Steven Wise

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amusement and recreation, and the overwhelming amount of so-called "management" is directed precisely at that—increasing animal populations so that people can go out and kill them for fun. Fish and game agencies are locked up by the hunting, fishing and trapping interests. And that has to stop. It's beginning to stop. It's becoming less socially acceptable to hunt, much less acceptable to wear fur. We're making an impact on the social mores of the country, and as that occurs, the fish and wildlife agencies are going to change, too.

Do you believe the animal rights movement is getting anywhere?

I see few aspects of animal abuse as hopeless as they were 10 years ago. We are seeing progress, although it might be slow in some areas. We are making the most rapid headway in fighting the veal industry, the fur industry, and in vivisection too. Everywhere people know about animal rights. There are now millions of people out there watching us, and tens of thousands willing to do something. I think that we have accomplished an enormous amount, especially in the past 10 years.

What do you think about our growing opposition?

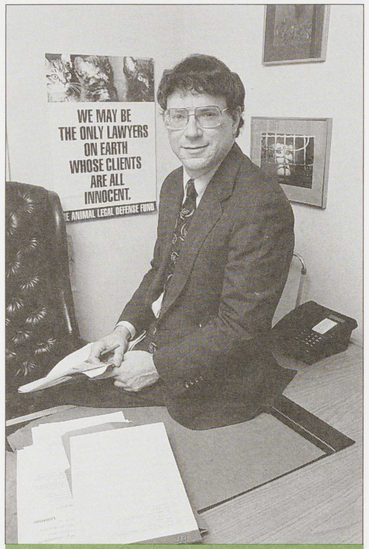
The growing opposition is a natural reaction to our success. If exploiters of animals don't feel threatened, they're not going to organize to try to stop us. The rising degree of organized opposition to us is directly related to our rising degree of success. Things are going to get tougher as we continue to succeed.

What should the movement's response be?

To push harder and harder, to apply as much pressure as we can.

What are the differences and similarities between the animal rights movement and the environmental movement?

Most mainstream environmentalists are very sympathetic to the animal rights movement and understand it, and we understand them and are likewise sympathetic. We both focus on wildlife and habitats. There's much ground for common cause. We might part our philosophical ways with the more radical segments of the environmental movement, the deep ecologists, those who not only care about animals and habitats, but about rocks, and think that



Things are going to get tougher as we continue to succeed.

animal rights people are guilty of sentientism. They want to subordinate the welfare of a single animal to the alleged health or welfare of a species or an ecosystem. Animal rights people care about species, but we also care about what happens to each animal.

Do you see any ways of bridging these gaps?

We don't have to bridge all the gaps; we can find common cause in those projects that forward both of our goals, like wildlife and factory farming.

What do you think about the recent "animal welfare vs. animal rights" debate?

Again, we have to make common cause and try to achieve those goals that all of us want. Animals don't have rights at present, and I think we should spend less time trying to classify each other as animal rights or animal welfare people and more time pushing forward on those things we agree will help animals. I don't believe that animal welfare harms animal rights; I see it simply as a first step toward animal rights and believe that animal welfare will, at a certain point, naturally turn into animal rights.

Are you concerned about the growing use of defamation (SLAPP) lawsuits?

SLAPP suits (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) are one way that animal exploiters strike at us, by bleeding our resources and diverting our attention. What we have to do is: 1) make sure that we don't lose these lawsuits, and 2) strike back—if people sue us groundlessly, we should sue them right back. The way we are going to end this harassment is to slap back as hard as we can and make people pay for filing these SLAPP suits against us. Of course people need to be careful that they do not actually engage in defamation, and one thing that ALDF does is educate people as to what defamation is.* It's one thing to be sued when you didn't defame somebody. It's something altogether different to be sued when you did.

What goals do you have for ALDF in the future?

As ALDF continues to grow, we're going to be able to bring more and more litigation. When people exploit animals or government regulators consider weakening the laws that protect animals, I want them to ask themselves—how's ALDF going to react to this; are they going to drag us into court? We'll be able to stop a lot of animal injury and pain once people know that, if they abuse animals, we have the resources to go after them, we will go after them, and we'll beat them. And even if we don't, they'll know they've been in one hell of a fight.

**For a copy of ALDF's 19 page memo, Avoiding Defamation Lawsuits, send a request to ALDF and $2.00 to cover duplication and postage costs.*

War on wildlife

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inflate populations. For example, Michigan has a special program whereby $2.00 is taken from each deer hunting license to manipulate habitat. This has caused deer populations to grow from 400,000 in 1972, to over 1.5 million today, resulting in numerous problems and creating the "need" for hunting to control them.

On the other hand, the very existence of such species as black bears, bighorn sheep, and elk is threatened by illegal poaching. These animals are killed to obtain their gall bladders, claws, horns and antlers.

War on the Range

Western public lands are being devastated by federally subsidized grazing that benefits cattle and sheep ranchers. Domestic livestock compete with wildlife for native vegetation, and this has contributed to the widespread decimation of bears, wolves, bison, mountain lions and elk. Although ranchers are a minority, they exert powerful pressure on Congress to protect their interests.

No Refuge for Wildlife

In 1903, National Wildlife Refuges were created by President Theodore Roosevelt, as inviolate sanctuaries for wildlife. However in just a few decades, this intent has been undermined. Trapping is now allowed on 86 of these refuges and hunting on 260 of the 452 wildlife refuges.

In 1916, Congress created the national park system, also intended to offer safety to wildlife by outlawing hunting and trapping. But, bowing to pressure from hunters, Congress may allow hunting in newly created national parks. (See "What You Can Do" to help our troubled refuges.)

Wildlife Litigation

A portion of ALDF's litigation docket has always been reserved for the protection of wildlife. In early cases, we defended feral burros, elk, wild horses, and deer, and challenged the leghold trap. We are currently challenging the Massachusetts Fisheries & Wildlife Board which by state law, is composed almost exclusively of hunters and trappers. And we are working to enjoin a deer hunt that adversely affects bald eagles. In 1989, we successfully sued the California Fish & Game Dept. to stop an annual hunt of black bears; in 1990, we halted the California bear bowhunting season. On the legal front, ALDF will continue to defend wildlife in court.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The future of America's wildlife depends on the choices we make now. Express your outrage over the mismanagement of our national wildlife refuges, and write letters to support the following legislation:

- *The Refuge Wildlife Protection Act, H.R. 330,* would prohibit the killing of wildlife for sport, recreation or commercial purposes on our national wildlife refuges. Ask your Congressmember to vote for this bill.
- The House of Representatives passed *H.R. 2929, the California Desert Protection Act,* which would expand Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Parks, and create the Mojave National Park. However, as passed, H.R. 2929 allows hunting in the newly created national park and would set a precedent to allow hunting in all other national parks. A companion bill in the Senate, S. 21, prohibits all hunting. Inform your Senators that you support S. 21, but oppose any amendment that would allow hunting in national parks.

and now a word from our clients . . .

CARTOON: PETE FRIEDRICH