

0001

1
2
3
4
5
6

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

7
8

In the Matter of the U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Public Hearing to Discuss
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
on Resident Canada Goose Management.

9
10
11
12

PUBLIC MEETING

13

TAKEN ON 5/14/02

14
15
16
17
18

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, taken in connection
with the above-captioned matter on the 14th day of
May, 2002, at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife
Visitors Center, 3815 East 80th Street, Bloomington,
Minnesota, before Dale R. Neumann, Professional
Freelance Reporter and Ramsey County Notary Public,
and commencing at 7:09 p.m.

25

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0002

1
2

P R E S E N T E R S:

3
4
5

Mr. Phil T. Seng
D. J. Case & Associates
607 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana 46544
Phone: (574) 258-0100
Fax: (574) 258-0189

6
7
8
9

Mr. Ron W. Kokel
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Migratory Bird Management
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240
Phone: (703) 358-1714

* * * * *

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0003

1 WHEREUPON, the following proceedings transpired:

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

MR. SENG: Good evening. I'd like to welcome all of you to tonight's meeting on resident Canada goose management. My name is Phil Seng. I'll be the facilitator for tonight's meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to take public input on the draft Environmental Impact Statement that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has prepared on Canada goose overabundance. I'd like to thank each of you for taking time out on this beautiful evening to come and give your comments.

Tonight's meeting is the fifth of eleven meetings to be held on this issue around the country. We started out on April 1st down in Dallas, and from there we went to Palatine, Illinois, then Waupun, Wisconsin. We were in Franklin, Tennessee, last week, here in Bloomington tonight. Tomorrow we head to Brookings, South Dakota, and then on to Richmond, Virginia; Danbury, Connecticut; North Brunswick, New Jersey; Denver, Colorado,

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0004

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

and we end up in Bellevue, Washington, on May 30th.

Before we begin, I'd like to recognize a few people in the audience. First, Vicki Sherry with the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. I'd like to thank you for making the facility available and helping us to put it all together. We appreciate that. We've hosted several meetings here, and it's a great facility to host at. So we appreciate her.

12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Tom Melius, Assistant Director

of Migratory
Birds and State Programs from Washington,
D.C.;

John Christian, Assistant Regional
Manager for Migratory Birds and State
Programs here in the regional office;
Steve Wild, chief of the migratory bird
program here in the regional office; and
Tim Breneger with the Minnesota Department
of Natural Resources.

We appreciate you folks joining us
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0005

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

this evening.

The process is very straightforward.
There will be a brief slide presentation
by Ron Kokel with Fish and Wildlife
Service, and then we'll jump right into
receiving your comments on the draft
Environmental Impact Statement.

When you came in, you should have
gotten one of these cards with a number on
it. We will take comments in that order.
It's one through however many were given
out this evening. And if you elect to
make comments, Patty, who has handed out
the cards, will be taking a mike around to
each of you, and we ask that you do use
the mike for a couple of reasons, first of
all so that all of us have a chance to
hear what you have to say, and also so
that Dale, our court reporter, can get
down your comments verbatim and make sure
we don't misinterpret what you have to
say.

If you don't elect to make verbal
comments but you'd like to make written
comments, on the back of that card is a

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0006

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14

regular mail address and an e-mail
address. And I would recommend that if
you have Internet access that you use the
e-mail address, because these comments
will go to the D.C. office, and, as most
of you know, because of the anthrax scare,
a lot of that mail has to go through a
special irradiation process. So, in order
to make sure that you get your comments in
on time, I would encourage you to use
e-mail if you have it.

When you make comments, if you would
state your name and spell your name,
unless it's immediately obvious how to

15 spell it. Again, we want to make sure
16 that we know who you are and we get it
17 spelled correctly. Also, if you're
18 representing an organization, please state
19 what the organization is and tell us where
20 you're from.

21 In just a second I'll be passing
22 around a sign-up sheet, and, if you would,
23 sign up so we know who attended. And
24 there are two check boxes below where you
25 put your name, and that will tell us

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0007

1 whether you're already on the mailing list or
2 not. So if you have received in the mail
3 a copy of the draft Environmental Impact
4 Statement, then you're on the mailing list
5 and you will receive a copy of the final
6 EIS when it becomes available. So you can
7 check that box if you have received it
8 already.

9 If you're not on the list, if you did
10 not receive a copy in the mail but you'd
11 like to receive a copy of the final in the
12 mail, there's a box for that too. If you
13 did not receive a copy of the draft and
14 you don't want a copy of the final, then
15 just make a note to that effect, just
16 "don't send a copy" or something like
17 that, and we'll be happy to honor that
18 request.

19 I'd just like to point out that the
20 format of tonight's meeting is not a
21 debate or a discussion format. It's for
22 us to take your comments. So just keep
23 that in mind when you make comments. If
24 you have questions of clarification over
25 what Ron has to say in his presentation,

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0008

1 then he may elect to take those questions,
2 depending on the nature of them, but keep
3 in mind that it's not a debate format.

4 And, finally, my job as facilitator is
5 to make sure that everybody has a chance
6 to say their piece tonight, and so I
7 apologize in advance; if someone tries to
8 dominate or control the meeting, I'll ask
9 them to please finish up, or if a segment
10 goes too long, I may ask you to finish up.
11 And I apologize for that, but I just want
12 to make sure that everyone has a chance to
13 speak.

14 So, with that, I'd like to introduce
15 Ron Kokel with the Fish and Wildlife
16 Service to give a brief presentation on
17 the draft Environmental Impact Statement.

18 Ron?
19 MR. KOKELE: Thanks, Phil. Again, good
20 evening, everybody. My name is Ron
21 Kokele. I'm with the U.S. Fish and
22 Wildlife Service and the Division of
23 Migratory Bird Management, stationed
24 currently in Arlington, Virginia. On
25 behalf of our director, Steve Williams,
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0009

1 I'd like to welcome everyone here tonight.
2 Now, if I can get the slides -- and the
3 lights. Okay.

4 As Phil pointed out, this is the fifth
5 of eleven public meetings that are being
6 held across the country for the purpose of
7 inviting public participation and input
8 into our process of developing an
9 Environmental Impact Statement on resident
10 Canada goose management. The DEIS was
11 developed in full cooperation with the
12 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife
13 Services.

14 Why are we here tonight? Well, we're
15 here tonight to explain the draft
16 Environmental Impact Statement, its
17 proposed action, and to listen to your
18 comments. The draft EIS considers a range
19 of plans and alternatives for addressing
20 expanding populations of resident Canada
21 geese, and, as such, we're really here to
22 listen to you, and we'd like your comments
23 on the Service's recommended management.

24 First, a little bit of a brief
25 explanation about the National
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0010

1 Environmental Policy Act which governs
2 this whole process. NEPA requires the
3 completion of an Environmental Impact
4 Statement to analyze environmental and
5 socioeconomic impacts that are associated
6 with any federal significant action. NEPA
7 also requires public input, including a
8 scoping period before the draft and a
9 comment period after the draft. That's
10 why we're here tonight.

11 We began this process in August of
12 1999 when we published in the Federal
13 Register a notice that announced our
14 intent to prepare this draft. Then in
15 February of 2000 we held nine public
16 scoping meetings which were designed to
17 seek public input into the process.
18 Scoping ended in March of 2000. In
19 response to the scoping, we received over
20 3,000 comments, and over 1,250 people

21 attended the nine public meetings.
22 What did we find out with scoping?
23 Well, with scoping we found the top issues
24 of concern were property damage and
25 conflicts caused by resident Canada geese,
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0011

1 the method of conflict abatement, the
2 sport hunting opportunities on resident
3 geese, the economic impact of resident
4 geese, human health and safety concerns,
5 and the impact to the geese themselves.
6 NEPA also outlines a specific format
7 for an EIS. There's a "Purpose and Need"
8 section, an "Alternatives" section, an
9 "Effect on Environment" section, and an
10 "Environmental Consequences" section.
11 First, what are resident Canada geese?
12 Resident Canada geese, as defined in the
13 EIS, are those geese which nest within the
14 lower 48 states in the months of March,
15 April, May or June, or reside within the
16 lower 48 states in the months of April,
17 May, June, July or August.
18 The purpose of the Environmental
19 Impact Statement was threefold. One was
20 to evaluate alternative strategies to
21 reduce, manage and control resident goose
22 populations in the U.S.; second, to
23 provide a regulatory mechanism that would
24 allow state and local agencies, other
25 federal agencies or groups and individuals

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0012

1 to respond to damage complaints; and,
2 thirdly, to guide and direct resident
3 Canada geese population management
4 activities in the U.S.
5 The need for the EIS was twofold. One
6 was that increasing resident Canada goose
7 populations coupled with growing
8 conflicts, damages and socioeconomic
9 impacts that they cause resulted in a
10 reexamination of the Service's resident
11 Canada goose management.
12 Alternatives: The draft Environmental
13 Impact Statement examines seven management
14 alternatives. First was Alternative A, no
15 action. This is the base line; second,
16 Alternative B, nonlethal control and
17 management, which included only non-
18 federally-permitted activities;
19 Alternative C, nonlethal control in
20 management, including federally-permitted
21 activities; Alternative D, expanded
22 hunting methods and opportunities;
23 Alternative E, integrated depredation

24 order management; Alternative F, state
25 empowerment, which is our proposed action;
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0013

1 and Alternative G, general depredation
2 order.

3 Under the "No Action" alternative,
4 Alternative A, no additional regulatory
5 methods or strategies would be authorized.
6 We'd continue to use special hunting
7 seasons, the issuance of individual
8 depredation permits and the issuance of
9 special Canada geese permits.

10 Under Alternative B, nonlethal control
11 and management, which included
12 nonfederally-permitted activities, we
13 would cease all lethal control of resident
14 Canada geese and their eggs, only
15 nonlethal harassment techniques would be
16 allowed, no permits would be issued, and
17 all special hunting seasons would be
18 discontinued.

19 Under the third alternative, "Non-
20 lethal Control and Management," which
21 includes federally-permitted activities,
22 we would cease all permitted lethal
23 controls of resident Canada geese, we
24 would promote nonlethal harassment
25 techniques, there would be no depredation

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0014

1 or special Canada goose permits issued,
2 egg addling would be allowed with permits,
3 and special hunting seasons would be
4 continued.

5 Under the fourth alternative,
6 "Expanded Hunting Methods and
7 Opportunities," we would provide new
8 regulatory options to increase the harvest
9 of resident Canada geese; it would
10 authorize additional hunting methods, such
11 as electronic calls, unplugged guns and
12 expanded shooting hours; decisions would
13 be operational during existing September 1
14 to 15 seasons; they could be experimental
15 during September 16 to 30 season, and it
16 would have to be conducted outside of any
17 other open seasons.

18 Alternative E we term "Integrated
19 Depredation Order Management." This
20 alternative consists of an airport dep-
21 redation order, a nest and egg depredation
22 order, an agricultural depredation order,
23 and a public health depredation order;
24 implementation would be up to the state
25 wildlife agencies; special hunting seasons

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0015

1 would be continued; and the issuance of
2 depredation permits and special Canada
3 goose permits would also be continued.

4 The airport depredation order would
5 authorize airports to establish and
6 implement a program which would include
7 indirect and/or direct population control
8 strategies. The intent of the program
9 would be to significantly reduce goose
10 populations at airports. Management
11 actions would have to occur on airport
12 premises.

13 The nest and egg depredation order
14 would allow the destruction of Canada
15 goose nests and eggs without a permit. The
16 intent of this program would be to
17 stabilize existing breeding populations.

18 The agricultural depredation order
19 would authorize landowners, operators and
20 tenants actively engaged in commercial
21 agriculture to conduct indirect and/or
22 direct population control strategies on
23 geese depredating on agricultural
24 properties. And, again, the management
25 action would have to occur on the

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0016

1 premises.

2 The public health depredation order
3 would authorize state, county, municipal
4 or local public health officials to
5 conduct indirect and/or direct population
6 control strategies on Canada geese when it
7 was recommended by health officials that
8 there was a public health threat. Again,
9 the management action would have to occur
10 on the premise where there was a threat.

11 Our proposed action is the sixth
12 alternative. Under this alternative we
13 would establish a new regulation which
14 would authorize state wildlife agencies or
15 their authorized agents to conduct or
16 allow management activities on resident
17 goose populations. The intent of this
18 alternative is to allow state wildlife
19 management agencies sufficient flexibility
20 to deal with the problems caused by
21 resident geese within their respective
22 states.

23 Under this alternative we would
24 authorize indirect and/or direct
25 population control strategies, such as

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0017

1 aggressive harassment, nest and egg
2 destruction, gosling and adult trapping

3 and culling programs. We would also allow
4 implementation of any of the specific
5 depredation orders which I talked about
6 under Alternative E.

7 During existing special hunting
8 seasons, we would expand the methods of
9 taking and increase hunter harvest, as I
10 talked about earlier under Alternative D.
11 We would authorize additional hunting
12 methods, such as electronic calls,
13 unplugged guns, expanded shooting hours.
14 The season would again be operational
15 during September 1 to 15. They could be
16 experimental during September 16 to 30,
17 but, again, they would have to be
18 conducted outside of other open seasons.

19 We would also implement a conservation
20 order which would provide special expanded
21 harvest opportunities during a portion of
22 the Migratory Bird Treaty closed period
23 that is August 1 to 31, and a portion of
24 the open period, September 1 to 15. These
25 would authorize additional hunting

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0018

1 methods, such as electronic calls,
2 unplugged guns, expanded shooting hours,
3 and liberalized bag limits. And, again,
4 these would have to be conducted outside
5 of any other open seasons.

6 Under this alternative the Service
7 would annually assess the impact and
8 effectiveness of the overall program, and
9 there would be a provision for possible
10 suspension of some of the regulations,
11 that is, the conservation order and/or the
12 regular hunting season changes when the
13 need was no longer present.

14 We would also continue all special and
15 regular hunting seasons, we would continue
16 the issuance of depredation and special
17 Canada goose permits. The only state
18 requirements under the program would be to
19 annually monitor the spring breeding
20 population of resident Canada geese and to
21 annually report the take under authorized
22 activities.

23 The last alternative, Alternative G,
24 General Depredation Order, would allow any
25 authorized person to conduct management

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0019

1 activities on resident geese that either
2 pose a threat to health or human safety or
3 are causing damage. These would be
4 available between April 1st and August 31.
5 It would provide special expanded hunting

6 opportunities, such as that under
7 Alternative D. It would continue to use
8 the special and regular hunting season and
9 the issuance of depredation and special
10 Canada goose permits, and the authoriza-
11 tion for all management activities would
12 come directly from the U.S. Fish and
13 Wildlife Service.

14 We look to two things under the
15 affected environment. One is the
16 biological environment, the second is the
17 socioeconomic environment. Under the
18 biological environment, we look at
19 resident Canada goose populations, water
20 quality of wetlands, vegetation and soils,
21 wildlife habitat, and any impacts on
22 federally-listed threatened and endangered
23 species.

24 Under the "Socioeconomic environment,"
25 we looked at the migratory bird program,

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0020

1 which includes the sport hunting program
2 and the migratory bird permit program,
3 social values and considerations, economic
4 considerations such as property damages
5 caused by resident geese, and agricultural
6 crop damages, human health and safety
7 issues, and the program cost.

8 The "Environmental Consequences"
9 section forms the scientific and the
10 analytic basis for a comparison of
11 different alternatives. It analyzes the
12 environmental impact of each alternative
13 in relation to the resource categories
14 that I just went over. And, again, the
15 "No Action" alternative provides a base
16 line for all analysis.

17 Under the "No Action" alternative,
18 what we would expect to happen is that
19 populations of resident geese would
20 continue to grow. In the Atlantic
21 Flyway, we would expect about 1.6 million
22 within ten years; in the Mississippi
23 Flyway, the population would approach 2
24 million within ten years; the Central
25 Flyway, 1.3 million in ten years; and the

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0021

1 Pacific Flyway, around 450,000 within
2 ten years. We would expect continued and
3 expanded goose distribution problems and
4 conflicts, we would expect increased
5 workloads, and we also would expect
6 continued impacts to property, safety and
7 health.

8 Under the proposed action, we expect

9 there to be a reduction in resident Canada
10 goose populations, especially in specific
11 problems areas. We would expect increased
12 hunting opportunities, significant
13 reduction in conflicts, decreased impacts
14 to property, safety and health. While
15 there would be initial workload increases,
16 we think that in the long term the
17 workload would decrease as the populations
18 decreased. And, lastly, it would maintain
19 viable resident Canada geese populations
20 in all areas.

21 Some recent modeling that's been done
22 suggests that to reduce the four flyway
23 populations from current levels of about
24 3.5 million down to the flyways'
25 established objective of about 2.1 million

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0022

1 would require annually for ten years the
2 harvest of an additional 480,000 geese
3 annually or the take of an additional
4 852,000 goslings annually, the nest
5 removal of 528,000 nests annually, or a
6 combination of additional harvest of
7 240,000 geese annually and the take of
8 320,000 goslings annually. All this would
9 have to occur each year annually for ten
10 years over what is already occurring.

11 Thus, we believe the only way to
12 possibly obtain these kinds of numbers is
13 to give states the flexibility to address
14 populations within their respective
15 states; secondly, to address population
16 reductions on a wide number of available
17 fronts; and since states are the most
18 informed and knowledgeable local
19 authorities on wildlife conflicts, primary
20 responsibilities and decisions of the
21 program should be placed with them.

22 What comes next? Well, first is the
23 development of a new regulation to carry
24 out the proposed action. This should be
25 forthcoming this month. Second, public

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0023

1 commentary on the draft, which Phil
2 already indicated closes on May 30th. And
3 third would be the publication of a final
4 Environmental Impact Statement, the
5 Service's record of decision, and any
6 final rules which we anticipate for this
7 fall.

8 As I stated, the public commentary is
9 over May 30, and Phil has already
10 indicated the various methods that you can
11 use to submit your comments. These

12 include any oral or written comments that
13 you submit tonight and any that you may
14 subsequently send in to us. Again, the
15 address is printed on the back of the card
16 that you received.

17 Additionally, we have set up an
18 electronic site that not only can you send
19 your comments, but you can access the
20 draft Environmental Impact Statement, the
21 news releases, and any other pertinent
22 information.

23 On behalf of the Fish and Wildlife
24 Service, I'd like to thank all of you that
25 are here tonight, and especially those who

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0024

1 are going to provide comments.

2 MR. SENG: Thanks, Ron. And now for
3 the important part of the meeting: to
4 hear what you have to say. I'd just like
5 to mention a couple of things, first
6 of all, when I call your number, if you
7 don't choose to make comments, please just
8 say you pass so we can move right along.
9 If you do want to make comments, please
10 raise your hand so that Patty can find you
11 with the mike. She's going to do her best
12 Phil Donohue impersonation and bring the
13 mike to everyone when they speak.

14 Again, state and spell your name
15 unless it's immediately obvious how to
16 spell it, and your organization, if you're
17 representing one, and where you're from.
18 With that, card number one.

19 MR. JOHN MOLKENBUR: Right here. My
20 name is John Molkenbur, M-O-L-K-E-N-B-U-R.
21 I'm president of the Minnesota Duck and
22 Goose Callers Association, a chapter of
23 the Minnesota Waterfowl Association.
24 Great info tonight. We were here two
25 years ago, and it was a great meeting

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0025

1 then, and I'm glad you guys are here again
2 for us. I like some of the ideas that you
3 have here, and I believe in what you're
4 saying, and I think it should work out
5 great.

6 A lot of the goose population is our
7 fault. A lot of it has to do with because
8 we belong to groups that believe in
9 conservation -- Ducks Unlimited, Minnesota
10 Waterfowl, Delta Waterfowl. These are the
11 ones that got the geese the way they are.
12 In 1969 I had to travel all the way to
13 Manitoba just to see a goose, and now
14 they're outside my yard every day and all

15 over. And, to be honest with you, I love
16 it. I think it's the greatest thing ever.
17 But just like your backyard is full of
18 dandelions and they're beautiful
19 dandelions, when you get too many of them,
20 they ruin your grass. And it's the same
21 with geese.

22 The last time we were here, they had
23 people that had really some, to me,
24 strange ideas. Some wanted to shoot them
25 with artificial inseminators, some wanted

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0026

1 just to take every other egg out of their
2 nest, and strange ideas. The only
3 solution I think, for us, is actually
4 hunting them. And, to us, the hunting
5 part of it is difficult, because most of
6 these geese in the early season, they come
7 within the city limits and stuff.

8 But one thing a lot of you are
9 forgetting is that this year a guy by the
10 name of L. P. Breszney came up with a
11 shotgun -- I can see some of you people
12 going, "Oh, no," I'm sure, but that thing
13 is so quiet that it actually will be
14 allowed to go on the golf courses. We
15 will be allowed to go in areas where you
16 couldn't go before, because it won't sound
17 like a drive-by or something like that.
18 It will just be a quiet gun, and it's
19 actually there to control the population.

20 And sometimes the way you're headed up
21 there, to me, a goose, I just love them.
22 How can you shoot something like that that
23 you love? Well, like I said before, you
24 get too many of them and you have to
25 control them, and how you control them is

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0027

1 the hard thing. That's our right to hunt,
2 and we love it. To us it's a thing that
3 you pass down through tradition, and it's
4 getting harder and harder to hunt these
5 geese in the metro area.

6 That's just one of the ideas that I
7 think we should do. I appreciate you guys
8 giving it to the state, because the state
9 has a lot of problems on this, and I think
10 the state knows best how to handle it.
11 Thank you.

12 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card number 2.

13 MR. KERMIT MOLKENBUR: My name is
14 Kermit, K-E-R-M-I-T, Molkenbur, and the
15 last name is spelled M-O-L-K-E-N-B-U-R.
16 I'm 67 years old, and who cares, right?
17 In 1973 we had a flock of 7,300 honkers,

18 the Greater Basin honker, coming from Oak
19 Point, Manitoba down to Rochester,
20 Minnesota. This is probably the greatest
21 conservation story in my lifetime, and
22 probably everybody else's lifetime that is
23 sitting in this room. To cohabituate with
24 public, with golf courses, wherever it is,
25 they take hold, and they're doing a
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0028

1 tremendous job.
2 I don't know, and I don't think
3 anybody knows, the answer to correcting
4 this problem. Everybody's got a different
5 idea, such as sterilization and all these
6 different things, taking the goslings out
7 of the nests and whatever. Mother Nature
8 probably will take care of the problem for
9 us. Maybe we'll have botulism. Who
10 knows? Okay? I would hate to look back
11 someday when you are in the same duck
12 blind that you were 35 years or 40 years
13 ago and said, "Oh, I see a goose."

14 Today we are just overjoyed with the
15 amount of geese that we see and also can
16 hunt. I would be for the Regulation A. I
17 would also be in support of increasing the
18 bag limits. I thank you for the oppor-
19 tunity to talk about this, and, hopefully,
20 everything will come out in the right
21 place. Thanks again.

22 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card 3.

23 MR. PETERSON: My name is Tim
24 Peterson, and I'm with Delta Waterfowl,
25 Minnesota Waterfowl, Minnesota Duck and
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0029

1 Goose Callers Association. Just about any
2 conservation organization that seems to
3 come along with a good plan, I manage to
4 find my way into it.

5 What I really see is -- and I think
6 you're beginning to address it now with
7 handing over some of the opportunities to
8 manage the problem to the states, because,
9 like he said, the local people should have
10 a much better handle on how to handle
11 their own particular problem. For
12 instance, in Minnesota in the metropolitan
13 area we've got a tremendous problem with
14 just getting the geese into an area where
15 you can legally hunt them during the
16 special early hunting seasons.

17 In the month of September, the birds
18 haven't really flocked together. They're
19 not operating on any sort of schedule. As
20 a hunter, typically what you want to do is

21 try and pattern the birds and find the
22 fields that they're going to, secure
23 permission to gain access to that
24 property, and set your decoys out prior to
25 the sun coming up, and then you catch the
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0030

1 geese as they're coming in the field.
2 However, this early in the year, the month
3 of September, birds have rarely had an
4 opportunity to establish any patterns.
5 They're still pretty much operating with
6 small flocks, which will be the family
7 units. So the opportunity for that early
8 season hunt -- this is my opinion, of
9 course -- is that it's relatively limited.
10 I think you could push limits to 20 birds
11 a day, you could do the unplugged
12 shotguns, you could do the electronic
13 calls, and I think that the net effect
14 would not be what you're looking for.

15 Personally, I would like to see the
16 opportunity to do an expanded resident
17 goose hunt the first five to seven days of
18 October. Unfortunately, that's when our
19 regular hunting season is in play, and if
20 the regulations are stated that none of
21 this can occur during open seasons for
22 other waterfowl, I think that hunting as
23 an option, certainly in the larger
24 metropolitan areas, is not as strong an
25 option unless people are allowed to hunt

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0031

1 on golf courses, soccer fields, football
2 fields, baseball fields, anyplace where
3 you've got a big stand of short grass.

4 Anyway, as the other two fellows said,
5 I'm real pleased to see some of this
6 authority being handed over to the states.
7 I think that the Minnesota DNR is a good
8 management group. Ultimately, if they're
9 given the opportunity to manage the
10 problem, I think that they will come up
11 with a viable solution. And, of course,
12 I'm certainly in favor of sport hunting as
13 one of the most effective tools to use to
14 control the Canada goose population. Did
15 I spell my last name for you? P-E-T-E-R-
16 S-O-N. Thank you.

17 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card number 4.

18 MR. SCHWARZ: Good evening. First of
19 all, I'd like to thank you for being here.
20 My name is Tom Schwarz, S-C-H-W-A-R-Z. I
21 personally feel that the right to manage
22 this situation individually should be
23 handed over to the states due to the fact

24 that they are in better control and
25 knowledge of what's going on in our area.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0032

1 Hunting has been a tradition in my
2 family for -- my father's deceased --
3 probably a hundred years or better. I'm a
4 member of the Duck and Goose Callers
5 Association, Delta Waterfowl, Ducks
6 Unlimited. For every goose that I get, I
7 would hate to say what I spent for it,
8 because I probably could buy some very
9 fine beef. But that isn't it. The thing
10 is is that we have an obligation to
11 control this in as gentle a way as
12 possible, because we don't know the retro
13 effects of this due to possible botulism
14 or whatever may come along, and then it
15 may be too late.

16 And if we use the hunter as a resource
17 to accomplish these goals, the individual
18 states can also monitor and control the
19 seasons. Besides that, they're taking
20 revenue in on licenses that can be used
21 also as either a detriment to increasing
22 the flock by whichever means they may see,
23 or produce more, whatever the case may be,
24 due to the population.

25 But, again, I'd like to thank you

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0033

1 for the opportunity
2 of being here and able to express my
3 opinions.

4 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card 5.

5 MR. SCHROERS: My name is John
6 Schroers, S-C-H-R-O-E-R-S. I am the
7 legislative coordinator for the Minnesota
8 Outdoor Heritage Alliance, and I am a
9 member of Minnesota Waterfowl and the
10 Minnesota Goose Callers Association.
11 Thank you for the opportunity to speak on
12 behalf of the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage
13 Alliance, speaking for the many hunting,
14 fishing and conservation groups that are
15 in the state of Minnesota, on their
16 behalf.

17 Canada goose management is best
18 facilitated in the hands of our state
19 Department of Natural Resources. They
20 know the attitudes of the society, they
21 canvass the hunting conservation groups
22 and all the cities that are affected by
23 problem goose situations. Through them I
24 believe that expanded opportunities
25 provide a quality hunting experience to

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0034

1 Minnesotans of all ages, which is
2 important, and through the Minnesota
3 DNR, I believe that additional opportun-
4 ities can be identified within the cities
5 affected, providing more meaningful
6 outdoor opportunities to Minnesotans of
7 all ages.

8 On behalf of Minnesota Outdoor
9 Heritage Alliance, we would endorse Option
10 F. Thank you.

11 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card number 6.

12 MR. ENGLUND: My name is Paul Englund,
13 E-N-G-L-U-N-D. I'm a member of the
14 Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Minnesota
15 Duck and Goose Callers Association, and
16 various other waterfowl and conservation
17 groups. I'm in favor of the Fish and
18 Wildlife proposal, as John just stated. I
19 think that the state has the best look at
20 the problems that we have with the Canada
21 geese, and I would hope that -- and I'm
22 sure that this will come to pass if this
23 proposal is the proposal that the Fish and
24 Wildlife Service goes with, that they
25 would allow the Duck and Goose Callers

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0035

1 Association, Minnesota Waterfowl, and any
2 other organizations of hunters to have
3 some input on how these problems are
4 handled, and I would be looking forward to
5 that. Thank you.

6 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card number 7.

7 MR. PETERSON: Thank you for this
8 opportunity to speak. My name is Chase
9 Peterson, S-O-N. I'm in favor of what you
10 are proposing. I would also like to
11 suggest that you take it one step further
12 by having the states appoint a number of
13 people to a committee per major metro area
14 to control that particular goose
15 population.

16 I'm only 18 years old, but I drive to
17 school every day, and I see probably 50
18 geese just on the way to school. And I
19 know that they're -- and I've heard from
20 my friends who walk just to get something
21 to eat, that they have been constantly
22 harassed by geese, and it just kills them
23 that they can't do anything about it. So
24 that's my two cents. Thank you very much.

25 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card number 8.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0036

1 MR. ROTTER: Good evening. My name is
2 Ed Rotter, R-O-T-T-E-R. Unfortunately, I

3 don't belong to any organizations, but
4 I've been hunting since I was 15, which is
5 a long time now, and I've enjoyed watching
6 the Canada geese population grow. When I
7 was a kid, we never saw a Canada goose.
8 Everybody had to go to Canada. Now
9 they're all over the place.

10 And, unfortunately, the group of geese
11 that are in this metro area right now are
12 getting to such exorbitant numbers that
13 it's undoubtedly going to happen that
14 we're going to have a devastating time
15 with these geese one of these days. It
16 just can't be without. There has to be
17 some kind of a natural disaster to come
18 on. The only way to stop that is to -- as
19 I see it, and apparently the way you
20 people see it -- is to cut out, rather
21 than to cull out, eliminate, this
22 terrible, terrible population that we have
23 right now.

24 I also like to play golf. Last year,
25 the last day of the golfing season I had

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0037

1 an opportunity to play golf at Goodrich
2 Golf Course over on White Bear Avenue in
3 Saint Paul, and if it wasn't for all of
4 the goose feces, I might have finished the
5 game, but it was impossible, and I kid you
6 not. It was a mess.

7 And, now, this is not only bothersome,
8 but it's got to have an effect on the
9 health of the people and it's got to have
10 an effect on the health of these geese.
11 They're in villages. They're not just
12 families anymore. You go to any golf
13 course and you have a village. And they
14 all have their droppings in the form of a
15 village. So something has to be done, and
16 I believe you people are on the right
17 path.

18 I'm certainly glad to be here. I'm
19 going to pass this word on to everybody I
20 know. I think we're on the right track,
21 and I do believe we have to allow our
22 states to handle a good portion of this,
23 because they know the geese, they know us,
24 they know their population. Thank you.

25 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card number 9.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0038

1 MR. TIMM: Right here. Thank you. My
2 name is Cliff Timm. That's T-I-M-M. I
3 live in West Saint Paul, and I belong to
4 the Westside Citizens Organization.

5 Now, I've been reading some of this

6 draft Environmental Impact Statement here.
7 I certainly agree with the gentleman that
8 just spoke here that there are just way
9 too many geese. Now, the reason that I
10 really started to fight the geese is
11 because I'm for clean water. I've been up
12 to the capitol the last couple years to
13 get this here phosphorous-free fertilizer
14 bill -- to help to get it passed. Well,
15 we succeeded, but the doggone goose comes
16 along, and there's a lot of phosphorous in
17 their droppings. It's .006 in every half
18 a pound of dropping, and they take on
19 three pounds of grass a day. So you can
20 imagine the amount of phosphorous.

21 I live over here close to the City
22 Hall in West Saint Paul, and last year in
23 the park you wouldn't be able to put your
24 finger down without touching it into goose
25 poop. Now, this here bacteria stays alive

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0039

1 for four weeks or longer, according to an
2 article that I read from Great Britain.
3 They've had a lot of goose problems.

4 Now, I don't think you're going far
5 enough here. I agree that these hunters,
6 that's the cheapest way to get rid of
7 them. But you've either got to take the
8 geese to the hunter -- now, that's by
9 baiting an area. This book here says on
10 goose baiting here, they're against that
11 because it's confusing. Well, you can
12 iron out the confusion. Bring the geese
13 out to the area where they can hunt, or
14 bring the hunter into an area like the
15 cemetery out here at Lexington and 110.

16 I went over there and talked to this
17 fellow with the cemetery. I said, "People
18 don't like it when they go out here to the
19 cemetery and see all this goose droppings
20 here."

21 "Well," he says, "I don't like it
22 either."

23 I says, "Well, why can't you have a
24 hunt in the morning for a couple of
25 hours?"

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0040

1 "Well," he says, "I'd love to."
2 So I went to City Hall over in
3 Mendota. I says to Mayor Mertensotto, I
4 says, "If people would come in here and
5 sign a petition or sign a petition and
6 bring it in here," I says, "wouldn't you
7 and the council people honor it?"

8 I didn't get a "yes" and I didn't get

9 a "no." Well, that's pretty good. I
10 think, by golly, that they would allow it.
11 They'd better.

12 And these schools, these poor kids
13 that are rolling in that goose poop, well,
14 that's ridiculous. And sooner or later
15 somebody's going to get sick, because in
16 this big book right here, on page 11181,
17 it talks about the goose droppings getting
18 into the livestock ponds. It actually is
19 a salmonella. It can kill the cattle if
20 they aren't treated.

21 Well, if it can kill a cow, what the
22 hell is a little kid going to do when he
23 gets into the droppings out in the park,
24 he falls down and gets it -- well, you
25 know he's going to get it in his mouth.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0041

1 It's just something that's bound to
2 happen.

3 Now, when I was introduced by KSTP
4 about Thompson Park, I didn't realize it
5 was so bad. Well, some of it was caused
6 because they were feeding the geese.

7 But, here, I told that Ron Rasmussen
8 with KSTP, I says, "Look where I'm
9 standing." I says, "Some people call this
10 thing a park?" I says, "It's nothing but
11 a barnyard." And then I says, "And then
12 this beautiful path that Metzen's going to
13 have, a million-dollar path or bridge over
14 Highway 82, and I says, "You know where
15 that path is going to end? Right here in
16 the goose poop!"

17 Well, the next morning Barbara Carlson
18 made a real funny over there. She really
19 had a circus on this thing. And this
20 Metzen, when I got ahold of him the next
21 day, he sent a letter right into
22 Washington, right here, and I've been
23 taking this letter to different
24 municipalities and tell them -- ask them
25 to do the same thing, and they're doing it

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0042

1 too.

2 So something is going to give. To me,
3 there shouldn't be any closed season on
4 these things. There should be an open
5 season all the way around. And, you know,
6 I made a hoop net here, 34 inches
7 diameter, 34 inches deep, and as soon as I
8 can use it without having to go to jail, I
9 want the Pioneer Press out there to see me
10 use it. Well, with some of the stories
11 I've heard about the geese, maybe I'm in

12 for a surprise, because I understand they
13 can get pretty nasty. Thank you.

14 MR. SENG: Thank you for your
15 comments. Card number 10.

16 MR. TUCKER: My name is Michael
17 Tucker. I'm with Wildlife Removal
18 Services in Bloomington, Minnesota. We're
19 a private wildlife control company. My
20 company gets dozens and dozens of calls
21 every year concerning human and goose
22 conflicts, and my company supports
23 Alternative F. That would give us the
24 most flexibility in resolving our
25 customers' problems.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0043

1 I'm also a member of the National
2 Wildlife Control Operators Association,
3 which is a national trade organization
4 that also supports Alternative F. Thank
5 you.

6 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card 11.

7 MR. COOPER: Jim Cooper, C-O-O-P-E-R,
8 professor emeritus, University of
9 Minnesota. My comments will be limited to
10 my support of Alternative F. I think here
11 in Minnesota over the past 20 years, I
12 think the first goose removal we did was
13 experimental work in Lake of the Isles.
14 This is perhaps the only metropolitan area
15 in North America, outside of Anchorage,
16 that has had a decline in the metro
17 population over the last 15 years as a
18 result of the leadership of the Department
19 of Natural Resources and its innovative
20 goose management program and support of
21 University research.

22 The model developed here is one which
23 I think has the elements of public input,
24 involvement of the city councils, of the
25 citizens who may love geese or may hate

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0044

1 them, who can come and express their
2 desires on a local basis. The program
3 developed in terms of research identified
4 that, indeed, perhaps the only way to
5 control urban geese is through an
6 intensive removal program. We have now
7 removed more than 70,000 Canada geese from
8 the metropolitan Twin Cities. Perhaps
9 more Canada geese were in the Mississippi
10 Bayou when I started my career in 1968.
11 So I'm very much supportive of Alternative
12 F. I'm somewhat, as a scientist,
13 skeptical that it will be adequate to
14 control Canada goose populations outside

15 of metro areas. The issue of being able
16 to kill enough geese is still in question,
17 and I do hope that the Fish and Wildlife
18 Service will provide research support to
19 the states to pursue, essentially, the
20 avenues that are still in question. Thank
21 you.

22 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card 12.

23 MR. McDONALD: Right here. My name is
24 John McDonald, and I'm with the Minnesota
25 Waterfowl Association and the Duck and

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0045

1 Goose Callers Association. I'm in
2 complete support of controlling the goose
3 population with hunting measures.
4 However, as far as electronic call goes, I
5 travel all across the country hunting, and
6 we've seen the snow geese once we were
7 allowed to use the electronic call. It
8 worked for a short time, and it's starting
9 to wear out now. We're now getting down
10 to needing absolutely perfect conditions
11 as far as limited visibility for the birds
12 to come into a shootable range. And I
13 think that's going to be the same thing
14 that's going to end up happening if we
15 allow it with Canadian geese. So I guess
16 I'd be more supportive of a larger bag
17 limit during the regular hunting season
18 with traditional hunting measures. Thank
19 you.

20 MR. SENG: Thank you. Lucky 13.

21 MS. HATFIELD: That's me. Good
22 evening. My name is Linda Hatfield, and
23 I'm representing myself. Hatfield,
24 H-A-T-F-I-E-L-D. And I'm going to be the
25 first voice for geese. All the previous

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0046

1 12 before me want to kill them, and I
2 don't want to see that happen. I'm
3 opposed to the Fish and Wildlife plan to
4 unleash hunters during the summer months
5 in our parks and ponds. It is a poor way
6 to solve the problem of too many geese.
7 If I could quote that, I would do that,
8 "too many geese."

9 This is a problem that Fish and
10 Wildlife admits, and local game agencies,
11 and as I heard from the first speaker this
12 evening, the hunter over there said we
13 also are part of the problem, that we
14 created the number of geese that we have
15 today. I also understand that Fish and
16 Wildlife's choice alternative is F. I
17 believe it deserves an F. As I see it,

18 and as most people would see it if they
19 truly understood the agenda behind the
20 program, it's nothing but a fund-raiser
21 for local game state agencies, another
22 desperate attempt of game agencies to
23 expand the number of hunters -- of
24 licensed hunters -- by creating more
25 hunting opportunities on more animals to
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0047

1 hunt during the year at more places.
2 Yet, this notion of summer hunts in
3 the parks jeopardizes safety of children
4 and their parents who use these parks
5 during their summer vacations. I assume
6 that those parks will be closed during the
7 summer. Here we are in mid May, and the
8 weather's been really crappy. So now
9 we're going to take away a possible warm
10 month just so hunters can go in there and
11 shoot and kill Canada geese because of
12 goose poop?

13 Those who want Canada geese off the
14 parks should take note: There is no
15 evidence provided by Fish and Wildlife
16 that urban and hunting will reduce goose
17 poop in the parks. Again I will state,
18 this plan is nothing but a fund-raiser at
19 the expense of all citizens. Hunters
20 should also be concerned that the game
21 agencies are once again making them look
22 foolish just to enhance their game
23 agencies.

24 Fish and Wildlife has also shown that
25 goose poop is not a health hazard. On the
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0048

1 other hand, Fish and Wildlife dismisses
2 the real hazards of eating Canada geese.
3 Studies at Cedarburg show that toxic
4 contaminants such as dioxide from lawn
5 chemicals are in Canada geese. The geese
6 rounded up and slaughtered had to be taken
7 to local landfills. So I need to ask the
8 Service, how do we plan to inspect what
9 hunters kill for toxic contaminants?

10 Fish and Wildlife also admits that the
11 Migratory Bird Treaty Act does not allow
12 hunting migratory birds during the month
13 of August, yet proceeds to recommend that
14 it be done. Fish and Wildlife overlooks
15 the humane method to deal with these too
16 many geese, information that has been
17 repeatedly given to the Service and to the
18 state game agencies and to local
19 communities by many people around this
20 state and around the nation, but that's

21 always overlooked. I will not take the
22 time here this evening to present that
23 information, unless you want me to.

24 In closing, I must say that I'm angry
25 that once again dealing with a so-called
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0049

1 overpopulation problem is being addressed
2 through lethal means. Why? Because
3 there's a constant complaint of goose
4 poop, that there are too many geese. I
5 also heard over 13 years ago in this same
6 setting, that there's too many deer. My
7 goodness, Canada geese and deer, game
8 species. Now, go figure. Aren't they
9 managed really well to keep those numbers
10 up for those hunting interests?

11 Yet, there's another overpopulated
12 species that inhabits this planet, but, in
13 closing, I will say there is not a
14 separate law for our own species. Thank
15 you.

16 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card 14.

17 MR. GOLDMAN: Hi. My name is Howard
18 Goldman, G-O-L-D-M-A-N, and I represent
19 three organizations tonight, the Minnesota
20 Humane Society, Friends of Animals and
21 Their Environment and the Coalition for
22 Animal Rights Education. I'd like to
23 thank you for the opportunity to share our
24 comments.

25 It seems the public attitudes are
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0050

1 changing dramatically towards the
2 treatment of wildlife. The public is
3 increasingly demanding that wildlife be
4 treated humanely and that that be
5 considered when policies are established
6 with regard to the treatment of wildlife.
7 The evidence regarding this I think is
8 surrounding two issues. One is hunting
9 and the other is trapping. There's a lot
10 of opposition to the use of metal traps,
11 largely because of the pain and suffering
12 inflicted on all wildlife. We own the
13 wildlife. It's here in the state for the
14 benefit of all of the people, not just
15 hunters and trappers, I might add.

16 And, secondly, the issue of furs.
17 There's a lot of opposition now to the
18 wearing of furs, because millions of
19 animals are killed simply to produce a
20 product. The second is the issue of
21 hunting, recreational killing of animals,
22 sport hunting versus subsistence hunting.
23 Sport hunting is under examination all

24 across the country. Many people now are
25 changing their views regarding the use of
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0051

1 animals for recreational killing. Non-
2 consumptive uses of wildlife are
3 increasing, consumptive uses of wildlife
4 are decreasing, the number of trappers is
5 declining nationally as well as the number
6 of hunters nationally,

7 There was a recent article in the Wall
8 Street Journal which talked about a
9 chimpanzee, and the reason it was
10 highlighted is because, for the first
11 time, they were talking now about granting
12 chimpanzees legal standing, rights. There
13 were experiments that were being done on
14 chimpanzees, and there are now currently
15 Harvard and several other universities who
16 believe that they have rights and those
17 rights should be protected. This again is
18 just another indication of how attitudes
19 are changing in the society, and we
20 believe Fish and Wildlife must take those
21 into account before they issue a final
22 policy.

23 The principal reasons cited in the EIS
24 to support the changes are, one, property
25 damage -- golf courses, parks, lawns --

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0052

1 and, second, the impact on human health
2 and safety. Before I address those, let
3 me just mention that the geese share our
4 world. We don't own this world. The
5 geese share it with us. There's ways to
6 resolve this issue, and we don't believe
7 it's by killing more geese. And we know
8 full well that's what will happen
9 ultimately. It's the last resort, not the
10 preferred choice. We strongly urge Fish
11 and Wildlife to develop a much more
12 tolerant attitude toward our fellow
13 creatures, which means less killing.

14 We cite as an example the black bear
15 in Minnesota. There was a time not so
16 long ago where the bear was considered of
17 no value, a worthless creature. In large
18 part due to the efforts of the Forest
19 Service, and particularly the Department
20 of Natural Resources, that attitude has
21 changed. People have been educated that
22 bears do indeed have value, that they play
23 an important role in our ecosystem. They
24 also provided people with basic informa-
25 tion on nonlethal ways to prevent damage.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0053

1 That's changed attitudes dramatically
2 throughout the state of Minnesota, and I
3 think the same would be true with respect
4 to the geese.

5 I was recently in the Boundary Waters
6 Canoe Area last year. There was a high
7 population of bears. We were on sort of a
8 landing. There were notices all around,
9 "Be careful. Bears are breaking into
10 cars. You're supposed to keep your
11 backpack out of reach," and so on.
12 Everyone understood it. Everyone knows
13 that we're sharing this land with the
14 bears. You take precautions. We live
15 together. Sometimes you've got problems.
16 All these problems are manageable.

17 Now, the impact on human health which
18 was cited in the EIS as a basis for a
19 change. The EIS does conclude -- and I'm
20 simply paraphrasing -- that all the states
21 -- that not a single state, I should say,
22 is able to substantiate that geese
23 transmit disease to humans, not a single
24 state. They've found no direct link thus
25 far with disease in humans and fecal

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0054

1 matter of geese. I'm simply paraphrasing
2 what was in the EIS.

3 With respect to property damage, the
4 EIS does, I think, an extraordinarily good
5 job of outlining all of the nonlethal
6 alternatives, 17, both physical deterrents
7 and habitat alterations, many of which
8 have been used very, very effectively, and
9 we urge the Fish and Wildlife Service to
10 focus one more time on the nonlethal
11 alternatives.

12 Human safety, you would say that's a
13 critical feature in all of this. And
14 geese do present a threat to aviation. We
15 recognize that, and the last thing we
16 would do is discourage the airports from
17 having a goose control program. That we
18 think should continue.

19 We believe, in conclusion, that we
20 must find ways to coexist with the geese
21 and with all the other creatures on this
22 Earth. We have the expertise, the
23 resources. It's only a matter of will.
24 In conclusion, we recommend Alternative B,
25 with one minor modification, that if

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0055

1 clearly there is an issue of health and
2 safety for humans, then, and only then,

3 would we endorse a lethal program. Thank
4 you.

5 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card 15.

6 MR. KOEN: Yes. I'm Christopher Koen,
7 K-O-E-N. I think the main reason I'm
8 opposed to this plan is that it will put
9 the power to manage this particular issue
10 back to the states, and then what we'll
11 have is a helter-skelter approach in
12 dealing with this, instead of a compre-
13 hensive way of dealing with the problem.
14 And that is the big problem with the
15 geese, because they move. So if you deal
16 with the geese with one method in one
17 area, you'll have geese move in from other
18 areas, and we don't need to have a
19 helter-skelter approach. We need to have
20 one comprehensive plan. So let's not have
21 each state come up with its own plan.
22 That has not worked very well.

23 I'm disappointed in the plan because
24 it says that you're trying to evaluate
25 alternative strategies, and I don't think

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0056

1 you really did that seriously. I was
2 disappointed with Alternative C, the
3 nonlethal management, as well as the
4 discussion about egg destruction. I think
5 egg destruction is probably the most
6 promising technique we could use to
7 actually reduce the numbers of geese over
8 the long term. If you do hunting, you're
9 not going to be doing it everywhere, and
10 geese are going to move back into problem
11 areas. But if you do egg destruction
12 comprehensively around the country, you're
13 going to the reduce the populations over
14 the long term. It's proven very
15 effective. Your discussion of the egg
16 destruction did not discuss any of the
17 studies that are going on across the
18 country. It's been used very effectively
19 for years now in Virginia and Michigan.

20 I was lucky enough to be involved as a
21 volunteer in Michigan in the Michigan egg
22 replacement -- Canada geese egg
23 replacement study. They removed 11,572
24 eggs over four years in a small-scale test
25 study in three counties and a 100-square-

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0057

1 mile area. They used volunteers. They
2 had no problem finding volunteers. The
3 costs are fairly low. There was no
4 discussion in this part of the report
5 about the cost for this type of method.

6 And it's very successful. It's a type
7 of egg addling, but in this case it
8 replaces the eggs with a dummy egg. And
9 the comments that were made in here about
10 this method are not really realistic.
11 They said you can't find all the locations
12 for the eggs. Well, you don't need to.
13 You just need to find many of them or most
14 of them. You don't need to get every
15 single egg, you know, so you'll have a
16 reduction down to a zero number. You just
17 need to reduce the population growth as
18 much as possible.

19 Another criticism was that it's
20 difficult to find the eggs at the right
21 time, that the geese will come back and
22 lay a separate number of eggs. It's
23 really not that difficult at all. The
24 geese will come and lay their eggs at the
25 same time each year. In Michigan it's in

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0058

1 mid April. So we go out and look through
2 the nests in mid April and we replace the
3 eggs with dummy eggs. We come back two
4 weeks later, and the geese do not usually
5 lay a separate group of eggs.

6 It's been terribly effective. So
7 let's discuss this alternative. It's
8 humane. It uses volunteers. And I think
9 we need to consider humane options here.
10 I think it's important.

11 Furthermore, there was a discussion by
12 one other speaker about the meat from the
13 geese, and that is a concern. It really
14 cannot be used for consumption. You never
15 want to use urban animals for consumption.
16 They've been contaminated with urban
17 runoff and other chemicals. There have
18 been a couple of studies that have shown
19 the geese to be contaminated with PCBs,
20 herbicide residues, tetrachlor and
21 dieldrin. These are carcinogens and
22 neurotoxins, so these geese should never
23 be eaten. So if you're going to be
24 killing these geese, you're not going to
25 be getting any food from it, or if you

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0059

1 are, you'll be doing it irresponsibly.

2 Also, there's been some areas
3 around the country that have used
4 nonlethal options to explore. Put that
5 in the report -- in Rockford, Illinois;
6 Morristown, New Jersey; New York. In
7 Milwaukee County parks in Wisconsin,
8 they've used the addling, in Montgomery

9 County parks in Washington, D.C. In
10 Rockford, Illinois, they used border
11 collies to take care of a problem in
12 one area.

13 We also need to have a public
14 policy of not feeding geese. This was
15 never discussed. That's one of the
16 main problems we have in our parks.
17 People feed the geese for fun, and it's
18 contributing to the overpopulation of
19 the geese, as is the creation of these
20 perfect environments for the geese.
21 That's why when you were young you
22 didn't see the geese and now they're
23 here. Why? Because we've created a
24 human environment that's ideal for
25 geese. They have perfect sight lines

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0060

1 by the water to get in and out of the
2 water easily, and it's a perfect place
3 for their nests. We need to create
4 barriers, and it's very simple to do in
5 landscape design. You throw in a few
6 barriers and shrubs, shrub mounds and
7 so forth, and it's part of a compre-
8 hensive method. One of the criticisms
9 of egg destruction was that it's not
10 good as a single method. Of course
11 not. You're never going to use one
12 single method. You're going to use
13 several. Don't feed the geese, let's
14 use egg destruction, let's use
15 landscape -- alter the landscape,
16 especially in new designs that are
17 going in. Let's come up with a
18 comprehensive plan here. Thank you.

19 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card 16.

20 MR. BRAMMER: My name is Paul Brammer,
21 B-R-A-M-M-E-R. I'm a member of the
22 Minnesota Duck and Goose Callers,
23 Minnesota Waterfowl, DU, and most any
24 other conservation organization, and I
25 think that's the whole point is

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0061

1 conservation organizations. My funds are
2 used for the conservation of these
3 animals' habitats. I am also a 30-year-
4 plus hunter, sportsman, however you want
5 to use that term. Any taxes that I pay by
6 the Robertson-Pitman Act on any clothing,
7 sporting goods that I purchase, all goes
8 towards conservation of wildlife in
9 general, not just the goose. And I feel
10 that your proposal is very good, and I
11 support the proposal.

12 As far as offering alternative methods
13 within that proposal, I know it's very
14 important that you allow the state, that
15 knows the local organizations, the local
16 environment, local populations, and let
17 them control it, let them manage it,
18 to the point if there is a botulism
19 outbreak, if there is something like this,
20 that they can just cut it off, where they
21 have that control without having to go
22 through the whole government process
23 bureaucracy along the way.

24 I think hunting is a viable means of
25 reducing the population, but it has to --

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0062

1 as the geese smarten up, as previously
2 said with electronic calling with the snow
3 geese and so on like this, you have to
4 keep other options open within this.

5 Your egg culling is fine, and working
6 with volunteers is one thing, but the
7 state has a ready list of volunteers in
8 hunting licenses. I mean, any of those
9 individuals, if they were given the
10 opportunity, would be more than happy to
11 help control a population of geese. It
12 isn't just where you can do nonlethal
13 methods and you have to coexist with the
14 overbearing populations of wildlife. You
15 have to understand that this is a
16 renewable resource, and it will always be
17 a renewable resource; and as long as the
18 habitat environment permits, you're always
19 going to have some sort of population
20 control.

21 And I want to thank you very much for
22 coming tonight and allowing me to speak.
23 Thank you.

24 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card 17.

25 ATTENDEE: Pass.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0063

1 MR. SENG: Eighteen.

2 ATTENDEE: Pass.

3 MR. SENG: Nineteen.

4 MR. BREMICKER: Good evening. My name
5 is Tim Bremicker. Last name is spelled
6 B-R-E-M-I-C-K-E-R. I'm the director of
7 the Division of Wildlife, Minnesota DNR.
8 First of all, I'd like to thank you for
9 the opportunity to comment. We're here
10 tonight because we think this is really a
11 very important issue. It's an issue that
12 we've been dealing with here in Minnesota
13 for quite a few years. And, as noted or
14 mentioned by a few other folks, we've

15 taken this problem very seriously, and I
16 think in many respects we've developed a
17 model approach to try to address it. And
18 in some respects I guess I would consider
19 that our efforts have been aggressive in
20 contrast to perhaps some of the other
21 states.

22 Despite that management perspective or
23 approach or effort, we still have a
24 growing resident Canada goose population
25 here in the state. And, as Dr. Cooper

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0064

1 noted, we may be the first major
2 metropolitan area with a tremendous
3 habitat base and a strong population of
4 Canada geese and actually begin to see a
5 decline in the population.

6 I've got some written comments, and
7 I'd like to read a portion of it, but I
8 will leave the letter with you folks for
9 the written record. And, typically, I
10 don't do this, read into the record. I'd
11 attempt to paraphrase it. Because of the
12 significance of the issue and also because
13 I want to be absolutely clear regarding
14 our position, I will read it.

15 This letter is to Mr. John Andrew,
16 Chief, Division of Migratory Bird
17 Management. "First, thank you for the
18 opportunity to comment on the draft
19 Environmental Impact Statement on resident
20 Canada geese management, dated February
21 2002. The authors are to be commended for
22 their efforts, as those documents
23 consolidate a tremendous amount of
24 information on the biology and management
25 of Canada geese. Minnesota is one of the

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0065

1 largest populations of resident Canada
2 geese in the United States. Despite
3 ranking either first or second in the
4 nation in Canada goose harvests since 1990
5 and having the harvest currently composed
6 of 75 percent resident Canada geese, our
7 resident Canada goose population continues
8 to grow in many areas, which has created
9 serious conflicts with humans in both
10 urban and rural settings.

11 "The 2001 Mississippi Flyway
12 population estimate for resident Canada
13 geese was 1,371,000, well above the
14 population objective of 1,169,000. Unless
15 effective steps are taken to reduce growth
16 of the population, the next flyway
17 population is estimated to be 1.7 million

18 in five years and 2 million in ten.
19 "The Minnesota Department of Natural
20 Resources agrees with the need to reduce
21 resident Canada goose populations and
22 supports Alternative F, state empowerment,
23 as the preferred approach. We believe
24 that Alternatives A through E will not do
25 enough to result in a significant

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0066

1 reduction in our resident Canada goose
2 population. One or two management
3 techniques will not be effective in every
4 situation. Under the state empowerment
5 alternative, Minnesota and other states
6 would have the flexibility to deal with
7 resident Canada goose problems via a
8 variety of strategies tailored to specific
9 situations. We support the option of a
10 conservation order (August 1 through 31)
11 harvest, and additional hunting methods
12 (September 1 through 15) as useful
13 additional tools to help reduce
14 populations in areas where other means
15 have not been effective."

16 And then there's a series of more
17 specific recommendations or comments
18 relative to Strategy F that, in our
19 opinion, would make the alternative more
20 streamlined and more easy to apply in a
21 critical situation for Canada geese and
22 make it easier for the states to
23 implement. And I won't belabor the
24 comments. They can be entered into the
25 written record when it's developed.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0067

1 Again, thank you very much for the
2 opportunity to comment, and my comments
3 here are being presented on behalf of the
4
5 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
6 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card number 20.
7 MR. JES: Thank you. My name is Tom
8 Jes. The last name is spelled J-E-S. I'm
9 a four-year member of the Minnesota
10 Waterfowl Association. I currently serve
11 on its board of directors. I'm a
12 representative to the Fish and Wildlife
13 Legislative Alliance and to the Coalition
14 of Minnesota Conservation Organizations.
15 I also serve as a volunteer field reporter
16 for the website waterfowler.com. That all
17 being said, I'm here on my own.

18 I support Proposal F because it
19 provides the states with the most
20 beneficial means to control the geese in

21 the areas where they need to be
22 controlled, leaves them alone where they
23 need to be left alone, and I think that
24 the state Department of Natural Resources
25 has the tools and is best qualified to
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0068

1 manage the birds. Thank you.
2 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card 21.
3 ATTENDEE: Pass.
4 MR. SENG: Twenty-two.
5 MS. WARP: Hi. My name is Jean Warp.
6 I'm from Crystal, Minnesota, and I live
7 near Bassett Creek Park. Sine I've lived
8 in my present residence, which is eight
9 years, there have been numerous geese in
10 Bassett Creek Park, flocks of them, which
11 I have tremendously enjoyed. Last spring
12 and this spring the goose population was
13 practically zero. So if you're trying to
14 eliminate geese, you're doing a good job
15 in Crystal. The geese I see are usually
16 two. The most I've ever seen in the park
17 is five. I've seen one group of goslings
18 this year; one.
19 The geese in Bassett Creek Park
20 brought a special sense of joy to me. In
21 our urban environment, I guess I may be in
22 the minority on this, but I like having
23 them there. Maybe it was because I was
24 born and raised on a farm and now I'm a
25 city dweller. I find that in the district

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0069

1 everything that's life affirming and
2 beautiful is destroyed. That goes for the
3 people on Highway 100 and the geese in
4 Bassett Creek Park. It's been a great
5 loss to me.
6 I would like to talk a little bit
7 about goose poop, which isn't the most
8 wonderful thing in the world, but it is
9 natural and it does affirm life. Recently
10 I was diagnosed with leukemia, and I've
11 gone through chemotherapy for over nine
12 months. A shocking thing came to my mind
13 while I was in the hospital. When you're
14 on chemotherapy and ill and in the
15 hospital, they use the same food system as
16 the city does. It goes through the same
17 sewage treatment plant, goes into the
18 river, comes into the ground. The biggest
19 polluters are not the geese poop. It's
20 this kind of sewage system and also the
21 factories throughout the state that are
22 dumping tons of raw sewage into our lakes
23 and rivers. As far as I'm concerned, as

24 many geese as want to can walk on my
25 grass, and I don't care if they poop on
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0070

1 it.
2 I would encourage you to find not only
3 for the alternatives but especially for
4 the nonlethal means. I liked the
5 gentleman's comment about egg collection
6 and putting false eggs in the nests. Our
7 resources are shared by all of us, hunters
8 and nonhunters alike. Hunters have the
9 right to purchase licenses to kill geese
10 and hunt them. As a nonhunter, I would
11 like to be able to purchase a license and
12 have the bird banded so it's protected,
13 and if it's shot by a hunter, there should
14 be a penalty for that. Somebody can have
15 more money for the Fish and Wildlife
16 Department.

17 Thank you. That's the end of my
18 comments.

19 MR. SENG: Thank you. Is there anyone
20 who did not get a card who would like to
21 speak?

22 (No response.)

23 MR. SENG: Okay. Then I'd like to
24 remind you that May 30 is the deadline for
25 comments. If you think of something else

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0071

1 after you leave tonight, please send it to
2 the address or the e-mail on the back of
3 the card. And if you didn't get a chance
4 to sign the sign-up sheet and would like
5 to receive a copy of the final EIS, it's
6 on the table in the back, so feel free to
7 sign up there.

8 Ron, anything else we need?

9 MR. KOKEL: No.

10 MR. SENG: With that, I want to thank
11 you again for coming out on such a
12 beautiful evening. Have a safe trip home.
13 We stand adjourned. Thank you.

14 (Whereupon, at 8:28 p.m., the
15 foregoing proceeding was terminated.)
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE PUBLIC MEETING - 5/14/02

0072

1

2 STATE OF MINNESOTA)

3 COUNTY OF RAMSEY)

4

5 I hereby certify that I reported the foregoing
6 public meeting on the 14th day of May, 2002, in
7 Bloomington, Minnesota;

8

9 That the proceeding was transcribed under my
10 direction and is true and correct to the best of my
11 ability;

12

13 That I am not a relative or employee or
14 attorney or counsel of any of the parties, or a
15 relative or employee of such attorney or counsel;

16

17 That I am not financially interested in the
18 action and have no contract with the parties,
19 attorneys, or persons with an interest in the action
20 that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect
21 my impartiality;

22

23 WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 24th day of May,
24 2002.

25

Dale R. Neumann

24 (Seal)

25