name automatically gets in the draw for 1-day hunts for signing up a Lifetime member.

**Raffle starts October 2007 - ends October 2008**

The *Sentry* is published monthly except for December and January by Migratory Waterfowl Hunters, Inc., 2404 E. Broadway, Alton, IL, 62002. The *Sentry* deadline is always the second Monday of each month.

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## **Good Luck!** **Duane Hahnenkamp**

By the time you read this, the big blind drawing should be at hand. So, let me say again, good luck to you all. I know there have to be some winners and some losers out there. But if you are a MWHI member, I hope you'll be one of the winners.

If you do get on a blind for three years, then you better cherish it because it may be your last time in Illinois. With this governor and his administration, the IDNR has been ravaged to the point that it can barely operate and be effective for much longer.

Some state parks are to be closed and even our local Pere Marquette Park, which is one of the largest parks in our state, is on the hit list. Next on the list will be the management areas, like our duck hunting areas. Truthfully, guys, Neil Booth has done one heck of a job with our areas while having his funds steadily cut back. We are now in such a situation that our areas are going to suffer seriously if any more cuts are being made. Any park, wildlife area, or even lakes, are good only if they are maintained and operated by trained personnel. This takes funding, which the governor does not want to let out of the greater Chicago area. With fuel prices continuing to rise, it will be all too easy for the governor to justify cutting out entire IDNR programs down state and using the funds for pet projects up north. If you think that will not happen, talk to the boys on the Brussels Ferry. The governor's people are talking about selling it and all down state ferry boats to private companies to save money.

I guess what I am saying is that things don't look good for your duck hunting areas. Your governor does not care about hunting or guns, so you are not really his type of people. Our local politicians have lost control of the state and are fighting desperately just to keep the rest of the state alive. Hopefully, if we can survive for a couple more years, maybe things will get better.

I got the chance to talk to some Missouri Conservation people the other day, and I mentioned that I was from Illinois. They frankly asked, "What the heck is wrong with your state government? Don't they care about the outdoors any more?" I simply told them that "if they're not talking about Chicago, then it just don't matter."

### **Refuges in Illinois face \$90.2 million budget shortfall**

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement, 5/22/2008

Illinois' 11 National Wildlife Refuges provide essential habitat to millions of migratory birds and federally endangered species like the Piping plover and Winged mapleleaf mussel. Some Illinois refuges contain bottomland hardwood forest, an increasingly-rare ecosystem that supports over 250 species of neotropical birds and at-risk species including Wood storks, Bald eagles and Black bears. Each year, over 1.1 million visitors enjoy hiking, birding, wildlife photography, environmental education, and hunting and fishing on Illinois refuges.

Years of meager budgets coupled with ballooning fixed costs such as fuel, electricity, and salary adjustments have prevented the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from filling vital positions and completing thousands of essential projects; 108 mission-critical projects are on the shelf in Illinois today.

#### **Persistent budget shortfalls have forced a planned 17% staff reduction in Illinois.**

These losses aren't of expendable federal bureaucrats; these are wildlife biologists, refuge managers, interpretive rangers that teach and guide visitors, and essential maintenance personnel. Without these people, Illinois refuges will continue to cut educational programs, allow equipment and visitor infrastructure to fall into disrepair, and significantly reduce biological management and monitoring of endangered species at certain refuges. But there is a reasonable solution to fix these seemingly complex challenges: increase funding to \$514 million in FY 09.

**Addition to Article published in May 2008 Sentry**  
**MRA Area Projects Meeting – Blind Moves and Changes for 2008 Drawing**  
Submitted by Neil Booth, IDNR Site Superintendent

**Calhoun Point** – Blind # 60 was moved 100 yards north-west.

April 30, 2008

Scotty Bryant - President  
Migratory Waterfowl Hunters Inc.  
2404 Broadway  
Alton, Illinois 62002

Dear Scotty;

I want to thank the officers, directors and members for the recognition at the annual MWHI banquet on Saturday night it was truly a humbling experience. I don't know that I can find the words to convey just how honored I felt. As a career public employee often we find ourselves referred to in less than meritorious terms. Saturday night served to reaffirm my decision to spend 38 years of my life working for the people of Illinois.

In my time with the State I have witnessed everything from the fabulous to the fool hardy. However the one constant and the driving force for me to continue as a public employee are the people we serve.

The rewards of my profession come from seeing the public enjoying their outdoor experience which I had a hand in providing. Knowing that the people recognize and appreciate those efforts is rewarding beyond description. I will never forget the evening of Saturday April 5, 2008.

Once again I want to thank MWHI and feel honored to have served you and the people of the State of Illinois.

Sincerely

Neil Booth

**Wal-Mart to Cut/Reduce Fishing Departments" Says  
Unconfirmed Report**

Submitted by George Hamilton

According to a report just released by *Lone Star Outdoor News*, Wal-Mart will eliminate the sale of fishing tackle at 200 of its stores and will reduce the space allotted to fishing tackle by 50% at about half of its 1,700 stores.

The article is based on reports from fishing industry representatives who were said to have been informed of the changes in recent meetings with Wal-Mart's new head of sporting goods, Scott Biddulph.

Wal-Mart has not officially confirmed these changes.

***SUPPORT YOUR CLUB!***

**Sign up a new member today**



## Capitol Commentary

by Todd Vandermyde, ISRA 5/12/2008

*“5/10/08 – Senate Bill 1007 which bans the sale, manufacture and possession of any large capacity ammunition magazine is scheduled to be debated in the Illinois House of Representatives in the next several weeks. Now is the time to call your State Representative and urge them to support this common sense legislation to reduce gun violence in Illinois.” – Illinois Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.*

That kinda tells us where we will be and what will be taking place over the next couple of weeks. We have been hearing rumblings that they may try and bring back SB-1007. We know from past votes they are short of the 60 they need and we plan on making them shorter.

It seems that their series of losses has been driving them crazy. As soon as they think they have us beat, then we move the ends on them again. That and the fact that in a few weeks they could receive a major set back with a very pro-gun ruling from the US Supreme Court I believe has them running a bit scared.

With two democratic candidates running as far away from gun control as they can, you would think, that they would take their lumps and plot for a vote after the election. No they decided to get in the face of a few legislators.

Two of them are State Representatives Sandy Cole and Dennis Reboletti. The Brady Campaign dropped a mail piece in their districts to women trying to gin up some sort of “outrage”. So far it hasn’t worked. Calls “trickled” in according to one secretary. Then they started placing robo calls to people trying to get more to call in. These were coupled with a patch through that you could press 1 to be connected to the state rep’s office. They even protested Representative Cole’s office. All two of them.

When the FOID card and background checks are explained to the few callers who actually take time to ask questions, the response seems to be, “I didn’t know that” or they didn’t say that.

The message from the Brady Bunch has been misleading. Imagine that. They make it sound like there are no background checks on handgun sales. Not true. It’s called the FOID card. And what they want to do is stop the private transfer of handguns between to law abiding people. It doesn’t matter that both have to have FOID cards, and have already passed a background check to get them. Doesn’t matter that the waiting period applies to private sales? Doesn’t matter that you have to keep a record of the sale for 10 years?

No, they didn’t tell all those parts of Illinois law, they said: **“Do YOU think background checks should be required to buy a handgun?”**

Your Representative Sandy Cole doesn’t think so. She voted “NO” on HB 758, a bill that would close a loophole in Illinois and require background checks on everyone who wants to buy a handgun.”

Again, before anyone can legally buy a handgun in Illinois they have to have a FOID card. In order to get a FOID

card, you have to pass a background check. Every night, the FOID card database is run against new mental health admissions in the DHS database. The State Police also run constant checks against new criminal conviction information that is entered into the state systems.

Those background checks are ongoing and continuous. How else does someone have their FOID card revoked? The misinformation, distortion and spinning or the issue only damages the credibility of the anti-gunners.

For Sandy Cole, her opponent was removed from the ballot last week. If that holds, they will have just picked a fight with someone who has no general election opponent. That is political brilliance. Of course if you thought that you would never get that vote and just wanted to piss them off, then it was a winner.

So far in both cases, calls from pro-gunners who got the mail and robo calls are out pacing the anti-calls. Without a statewide alert from our side, people who read the story in the Daily Herald generated calls for Representative Cole, saying thanks and support.

With Representative Reboletti, again they think that bullying, and press will somehow win what they have failed to achieve. A former prosecutor, he knows that the majority of the shootings that are taking place are doing so as a gang war erupts in Chicago. He has worked on straw purchase legislation. And called out those who have not supported his bills to stop the criminal trafficking in firearms.

Over the past weeks we have seen the anti-gunners frustration grow as the Governor has complained that the democratically controlled House refuses to vote for his pet projects like gun control. Now anti-gunners are just as bewildered since their Chicago dominated legislature won’t pass their pet issues.

We now are hearing word that anti-gunners may try to resurrect HB-758 as an amendment on to HB-5191. If they try to do that, they will only make a bad bill worse. And give more ammunition to kill it – pun intended.

With the acidic atmosphere at the capitol, it looks like we are in for another long overtime session. This gives the anti-gunners more time to try and bully people, or pull more stunts to try and slip something through. It also means we have to remain vigilant through out the rest of session.

What can you do? It’s the question we get all the time. Stay in touch with your state reps and senators. Be polite when you talk to them. You can be passionate and hold strong beliefs, but as we have seen, the attacks and badgering by the antis has done nothing to help them. I would not put it past anti-gunners to call up and harangue legislators pretending to be gun owners. At this time, given their desperation, who knows what they will do.

In between calling legislators and talking to them, keep up with the ISRA website as we’ll keep you updated with the behind the scenes antics at the state capitol. We will be posting positional papers and talking points as things progress. So stay tuned.

###

## ***ISRA Springfield Report - 5/14/2008***

### **SB1007 - The Hidden Gun Ban**

Proponents of SB-1007 don't want to admit it's a gun ban. From the 1873 Winchester John Wayne made immortal, to the Henry Rifle designed by B. Tyler Henry (used by Danny Glover in Silverado), the guns that won the west would be banned under SB-1007.

### **SB1007 - Unenforceable -- Unworkable**

Magazines do not have serial numbers. When confronted by law enforcement, the burden of proof will shift to the gun owner to prove that they did indeed own the magazine in question prior to the date SB-1007 became law. ###

## **Missouri Deer Collision Bill Will Cost Sportsmen**

U. S. Sportsmen's Alliance, April 7, 2008 (Missouri)

A bill recently introduced in the Missouri House of Representatives will end up costing the sportsmen of the state and could set a negative precedent on who is responsible for any kinds of damage caused by wildlife.

House Bill 2498 requires the Missouri Department of Conservation to pay to the owner of a motor vehicle the first \$250 of any damage caused to a vehicle that collides with a deer.

Outdoorsmen must rally against the bill, as wildlife is the responsibility of all people of the state. Money to cover the damages of deer/vehicle collisions should not be taken from the funds provided to the Missouri Department of Conservation by the licensing fees of sportsmen. Those fees must continue to be used for scientific conservation of the wildlife of the state.

As written, HB 2498 states that vehicle owners must provide "clear and convincing evidence" that the damage was caused by a collision with a deer and that the owner was legally operating the vehicle at the time of the accident. The provisions of the bill say there must have been contact with a deer and do not cover damaged caused to a vehicle due to avoiding a deer.

The bill was introduced on Friday, March 28 by Representative John Quinn (R-Chillicothe) and was co-sponsored by Representatives David Pearce (R-Warrensburg), Therese Sander (R-Moberly), Steve Hunter (R-Joplin) and Brian Munzlinger (R-Williamstown).

**Take Action-** contact state representatives and ask them to oppose HB 2498. To contact your representative, call (573) 751-3659 or use the Legislative Action Center at [www.ussportsmen.org](http://www.ussportsmen.org).

## **IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

NRA Update on Gun Bills **1-800-392-8683**

Federal Senate Office **1-202-224-3121**

Federal House Offices **1-202-225-3121**

Illinois State Rifle Association **1-815-635-3198** [www.isra.org](http://www.isra.org)

Illinois Senate Information **1-217-782-4517**

Illinois House Information **1-217-782-8223**

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**Barack Obama** – <http://obama.senate.gov>

**Shimkus** - <http://www.house.gov/shimkus>

## **America's 548 National Wildlife Refuges Under-Funded By 43 Percent**

*One in Three Refuges Fully Unstaffed – 300 Staff Lost, 250 More At Risk*

**May 22, 2008 (Washington, DC)** – A new report released to Congress today finds the nation's 548 National Wildlife Refuges are vastly under-funded, leading to unstaffed refuges and closings; unsafe roads and trails; decreased safety; millions of acres of invasive species; unprotected at-risk species; and hundreds of layoffs.

America's National Wildlife Refuge System, comprising nearly 100 million acres, requires a minimum of \$765 million annually to operate adequately. However, the System is currently receiving \$434 million per year – an average of just \$4.34 per acre.

The report finds that:

- One in three refuges are operating without a single staff member
- The System has already cut 300 staff positions; without adequate funding increasing, plans for a 20 percent staff reduction will resume
- Unfunded projects regarded as "Mission Critical" total more than \$115 million
- The system needs 845 full-time law enforcement officers, but currently has just 180 – one officer for every 555,000 acres
- The System is able to invest just 0.67 percent of its value in annual maintenance
- More than two million acres have already been lost to invasive species, placing threatened and endangered species at even greater risk

The Refuge System, created by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903, provides habitat for more than 250 at-risk animal and plant species. The 40 million people who visit refuges each year contribute an estimated \$1.7 billion in annual sales and over 27,000 jobs to local economies. Close to 800,000 Americans participated in environmental education programs last year, and more than half of the nation's refuges are available to anglers and hunters.

"Hundreds of thousands of Americans will visit their local wildlife refuges this Memorial Day weekend, but too many will find them either completely closed, open without staff or a visitor's center, or with decaying infrastructure," said Evan Hirsche, president of the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) and Chair of CARE.

The report, entitled "*Restoring America's Wildlife Refuges 2008*," was issued by the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), a diverse group of 22 organizations representing environmental groups, hunting and fishing advocacy groups, and scientific organizations representing more than 14 million members and supporters.

"This year's report continues to highlight the dire needs of our National Wildlife Refuge System and the failure of the federal government to meet them," said Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), a founding co-chair of the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus. "It serves as another wake-up call to the U.S. Congress that we need to do better in order to preserve and maintain these national treasures and the wildlife they support. I applaud the CARE alliance for its tireless efforts to bring these issues to light."

CARE recommends that Congress increase Refuge System funding to \$514 million in fiscal year 2009, and that it reaches full funding of \$765 million per year by fiscal year 2013.

"The National Wildlife Refuge System is one of America's greatest natural resources, and it cannot be ignored," said Rep. Jim Saxton (R-NJ), a senior member of the House Natural Resources Committee and a founding co-chair of the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus. "The CARE report demonstrates that our refuges are severely underfunded and inadequately maintained. Congress should act to increase funding of the refuges."

###

### **Ohio Television Stations Refuse to Run PETA's KKK Ad**

**April 29, 2008 (National)**

Sandusky and Cleveland, Ohio-area television networks and cable stations have refused to broadcast a People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) advertisement featuring the Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

The commercial shows a KKK member attending an American Kennel Club (AKC) meeting. A PETA official says it is meant to show similarities between the two organizations and that "the AKC is a shameless promotion of pure bloodlines and against mixed breeding."

According to the PETA official, the advertisement in question has run in other areas, including on stations in the New York City area during the Westminster Dog Show.

## Riverbend Catfish Tournament Trail - 2<sup>nd</sup> Qualifying Tournament, May 10<sup>th</sup>

Justin Wolfe

On May 10<sup>th</sup> the Riverbend Catfish Tournament Trail held their 2<sup>nd</sup> of 5 qualifying tournaments in Alton, IL, on the Mississippi River. Once again the top fifteen teams qualified for the Riverbend Classic to be held in October and also tried to gain as many points as possible for the points division. River conditions were again in horrible shape with the Mississippi forecasted to crest at Melvin Price Dam tail water at 25.0ft, which was 4ft. over flood stage with water temperatures around 60\*. These conditions were not much different from the first tournament except we were fishing a crest and not the fast rise that we had last time. Conditions above the water were very favorable with a partly cloudy sky and the temperature around 70\*. I heard no complaints about the weather from anyone. We had 32 teams sign up for tournament, 23 of 32 teams weighed-in at least one fish with a total of 63 fish weighed-in. Here are the results of the tournament:



**1<sup>st</sup> place:** Jerry Cline Sr. & Joe Ludtke 152.3lbs, fishing in 30 to 35 feet of water close to the main channel using shad, and skipjack.

**2<sup>nd</sup> place:** Jeff Trimbe & Monte Henson 145.4lbs, fishing a point of an island using shad.

**3<sup>rd</sup> place:** Rodney Foils & Rob Schiber 139.3lbs & Big fish 63.3, fishing in flooded willows using skipjack

**4<sup>th</sup> place:** Leonard Jacoby & Scott Bryant 136.8lbs, fishing a hot water discharge in 20 to 30 feet of water using shad, mooneye, & skipjack.

### **Payout:**

1<sup>st</sup> place: \$864

2<sup>nd</sup> place: \$432

3<sup>rd</sup> place: \$260

4<sup>th</sup> place: \$173

Big Fish: \$640

I would like to give a special thanks to Gamemasters of Quincy, IL for purchasing the plaques for this tournament and all other sponsors for their support.

## **Obama Gun Stance Counters History**

*Source: United Press International*

*Publication date: 2008-04-20*

Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama's time on the board of a gun-control group doesn't mean he wants to eradicate handguns, a spokesman said.

Sen. Obama, D-Ill., served nine years on the board of directors of the Joyce Foundation in Chicago that claimed the Second Amendment protects state militias, but not the individual right to bear arms, the Politico reports.

The Joyce Foundation supported grants totaling \$21 million for anti-handgun measures and funded publication of a book Every Handgun Is Aimed at You: The Case for Banning Handguns while Obama served on the board, the Politico said.

Obama spokesman Ben LaBolt said Obama's time on the board does not conflict with his more recent support of gun ownership. He told the Politico the Joyce Foundation supports dialogue aimed at reducing gun violence.

LaBolt said Obama does not remember each of the over 1,500 positions he may have voted on during his tenure with the Joyce Foundation from 1994-2002, the Politico said.

Obama indicated in a 1996 state Senate questionnaire that he supported banning the manufacture, sale and possession of handguns, but said in a Democratic presidential debate Wednesday he never favored an all-out ban on handguns.

## **MN Lead SS Ban Bill Pulled After Testimony from Federal Cartridge Submitted by George Hamilton**

As reported last month, Minnesota legislators have been debating a proposal to ban the use of lead shotshells for hunting small game on all public lands in Minnesota, beginning with the 2011 hunting seasons.

- Late last week, after Minnesota-based Federal Cartridge Company offered testimony on the negative economic impact such legislation would have on the company, the author of the bill (Senator Satveer Chaudhary) suspended his proposal, stating that more “homework needed to be done.”
- In withdrawing his bill, Chaudhary said that Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) officials need to explore the economic impact of the lead shotshell ban, after hearing from Federal Cartridge that they employ about 1,000 people in Anoka, Minnesota, and more than one-fourth of them are directly related to the production and distribution of lead shot ammunition.
- DNR officials said they were surprised by Chaudhary's move since the measure had already cleared two state senate committee hearings. "We're disappointed," said Dave Schad, DNR fish and wildlife section chief. "We brought it forward because we thought there were good reasons for it."
- As previously reported, Minnesota banned lead shot on eight of its state-managed dove-hunting areas beginning in 2006 and concurrently formed a Nontoxic Shot Advisory Committee\*\* to study the future of lead-shot use for the hunting of doves and other upland game birds throughout the state. The committee has said that it's inevitable that lead shot be restricted for all shotgun hunting in the future. This proposal was a result of that committee's recommendations.
- As reported last month, Wisconsin will require non-toxic shot for mourning dove hunting on all state hunting lands beginning with the 2008 dove season, which opens on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Lead Shotshell Restrictions Continue to Expand Across U.S.**

- Fifteen states, including Missouri, South Dakota and Iowa, currently have restrictions on lead shot beyond current federal regulations for waterfowl and upland hunting on waterfowl production areas.
- Missouri now requires non-toxic shot for ALL hunting with a shotgun (including dove, turkey,

quail, rabbit and squirrel) on all 500+ state conservation areas.

- Nine states, including Texas, Minnesota, and Wisconsin are exploring significant restrictions on the use of lead shotshells for turkey, dove, and upland game hunting. Recent articles have drawn a parallel to the current debate surrounding lead shot for dove and upland game hunting to the debate that ultimately led to a nationwide ban on lead shot for waterfowl hunting in the 1990s.
- Obviously, a state or federal ban on lead shotshells for dove hunting would have a significant effect on ammunition manufacturers and hunters alike since lead shotshells are currently used for the vast majority of dove hunting nationwide: More shotshells are consumed for dove hunting than for any other species of game and over one million hunters harvest more than 20 million doves per year.

### **\*\*The Minnesota Nontoxic Shot Advisory Committee: Formed in 2006**

- **The committee is comprised of eleven people, including one MN DNR staff member and representatives from several conservation groups as well as one person each from Federal Cartridge Company and Gander Mountain, both of which are headquartered in Minnesota.**
- In a departure from previous statements from Federal Cartridge -- that could be construed as being supportive of efforts to increase restrictions on lead hunting ammunition -- **the current committee member from Federal Cartridge publicly stated during last weekend's roundtable that Federal opposes any additional restrictions on lead shot in Minnesota.** He stated, "We don't think it's needed because we don't think there's any evidence that lead shot is causing any problems to wildlife and absolutely no evidence lead shot is causing any human health problems. If there are regulatory efforts in Minnesota, the National Rifle Association is likely to come in and oppose those very heavily. They've told us that."
- **Federal's public shift in stance may be due to the fact that they have a new employee representing them on the Nontoxic Shot task force,** following the retirement of the individual who had managed their conservation programs for the past 42 years. Federal's new employee was previously with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

###

## CCRKBA Says Chicago Alderman Should Suffer Like Other Gun Owners

CCRKBA, May 22, 2008

Chicago Alderman Richard Mell ought to be prosecuted like any other negligent gun owner for failing to re-register his firearms under an ordinance he helped pass, the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms said today.

"I don't care if anti-gun Mayor Richard Daley supports giving Mell a break, and it doesn't matter that Mell is the father-in-law of Gov. Rod Blagojevich," said CCRKBA Chairman Alan Gottlieb. "For years, the draconian ordinance supported by Mell and enforced by Daley has terrorized Chicago gun owners. It's time for Mell to face his own music, and it's time for Daley to just shut up."

Mell has proposed an amendment to the existing law that would allow gun registration to re-open for a month, giving him amnesty. Mell and Daley are claiming that this is for other gun owners in the city as well who may have let their registrations lapse.

"For years, the Daley Administration has engaged in goon squad demagoguery against gun owners," Gottlieb observed, "but now all of a sudden, just because Alderman Mell finds himself on the wrong side of a law he supported, he and Daley want to do

Chicago gun owners a favor. This magnanimity is a flimsy sham, and law-abiding firearm owners all over Illinois should be outraged.

"It is equally outrageous that Mell is blaming this lapse on an aide," he added. "How stupid is that? Mell knows that gun owners are personally responsible for re-registering their firearms, and over the years, the city has shown no mercy for others who have failed to comply with the law. This guy shouldn't be on the city council, he ought to be in an unemployment line, and even more than that, he ought to be facing charges in court for possession of unregistered guns inside the city.

"The sad fact is," Gottlieb concluded, "that this proposed amnesty amendment would never be on the table if it weren't designed specifically to help Alderman Mell. That anyone else might benefit is an accident, and both Mell and Daley know it. Other gun owners should be allowed to re-register, but Mell should lose on this sweetheart deal. Perhaps then he will fully understand just how insidious Chicago's gun laws really are, and he will lead the fight to abolish them." #####