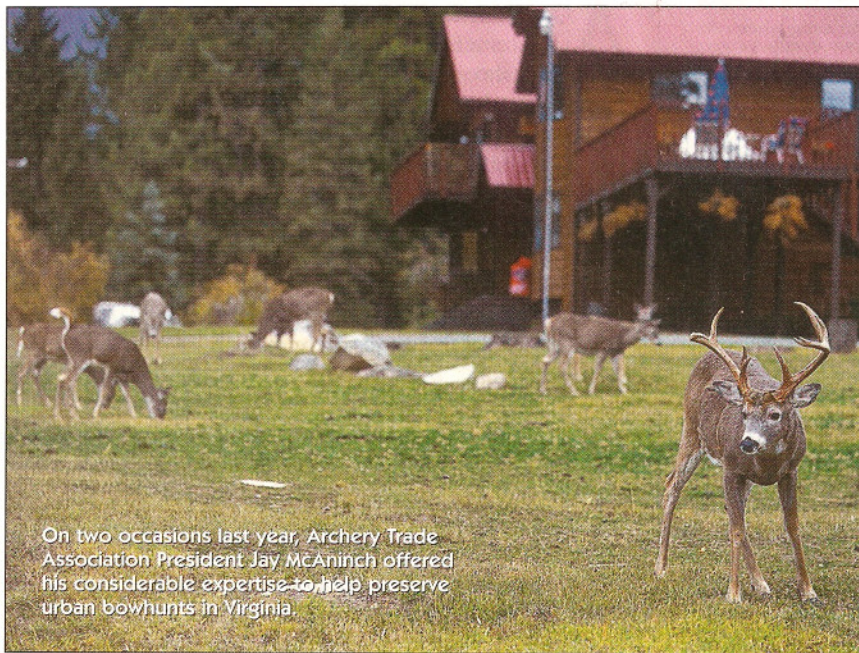


ATA Fights For Bowhunting



On two occasions last year, Archery Trade Association President Jay McAninch offered his considerable expertise to help preserve urban bowhunts in Virginia.

The Archery Trade Association (ATA) is known as an organization that promotes archery and bowhunting. However, the ATA does much more than that. The latest issue of *ArrowTrade Magazine* outlines two recent urban deer issues in which the ATA stepped in to fight for bowhunting. As a former wildlife biologist from Minnesota, ATA President Jay McAninch came to the ATA with a lot of experience in dealing with urban deer problems, and he understands the value of bowhunting in curbing deer overpopulation problems in urban and suburban neighborhoods. So when recent problems arose regarding urban bowhunts, Jay knew exactly what to do — and he has guided the ATA in doing it.

An organization known as Suburban Whitetail Management of Northern Virginia (SWMNV) has been running successful urban bowhunts in and around Fairfax County for many years. This group's mission is "to reduce and maintain the whitetail deer population in Northern Virginia; restore a proper balance of wildlife within this geographical area; develop a general awareness of the wildlife management role of bowhunting in suburban settings; and promote a positive image of bowhunting and bowhunters." A visit to the group's website shows that it has succeeded in meeting this mission (www.swmnv.com).

However, when SWMNV bowhunters

attempted to help a McLean, Virginia, landowner remove deer from his property, a few antihunting neighbors filed an injunction to prevent it. The ATA reviewed the situation, looked at the scientific literature, and then directed its legal firm to help. For some reason, the Virginia Attorney General would not get involved, so the ATA had to subpoena the Director of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to attest to the fact that bowhunting is a viable wildlife management tool. The ATA also brought in a state wildlife manager, who testified that not only did bowhunting curb deer numbers in Fairfax County, but that it was the preferred method of doing so.

Then something rather unusual happened. The judge actually visited the site of the proposed bowhunt and found it to be perfectly safe. He dismissed the case. This had legal implications because one homeowner attempted to stop a neighbor who was legally using bowhunters to remove problem deer. Had the antis won, this case may have set precedent that would have undermined urban bowhunts everywhere.

The second situation was also interesting because it involved something many of us live in — a homeowners association (HOA). Apparently two Reston, Virginia, homeowners were having deer problems. They approached the state wildlife agency, which directed them to the Suburban Wildlife Management group. Bowhunters then harvested deer on these properties for several years. That approach was successful until 2006, when the HOA decided that its board needed to vote and approve each individual member's application to allow bowhunting on his or her property. In 2006, the two homeowners in question filed the proper applications; the HOA board told them they could no longer allow bowhunting on their properties.

At that point, the ATA entered the fray and again provided legal help. Arguments centered on the fact that Virginia has a new constitutional amendment protecting the right to hunt. In addition, the two homeowners argued that the game agency controls wildlife management and not the HOA. As I write this (November 2007), this case has not been decided. It goes to trial on December 11, 2007, and I will update you on the results. Again, this case has serious ramifications relative to citizens' rights to manage deer on their own property following state laws. Hats off to the ATA for stepping in and helping private citizens use bowhunting to control deer.

For more information on the ATA, go to www.archerytrade.org.

For further information on the issues discussed, go to www.knowhunting.com.