

2019 HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HB 1209

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Coteau A Room, State Capitol

HB 1209

1/24/2019

31432

☐ Subcommittee

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk

Kathleen Davis

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Relating to the use of dogs in the recovery of big game

Minutes:

Attachment 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11

Chairman Porter called the hearing to order on HB 1209.

Rep. Ruby: This bill was brought to me by the ND Dog Tracing Group. If this bill were to pass and the deer runs off and you can't find it, your first step is to contact Game & Fish. You can leave a message and then recovery begins. During your search, the dog must be leashed, nobody can be carrying a firearm or archery equipment. When the animal is found, the dog and animal are required to leave the area and the hunter may then retrieve his weapon, and continue the hunt. If the animal is found it's no longer recovery, it's a hunt once more. We believe the language solidifies the line between hunting and recovery with a dog. 36 other states have this.

Rep Heinert: Why on line 17, individuals may not carry a firearm?

Rep. Ruby: In speaking with G&F, we don't want to blur the line more of somebody flushing with a dog. That's why we state recovery.

Rep Heinert: When you track a deer otherwise, do you still carry your weapon all the time.

Rep. Ruby: If you shot it and dropped it the first time you wouldn't have to worry! Yes, you're right. G&F drew the line. If we have people using a dog and tracking, carrying a weapon, I understand you're thinking the deer's going to get up and run away?

Rep Heinert: No, I'm thinking along the line of hunter safety, other critters, carrying a handgun for your own protection, other predator animals.

Rep. Ruby: I agree. Initially I thought of carrying a non-typical caliber pistol that would assist in that. It was solid by the group that brought this forward they didn't want to risk losing the bill on that point.

Rep. Marschall: Stationed in AK, I never went out without a 44. You're out there, you come on the deer, it's wounded, you need at least a sidearm to put it out of its misery.

Rep. Ruby: I agree with you. That was my initial thought. We could ask Game and Fish to clarify on that. We want to get something passed so we can at least start tracking.

Chairman Porter: further support?

7:30

Jason Babincheck: presented Attachment 1.

Alison Kammer, ND Versatile Dog Hunting Association: read Attachment 2 from their Board of Directors.

Brett Hall, Midwest North Chapter OF VDD-GNA: Presented Attachment 3 from their chapter Chairman. I'm here as a first hand witness. I own 2 dogs trained to track big game. I've recovered deer after 24 hours and haven't been found. In 18 minutes we found the deer.

Chairman Porter: questions? Further testimony in support?

Darryl Belisle, president of the ND Bow Hunters Association: presented Attachment 4. Currently the law says we can legally go onto land where the deer ran to but you cannot take a gun onto that land.

Bill Helfry ND Bow Hunters Association: This has nothing to do with going out and shooting. It's about recovery and the animal should not be wasted. If a tracking dog had been available, I would have had the animal in an hour.

Chairman Porter: questions? Support? Opposition? Closed the hearing.

Submitted testimony not speaking:

Susanne Hamilton, President of United Blood Trackers, Inc. – Attachment 5

Bryan Guillory, Central Dakota NAVHDA – Attachment 6

Tyler Webster, ND hunter, host of The Birds, Booze, and Buds Podcast – Attachment 7

Dillon Grose, Red River Valley NAVHDA – Attachment 8

Amanda Hauf, President, Hiddenwood Sportsmens Club – Attachment 9

Jeb Williams, ND Game & Fish – Attachment 10

Bob Hauser, VP, NAVHDA – Attachment 11

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Coteau A Room, State Capitol

HB 1209

1/24/2019

31462

☐ Subcommittee

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk

Kathleen Davis

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Relating to the use of dogs in the recovery of big game

Minutes:

Chairman Porter called the hearing to order on HB 1209. Discussion?

Rep Bosch: moved a Do Pass.

Rep. Marschall: Second.

Chairman Porter: Discussion? Clerk called the roll on a Do Pass motion on HB 1209.

13 yes, 0 no, 1 absent. Motion carried. Rep. Marschall is the carrier.

Date: 1-25-19
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1209

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

☐ Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

Recommendation: ☐ Adopt Amendment
☒ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Without Committee Recommendation
☐ As Amended ☐ Rerefer to Appropriations
☐ Place on Consent Calendar
Other Actions: ☐ Reconsider ☐ _____

Motion Made By Rep Bosch Seconded By Rep Marschall

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Porter	✓		Rep. Lefor	✓	
Vice Chairman Damschen	✓		Rep. Marschall	✓	
Rep. Anderson	✓	AB	Rep. Roers Jones	✓	
Rep Bosch	✓		Rep. Ruby	✓	
Rep. Devlin	✓		Rep. Zubke	✓	
Rep. Heinert	✓				
Rep. Keiser	✓		Rep. Mitskog	✓	
			Rep. Eidson	✓	

Total (Yes) 13 No 0

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Rep Marschall

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1209: Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Rep. Porter, Chairman)
recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING).
HB 1209 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2019 SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

HB 1209

2019 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1209
3/15/2019
Job Number 33785

☐ Subcommittee
☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk: Marne Johnson

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A bill relating to the use of dogs in the recovery of big game.

Minutes:

3 Attachments

Chair Unruh: Opened the hearing.

Representative Matt Ruby, District 40 (0:25-2:05) Introduced the bill, please see attachment #1.

Senator Roers: How do you train your dog to hunt for deer?

Representative Ruby: Blood trail, mostly. There is a group that will speak after me, this is what they do; there are certain dogs that are better than others, but really you can train any dog. Schizophrenia

Jason Babinchak, North Dakota Tracking Dog Group (3:00-6:10) Testified in favor. Submitted letters of support, please see attachment #2. We hope to have another tool in the tool box for North Dakota hunters pursuing big game. We are talking about using dogs to track mortally wounded big game. North Dakota Tracking Group was formed more than two and half years ago when several of us realized that this is currently illegal in North Dakota. We researched it and reached out to North Dakota Game and Fish. During our meeting, we asked what they would be comfortable with. We found some common ground and they informed us about the legislative process and what we would need to do. For the last two years we have been educating ourselves, North Dakota Game and Fish, and the public every chance we can. We have attended numerous North Dakota game and Fish advisory board meetings. We have gained a lot of support at the local and state level.

Sometimes a hunter may make a less than ideal shot, the results are the same: very little blood or signs of a hit to follow, even with well-placed shots there can be little evidence left that a hunter can see to follow. This is where using a dog to track comes into play. Dogs use their noses to follow the scent to the mortally wounded animal. Dogs have been used for this purpose for hundreds of years. Currently there are 37 states where this is legal, and two where it is conditionally legal. At least three other states have tracking dog bills in their current legislative sessions besides North Dakota. In all the states that have legalized this, there is

no documentation where passing a tracking bill has caused issues for the state's wildlife enforcement agencies. United Blood Trackers is an international organization that has a website with a plethora of information. We have written this bill to make it difficult for someone to get away with doing this illegally. It does not violate the rules of fair chase as evidenced by all the support it has from hunters and conservationists. It does not aid in the pursuit or hunting of big game, it will only help in the recovery. It's another resource hunter would have to utilize in the efforts to recover their animal. We hope we have shown you our reasoning and efforts over the last two and half years; as well as the support this bill has. We have worked with the Game and Fish on this, by passing this bill you will help aid in the conservation of big game in North Dakota.

Senator Roers: Which breed is the most likely to be trained to be a tracker?

Jason Babinchak: That's a good question, most of us have Deutsch Drahthaars, it's a German breed similar to German Wirehair Pointer. Wirehaired Teckels or Wirehaired Dachshund are very popular, but any mixed breed, almost any dog can be trained to do this if they have a propensity, you can cultivate that.

Chair Unruh: Did you help put the language together?

Jason Babinchak: One of our members put the rough draft together, and it was revised by Legislative Council until everybody was comfortable.

Rhett Hall, Iron Point Kennels and the Verein Deutsch-Drahthaar-Group North America (8:00-10:20) Testified in favor. I've trained dogs for 10 years, I owned Drahthaars, they are a versatile breed bred to try to do everything. My dogs will point game, retrieve ducks, kill predators, I've trained them to recover big game, or pull a sled. They are a huge benefit when it comes to the conservation of wild game, when you are bird hunting, for example you will be able to find more of your downed animals. On the blood tracking last year, I had a friend call me, he shot a deer and lost the blood trail. He called his friends and they did a grid search for 24 hours. I showed up with my dog and found it within 18 minutes. Unfortunately, coyotes had consumed most of it. I've heard multiple stories throughout the two years we've been doing this, of people that shoot a deer, lose it, shoot another one. It sickens me that I have the ability and the tools to help these people and I can't, due to a law. I urge you to change the law.

Heidi Folden, North Dakota Tracking Dogs Group (10:40) Testified in favor. We are in full support of this bill, which was born out of a passion for hunting and conservation, the passage of this bill will give hunters another tool to aid in recovery of big game animals that could potentially be lost. Out of respect for our wildlife and hunting heritage we owe it to the animals to recover what we take.

Chair Unruh: Were you the one who worked on the language?

Heidi Folden: I am. I used the surrounding states, South Dakota and Montana for the framework of the original bill.

Allie Morris, Central Dakota chapter of North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (11:50-12:35) Testified in favor, please see attachment #3.

Bill Helphrey, North Dakota Bow Hunters Association (12:55) When any of the members in this bill are brought into action, the hunt is over. It's in recovery phase; the game in this state is a natural resource. A hunter with ethics will do everything they can to recover a wounded animal, I've been through it, I lost a deer, spent 12 hours looking for it. Let's do something to not waste the resource. Help that hunter recover that game, and not waste it, it's worth it.

No opposition testimony

Jeb Williams, Wildlife Division Chief, North Dakota Game and Fish (14:15-14:45) Provided neutral testimony. To summarize, the Department is very appreciative of the education provided to both the Department and the public from this group over the last two years, we feel like we have a better understanding of the issue. As the bill is written, we are comfortable with it.

Chair Unruh: Closed the public hearing.

Senator Roers: I move a Do Pass.

Senator Piepkorn: I second.

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passes 6-0-0.

Senator Piepkorn will carry.

Date: 3/15
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2019 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1209

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

☐ Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

Recommendation: ☐ Adopt Amendment
☒ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Without Committee Recommendation
☐ As Amended ☐ Rerefer to Appropriations
☐ Place on Consent Calendar

Other Actions: ☐ Reconsider ☐ _____

Motion Made By Sen. Roers Seconded By Sen. Piepkorn

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Jessica Unruh	X		Senator Merrill Piepkorn	X	
Senator Curt Kreun	X				
Senator Donald Schaible	X				
Senator Dwight Cook	X				
Senator Jim Roers	X				

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Sen. Piepkorn

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1209: Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Sen. Unruh, Chairman)
recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING).
HB 1209 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2019 TESTIMONY

HB 1209

Mr. Chairman and committee members,

We come before you today with a conservation effort. We hope to add another tool to the tool box for North Dakota hunters pursuing big game. We are talking about using dogs to track mortally wounded big game. The ND Tracking Dog Group was formed two and a half years ago after several of us who dog train together realized this is currently illegal in North Dakota. We researched it and reached out to the NDGF two years ago. We requested a meeting with them and asked what we needed to do to legalize this. During our meeting with them, we explained what we wanted to do, and asked them what they would be comfortable with. We came to some common ground, and they informed us about the legislative process and what we would need to do. So for the last two years, we have been educating ourselves, the NDGF, and the public every chance we can. We have attended numerous NDGF Advisory Board meetings to get the word out and to educate the public. We have gained a lot of support at the local and state level, and even from out of state and international groups. We contacted Mr. Ruby and he decided to sponsor this bill after we explained ourselves and informed him of all the work we have done, as well as how much we have worked with the NDGF on this.

Now for the why: There are times when a hunter may make a less than ideal shot. There are various reasons for this, but the result is the same: Very little blood or signs of a hit to follow. Even with well-placed shots there can be little evidence left that a hunter can see to follow. This is where using a dog to track comes into play. Dogs use their noses to follow the scent of the mortally wounded animal, whether it's blood or body scent. Dogs have been used for this purpose for hundreds of years. Currently, there are 36 states where this is fully legal, and two states that are conditionally legal. At least two other states have tracking dog bills in their current legislative sessions. In all the states that have legalized this, there is no documentation out there where passing a tracking bill has caused issues for the states' wildlife enforcement agencies. United Blood Trackers (unitedbloodtrackers.org) is an international organization that has an extensive website with a plethora of information, including all the states that are legal, as well as links to the regulations for each state.

How we have written this bill makes it very difficult for someone to get away with doing this illegally. This bill does not violate the rules of fair chase as evidenced by all the support it has from hunters and conservationists. It does not aid in the pursuit or hunt of big game how we have written it, it only helps in the recovery. It's another resource hunters would have to utilize in their efforts to recover their animal.

We hope in our short time together we have shown you our reasoning and efforts over the last two and a half years, as well as the support this bill has. We have worked with the NDGF on this, and we feel we have had a very good working relationship with them. By passing this bill, you will help aid in the conservation of big game in North Dakota.

Additional Blood Tracking Notes- ND Tracking Dog Group

Idea originated amongst a few of us dog owners/trainers during the summer of 2016.

This is a conservation effort. Hopefully less shot and lost game out there. Elderly, youth, and newer hunters may gain from this. Even experienced hunters could benefit from this.

We met with the G&F in Dec. of 2016. Jeb Williams- Wildlife Division Chief, Casey Anderson- Wildlife Division Asst. Chief, and Robert Timian- Chief Game Warden. They were engaged in the conversation, and gave us positive ideas and let us know things they had issues with. We worked well together throughout the meeting. Mostly positive feelings coming out of the meeting. We have kept them in the loop for the last two years as well. Officially, the G&F has no position on this until a legislative bill comes out. (Sept.-Oct. 2018). *** Staying Neutral, but approve of the wording of the bill- Jan 2019 ***

We have attended a number of G&F Advisory Board Meetings with about 98.5% positive feedback. Only negatives were 2 landowners that didn't want dogs running all over their land. After educating the public during the meetings, we had a lot of positive feedback. Positive feedback as well from some of the G&F employees in attendance.

We have a legislator, Matt Ruby (Republican-District 40), who is sponsoring our bill. We have it in bill draft form, and waiting for the first revision to come back. He feels very positive about it, and suggested getting as much support as possible for this from as many local, state and national hunting/conservation groups as we can. *** Bill introduced and Hearing date set- Jan 24, 2019 ***

United Blood Trackers- National- Have full support & will supply information/documentation for legislation

NAVHDA Int'l- International- Approved, email sent

VDD-GNA- International- **Contacted- no response**

Pope & Young Club- International- **Contacted-** Already have a position on it that closely mirrors our proposed bill

Boone & Crockett Club- International- **Contacted, will review our request at a Board level and get back to me**

Dog Bone Hunter- National- Approved, sending letter

Midwest-North VDD- Regional- **Contacted**, pending formal approval

Game and Fish- State- **Have been working with them**

NDBA- State-Full support, will be at the hearings

NISHU- State- **Contacted, will review our request at a Board level and get back to us**

Mule Deer Foundation of ND- State- **Contacted, will be reviewed at a Board level**

Deer Search of West New York- State- Sought us out, Full support and legislative assistance- letter sent

Berthold Sportsmen Club- Local- Pending vote for approval

Hiddenwood Sportsmen Club- Local- Full Support, Letter sent

Souris Valley Bowmen- Local- **Will follow NDBA's position**

Central Dakota Chapter NAVHDA- Local- Approved, sending letter

Red River Valley NAVHDA- Local- Approved, letter sent

Roughrider Archers- Local- Contacted, approved, but no letter sent yet

Birds, Booze, and Buds Podcast- Tyler Webster- Local- Approved, will be on a podcast in Oct/Nov

Wildlife Federation—**Contacted, no response**

Legislator Ruby- Has several other legislators and senators on board, and supporting this bill

Any Other Suggestions???

36 states currently allow it. Pennsylvania just legalized it after an 18 year battle. See United Blood Trackers for further info.

www.unitedbloodtrackers.org

Any dog that will take a blood track may be used. Most dogs will need training.

Not every animal will be recovered. Lots of Factors to consider. Time of day, shot angle and placement, reliability of witness account(s), weather conditions, time since shot was made, how much the track has been messed with (human tracking attempts, ground disturbances), other animal factors (herd or single animal, cattle pastures, coyote packs, etc...), and difficulty of the terrain.

Trackers are all volunteers, may not always be available. Trying to come up with a pamphlet. Once legalized, we would be added to UBT's website with all State law info as well as trackers available that want their info out there.

Explain all info in the proposed bill.

WHICH STATES ALLOW TRACKING WOUNDED DEER WITH DOGS? 30 States allow tracking wounded game with dogs, with various regulations (on lead or off lead, handler or tracker may or may not carry a weapon, etc.) Five additional States allow tracking in some area of the State or allow tracking under certain circumstances. There are 15 States that prohibit the use of tracking dogs for recovering wounded deer.

Tracking allowed:

Alabama
Alaska
Arkansas
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Michigan
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
New Hampshire
New York
North Carolina
Ohio
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Wisconsin

Tracking allowed in some areas or under certain circumstances:

California (restrictions vary across State)
Delaware (up to game wardens in each area)
New Jersey (trackers must be listed on a special permit)
New Mexico (varies by local jurisdictions)
Texas (allowed in most of State except some Eastern counties)

Not allowed:

Arizona
Colorado
Connecticut
Iowa* efforts to allow use of dogs underway
Massachusetts
Minnesota
Nevada
North Dakota
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania* efforts to allow use of dogs underway
Rhode Island
Washington
West Virginia
Wyoming

HISTORY OF TRACKING WOUNDED DEER WITH DOGS IN THE UNITED STATES: Blood tracking dogs as they are typically called, even though they don't need blood present to follow the trail of a wounded animal, have always been legal for use in many of the southern states. However around the beginning of the 20th century most of the rest of the United States outlawed the use of dogs in any way for deer hunting. This coincided with those states formalizing their game laws as state game agencies began regulating hunting activities. Over hunting of whitetail deer

by market hunters using dogs to actually hunt, not just recover deer, is often cited as the cause of the ban.

The use of blood tracking dogs stayed illegal in all but a few southern states for the next 80 years or so until a movement for their use got started in New York in 1976. Once New York legalized the use of leashed tracking dogs for wounded deer recovery in 1985, six other states followed suit over the next few years but then things stayed quiet until about 2004. In the last ten years 20 more states, most recently Kansas (August 2014), have changed their laws and regulations to allow leashed tracking dogs to be used in big game recovery. As of the fall of 2014, there are 35 states where a hunter now has this valuable resource.

SO WHAT'S WRONG IN THE 15 NON-LEGAL STATES? WHAT'S HOLDING UP LEGALIZATION?

Why are some deer, bear, and other big game animals that could easily be recovered with the use of a leashed dog going to waste in states like Minnesota? There are many reasons for sure, but the 2 major impediments to legalization in most states seem to be lack of awareness and politics.

LACK OF AWARENESS is easily overcome. Here are the most common misconceptions about the use of leashed tracking dogs and their simple clarification.

Misconception 1. The use of leashed tracking dogs might lead to the illegal hunting of deer with dogs.

Clarification – Note that the word “leashed” is part of the description of how dogs may be used. Dogs that are used for hunting deer are unleashed and running free. None of the 27 states that have legalized the use of leashed tracking dogs in recent years have gone on to later legalize hunting deer off leash with dogs, nor have they experienced a problem with illegal hunting of deer with a dog under the guise of tracking a wounded deer.

Misconception 2. The dogs will disturb other hunters.

Clarification - How disturbing is it to have a single dog on a leash walking through the forest with a dog handler and a hunter walking single file right behind him as he follows the footsteps the deer took earlier? Compare that to a single hunter or perhaps the hunter and 4 or 5 buddies grid searching the forest or field for hours when the blood trail disappears. Leashed tracking dogs almost never bark on the trail and the rare ones that do may only bark when they find the quarry at the end of the trail. The use of a leashed dog to recover game does not give the hunter or tracker permission to trespass; land owner permission still must be secured.

Misconception 3. There might be throngs of handlers using untrained dogs in the field.

Clarification - This has not ever been a problem in any state. Actually, the opposite is true. During the height of deer season trackers are the busiest and some hunters can't be helped due to the lack of enough dog/handler teams to go around. The use of leashed tracking dogs is self-limiting in regards to untrained dogs and quite frankly poorly skilled handlers as well. Following a dog around on a leash through thick and thin and over hill and dale gets pretty uncomfortable pretty quick if the dog is not doing a good job and you are not finding anything. These trackers

quickly quit or get better training for themselves and their dogs. Hunters in a geographic area also figure out pretty quickly who are the capable teams and only call on the handlers with a successful reputation.

Misconception 4 - The dogs will chase healthy deer.

Clarification - First of all the dogs are on a leash so it is impossible for them to actually "chase" a deer unless the dog's handler is a world class cross country athlete. Putting that aside, much like the clarification for number 3 above, tracking the wrong healthy deer by mistake is self-limiting. The dogs are trained to follow the track of only the specific wounded deer they are originally put on. There is no reward at the end for the handler or dog if a healthy deer is followed. A dog that is not good at staying on the correct deer is no fun for the dog's handler and quickly is left at home for a dog that is better.

Misconception 5. The availability of tracking dogs will increase the amount of unethical shots hunters will take.

Clarification – Unethical hunters are taking those marginal shots right now and hoping for the best. Dogs are not going to change that. A hunter takes ethical shots or he doesn't. Andy Bensing, President of United Blood Trackers, states, "In 14 years of handling blood tracking dogs I have spoken directly to over 1,000 hunters who have called me for help in locating a wounded animal. As they describe to me what has happened, I can assure you that some of them describe what most hunters would consider an unethical shot, but I have never once gotten the impression they took the shot because they knew if it went wrong a dog could help them out." Actually, when most tracking dog handlers speak to hunters who have taken poor shots, they take the opportunity to try and educate the hunters as to why they should not have taken the shot in the first place.

Misconception 6. Blood tracking dogs are just one more new gadget to take the challenge out of hunting and make it easier.

Clarification - Tracking dogs are not anything new. The use of dogs to recover wounded big game goes back 100's of years to well before the middle ages from our traditional European hunting roots where it has always been part of the hunt. In some European countries, having a tracking dog available to assist with the search is one of the requirements to be allowed to hunt! It is only in the last 100 years, and only in some parts of the United States, where the tradition was lost. Restarting an old tradition is certainly not something new - especially when some parts of the country never stopped!

Secondly, **POLITICS** often rears its ugly head even after the common misconceptions have been addressed. Here are some typical examples of how politics can hold up legalization.

Wildlife law enforcement agencies within a state sometimes erroneously believe tracking dogs will somehow make their jobs more difficult and vigorously work in the political shadows to defeat it. Facts to the contrary are often just ignored. Interestingly, no matter how the tracking regulations in each new legalized state have been written, leashed tracking dog programs have caused no problems for hunters or Law Enforcement in those states. **There is no evidence to**

show a down side for law enforcement agencies to any leashed tracking dog program anywhere.

In some states, not all of the sportsmen's clubs who represent the hunters of the state get on board right away. They all have an agenda of items they want to accomplish. Legalization of leashed tracking dogs often starts out low on that list. They don't want to waste any political "chips" they might have on the issue.

Then there is the State government politics. In the luckier states, only regulations directly controlled by the wildlife management agencies need to be changed. In those scenarios it typically only takes the convincing of a few key individuals to get the regulations changed but even here sometimes intradepartmental political conflicts can arise.

It is hard enough to change a bureaucratic regulation within a state but when an actual state law has to be changed, that process can get particularly difficult.

Luckily hunters in many states have been able to overcome the above challenges and get leashed tracking dogs legalized in their state. These hunters have the obvious benefit of an additional tool to recover their game but more importantly they are demonstrating to the non-hunting public that hunters take all ethical means possible to retrieve game that has been shot. In today's society our hunting traditions are often under attack. Anything we can do to put a more positive light on hunting to the general public is a plus for the survival of our hunting heritage. Leashed tracking dogs can only help to strengthen the public's attitude in a very positive way.

WHAT TYPES OF DOGS ARE USED?: The New York Deer Search project began with one German Wirehaired Dachshund and Dachshunds from European bloodlines have remained the predominate dog used. Other breeds used successfully have been Drahthaars, Labrador and Golden Retrievers, Southern Cur breeds, Beagles, Basset Hounds, Texas Blue Lacys and Bloodhounds. Whether you use a large dog like a Bloodhound or a small dog like a Dachshund is a matter of personal preference. What is essential is a dog with a good nose, intelligence and a desire to please the handler. The dogs must learn to track scent lines of wounded deer, which are a day or more old, and they must ignore the fresher scent of healthy deer which have recently passed.

ABOUT UNITED BLOOD TRACKERS: United Blood Trackers is dedicated to promoting resource conservation through the use of trained tracking dogs in the ethical recovery of big game. We support recovery efforts afield, the education of hunters, the training and testing of dog handlers and their dogs, and legislative efforts to promote blood tracking.

HOW WE FULFILL OUR MISSION: Making hunters and future handlers aware of how a good tracking dog can reduce the loss of big game.

- Providing support to handlers training their dogs.
- Encouraging our members to assist hunters with lost game recovery afield. UBT's

website at www.unitedbloodtrackers.org has a **"Find A Tracker"** resource to connect hunters and tracking teams.

- Sharing information and advice with those who seek to establish the legal and ethical use of tracking dogs in their own states.
- Sponsoring testing opportunities for those who would like to document the capabilities of their dogs.
- Organizing blood tracking workshops as a means of promoting excellence and encouraging fellowship among members.

WHEN WAS UBT FOUNDED? United Blood Trackers was incorporated in 2005 by founding members John and Jolanta Jeanneney (NY), Larry Gohlke (WI), Cheri Faust (WI), Ken Parker (GA), Andy Bensing (PA), Susanne Hamilton (ME) and David Johnson (IL).

HOW MANY MEMBERS DOES UBT HAVE? United Blood Trackers has over 250 members in the United States and Canada.

Link to blog post opposing the use of dogs in Minnesota:

<http://www.sportsmansblog.com/2009/02/08/minnesota-considers-allowing-dogs-to-recover-shot-big-game/>

Link to an article in response to the above blog post by Jim Braaten:

<http://www.simplyoutdoors.net/2009/02/17/dogs-a-blood-trailing-hunters-best-friend/>

Another article in response to Jim Braaten's blog post:

<http://www.skinnymoose.com/hogblog/2009/02/17/using-tracking-dogs-to-recover-game/>

Link to article supporting the use of dogs in Minnesota:

<http://www.fieldandstream.com/blogs/whitetail-365/2013/10/finding-lost-deer-it%E2%80%99s-time-tracking-dogs-go-national>

David Trahan <davidt@onpointkennel.com>

Thu 1/24/2019, 8:01 AM

You;

Alli Morris;

Heidi Miller;

andydoak@hotmail.com;

Sean Timmens;

rhett hall;

Marilyn_vetter@yahoo.com ;

Marilyn Vetter;

Bob Hauser

□

Hi Jason

Please read this to your legislators.

Good morning Mr. Chairman and committee members I am here on behalf of the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association.

I would like to read a statement from the board of directors.

The North American Versatile Hunting dog Association is the largest hunting dog group in this country. With close to 8000 members our mission statement is the Foster good game management and well-trained dogs. We are in full support of this piece of legislative work. Just like in other states throughout the US this type of activity to recover game is permitted. European countries have been doing this for many years. We see this as a good game management tool for wildlife.

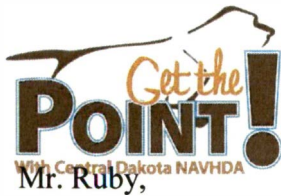
We hope the committee will see that this is good game management.

Thank you for your time.

David A Trahan

President NAVHDA

Sent from my Verizon 4G LTE Droid



Central Dakota NAVHDA



HB 1209

1.24.19

Attachment 3

We at the Midwest North Chapter of VDD-GNA would like to express our support of HB 1209. The ND Tracking Dog Group has spent considerable time on this matter, and have put together a reasonable bill. They have also worked with their state wildlife agency on this successfully.

This conservation effort will undoubtedly help the hunters of North Dakota have every chance to find a lost big game animal. The MWN VDD-GNA believes in game conservation and the use of leashed dogs to track and recover wounded big game.

Please pass on our support of this bill to any and all committees that will be hearing it.

Best Regards,

Ned Sorley, Chairman

Midwest North Chapter of VDD-GNA

nedsorley@frontiernet.net

Darrell Belisle <bigbucks@westriv.com>

Wed 12/19/2018, 8:48 AM

You;

bowhuntnd@gmail.com;

bryan.triebold@live.com;

audubonarchery@gmail.com;

helpfrey@bis.midco.net;

kaarndt@live.com;

mingman@steffes.com;

lh_equine@msn.com

+ 13 others

□

Jason,

The NDBA will be in line with the G&F position on your bill. We feel the opportunity to increase recovery is beneficial to Bowhunters. We also appreciate all the work you have done to satisfy those with concerns.

We will keep track of your bill and most likely be on hand to help push it along.

Thanks,

September 4, 2018

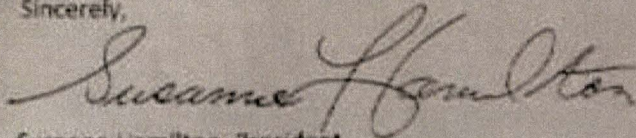
Dear Mr. Ruby,

Every hunting season deer that are shot by hunters die in North Dakota and are unable to be found by the hunter. Despite the hunter's best tracking efforts these deer go to waste. This unnecessary waste of a valuable North Dakota natural resource could be greatly reduced by a simple amendment to the hunting regulations that would allow the use of leashed tracking dogs for the recovery of wounded big game that has been legally killed or wounded by a hunter. This practice is currently legal in 35 states.

- Leashed tracking dog regulations vary by State. Regardless of degree of regulation, the use of leashed tracking dogs has been successful in all States where legalized.
- No States where leashed tracking dogs have been legalized report problems created for law enforcement.
- The use of leashed tracking dogs demonstrate to the non-hunting public that hunters are using all ethical means to recover game.
- Leashed tracking dog legislation has been supported by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for some time. HB451 from the 2013-2014 session passed unanimously.

United Blood Trackers, Inc. supports the proposed Recovery of Big Game Animal Bill 20.1-08-09 and encourages you to bring it up for vote.

Sincerely,



Susanne Hamilton, President
United Blood Trackers, Inc.

United Blood Trackers, Inc. is the preeminent organization in North America dedicated to promoting resource conservation through the use of trained tracking dogs in the ethical recovery of big game.



Central Dakota NAVHDA



HB 1209

1.24.19

Attachment b

To whom it may concern,

The Central Dakota chapter of NAVHDA, North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association, wants to give our full support for HB 1209. We believe that recovery of shot game is of the highest importance when hunting ethically. We believe this bill, allowing leashed dogs to aid in recovery, will result in less big game animals being shot and being wasted because they aren't found. This is important to conservation because a hunter that doesn't recover their shot animal will most likely harvest another. This will result in more animals taken overall. As hunters and conservationists representing western and central ND, we urge you to vote in support of this bill.

Bryan D. Guillory
President, Central Dakota NAVHDA
701-818-0277

Tyler Webster <westernwingshooter@yahoo.com>

Tue 1/22/2019, 11:01 PM

You

□

My name is Tyler Webster. Born and raised in North Dakota. I was raised an avid outdoorsman. My Grandfather raised me in the outdoors while my mom worked two jobs. My Grandfather taught me that there were certain things in hunting and fishing and trapping that were cardinal sins. If you catch and keep a fish, you clean it and take care of the meat. If you trap an animal, you take care of the fur. And if you shoot an animal you do everything.... EVERYTHING... in your power to find it and take care of the meat.

I was shocked a few months ago when I learned that the use of tracking dogs in the case of a wounded big game animal is illegal. I just couldn't believe it. As much as we try as hunters we are human and bad shots happen. I feel it is my responsibility as a hunter and the person that wounded an animal to find it as fast as possible to ensure that the meat doesn't spoil in the warmer months and isn't eaten by coyotes if left over night. I just feel it is wrong to leave a tool in the tool box if all other options have been used.

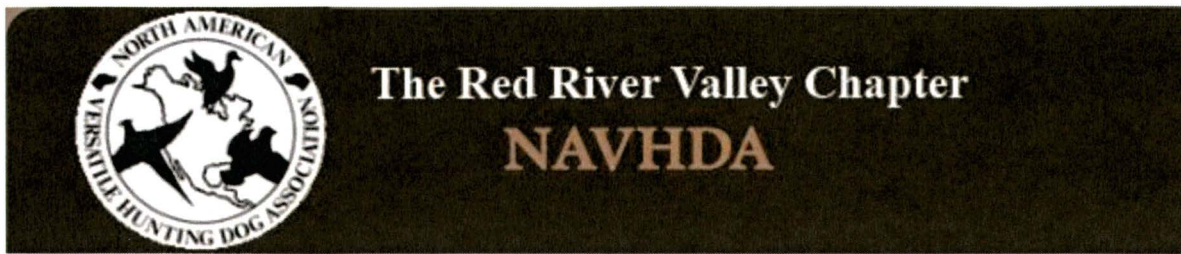
I enthusiastically want to voice my support of HB1209. I feel that it is our responsibility as hunters to empty the tool box in the effort of recovery of downed or wounded game.

Tyler Webster

North Dakota hunter

Host of The Birds, Booze, and Buds Podcast.

Sent from my iPhone



Mr. Ruby or whom it may concern,

We, the Red River Valley chapter of the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association are writing to express our **full endorsement and support of HB 1209** to adopt the use of leashed blood-tracking dogs for the recovery of big game. Many of our chapter members actively pursue big game here in North Dakota and across the country. We have first hand accounts of the success of utilizing leashed tracking dogs for big game recovery as is currently legal and practiced in 36 other states. As North Dakota hunters, our goal in the ethical pursuit of any animal is conservation. It is our duty to make every reasonable effort possible to recover a mortally wounded animal, and there is significant evidence that blood-tracking dogs can help aid hunters in making those recoveries.

The North Dakota Tracking Dog Group with guidance from United Blood Trackers have worked closely with ND Game & Fish in developing the wording for the proposed bill and to address some misconceptions and provide education about the use and history of blood-tracking dogs. When attending G&F advisory board meeting the feedback about introduction of this bill has been very positive. Our conservation effort is noted and it is understood that more successful harvests and recoveries leads to fewer animals taken overall.

In our encouragement for you bring of Recovery of Big Game Animal Bill 20.1-08-09 to vote we hope you will consider the following:

- Leashed blood-tracking dogs have been very successful in 35+ states across the country.
- In these states there has been no evidence of increased workload for G&F employees or Law Enforcement.
- By demonstrating our commitment to game recovery, we can spread our mission of conservation to the public.

Sincerely,

Dillon Grose, Director of Promotions

Red River Valley NAVHDA



The Hiddenwood Sportmens Club

Mr. Ruby or whom it may concern,

We, the Hiddenwood Sportmens Club, are writing to express our full endorsement and support of Recovery of Big Game Animal Bill 20.1-08-09 to adopt the use of leashed blood-tracking dogs for the recovery of big game. Our club is focused primarily on conservation and increasing the involvement of youth in the outdoors. We believe that this bill is a step forward in the right direction for both of our main goals.

First for conservation, this will allow for the retrieval of more mortally wounded animals that would otherwise be unrecoverable. This will positively change the overall number of animals taken allowing for better conservation practices in the future. Currently there are over 35 states that already allow the use of recovery dogs including Montana and South Dakota. These states have seen a higher percentage of recovered animals.

Second, we would be encouraging young hunters to use every ethical resource available to retrieve a wounded animal and express the importance of what each animal life means for the current and future ecosystems that they are involved in. This also is more likely to keep youth involved in outdoor activities by allowing a better chance to recover an animal leaving a positive experience instead of them losing one of the first animals they hunt leaving a negative situation.

The North Dakota Tracking Dog Group has worked with the ND Game and Fish developing an agreed upon wording that would allow for tracking dogs to become an excellent resource in the recovery of big game animals while still retaining the pursuit and fair chase elements of section 20.1-05-04 of the North Dakota Century Code. We have found positive feedback in our area when we have expressed the ideas at our meetings as well.

Sincerely,

Amanda Hauf, President

Hiddenwood Sportsmens Club



House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Information on HB 1209

North Dakota Game and Fish Department
Jeb Williams, Wildlife Division Chief
January 24th, 2019

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Jeb Williams and I am the Wildlife Division Chief with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. I am providing information to the committee on HB 1209.

- In the fall of 2016 the Department was first contacted about this issue and a dialogue began. Due to the passionate big game hunting culture in North Dakota, which currently does not include the use of dogs for any purpose, the Department recommended the group first educate the sporting public about their proposal. The group responded by attending all of our public advisory board meetings over the last two years which provided good information and education on the issue and provided the Department with some feedback as to the comfort level of the public. Much of this information was used to create the proposed legislation based on feedback from the sporting public at these meetings.
- South Dakota has a similar law and through personal communication with my counterpart with the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, they have not had any issues that has caused them concern.
- In summary, everyone can agree that if a method exists to improve the recovery of potentially lost and wasted big game animals, that is a good thing. The Department is comfortable with HB 1209 in its current form.

Bob Hauser <bobhauser1@gmail.com>

Mon 10/1/2018, 2:00 PM

You;

Heidi Miller;

Marilyn_vetter@yahoo.com;

NAOFFICE@NAVHDA.org;

Sean Timmens;

andydoak@hotmail.com;

davidt@onpointkennel.com

Jason,

On behalf of the NAVHDA Executive Council, I wish to express agreement with and support for your efforts to legalize the use of using leashed dogs for tracking mortally wounded big game. The North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association is the largest sporting dog organization, with over 7,000 members, focused on the versatile hunting dog. A primary goal of NAVHDA is to "prevent cruelty to animals by the use of properly trained hunting dogs". The use of dogs for tracking as you propose is unambiguously consistent with this goal.

Thank you for your efforts with this, and we wish you the best.

Regards,

Robert Hauser

Vice President

NAVHDA

On Mon, Sep 17, 2018 at 7:37 AM Jason Babinchak <ffbabs@hotmail.com> wrote:

Hello All,

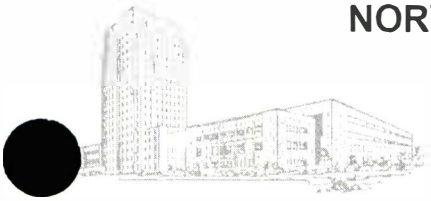
I hope the Invitational went well this last weekend! This is Jason Babinchak in North Dakota. I am a NAVHDA Int'l member, as well as a member of the Central Dakota Chapter in Bismarck, ND. I am reaching out to all of you a second time. There is a group of us in ND trying to legalize the use of leashed dogs for blood tracking mortally wounded big game in the state. We are pursuing this as a game conservation effort, and a way to use our dogs in a more versatile manner. We are calling ourselves the ND Tracking Dog Group, and would like you to consider supporting our efforts. We have been working with our state G&F Dept. through the entire process, and now have a legislator willing to sponsor our bill. The bill writing session was moved from the 18th of this month to the 25th. I spoke with our legislator yesterday, and he feels very confident in the bill we have proposed. He is asking us to get as much support from hunting and conservation groups as we can. We have several national, state and local groups supporting our efforts thus far, but would like more. I am attaching our proposed bill, along with some other documentation. Feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns. Thank you for your consideration on this matter

Regards,

Jason Babinchak

ND Tracking Dog Group

NORTH DAKOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Matthew Ruby

District 40
315 Fourth Street NW
Minot, ND 58703-3129
C: 701-509-8149
mruby@nd.gov

COMMITTEES:
Energy and Natural Resources
Human Services

15-MAR-19

Good Morning Chairman Unruh and members of the committee,

I am here to present HB 1209 which would allow the use of dogs to track a wounded big game animal. This bill was brought to me by the ND Tracking Dog Group early in the summer after their extensive community outreach and deliberation with Game and Fish thoroughly vetted this idea.

To give you the real-world application of this bill, if you shoot a deer near sundown and you can't find it, the first step would be to contact Game and Fish. You can leave a message with your information and where you are searching. During the search, the dog must remain leashed and nobody can be carrying a firearm or any archery equipment. The moment the animal is found, the dog and handler are required to leave the area and the hunter may get their weapon and continue the hunt. We want to really underline that if the animal is found alive it is no longer a recovery but a hunt once again. We believe the language we have in place blackens the line between hunting with a dog and recovering an animal with a dog. Other states that have these laws on the books have not reported any extra work for their game wardens.

The main reason I got behind this idea is because I hear too many stories of someone shooting a deer at the end of the day, not being able to find it, and shooting another one instead. I want to see less deer going to coyotes. I think it is important to make the ultimate effort to recover an injured animal and this would assist in that. The letters of support from the various groups are all about conservation and being good stewards. This is a major tool for accomplishing those ideals. Thank you for your time and consideration. I stand for questions.

Bullet points for Letter to Legislators

We are ND hunters and would like to see ND adopt legislation allowing use of blood tracking dogs for big game recovery similar to what is allowed in 36 other states.

We have been working with the game and fish department to develop wording of a proposed bill that would be amenable to them. We have had two meetings with them and numerous emails back and forth. We have heard no concerns as of yet from them with the bill we are proposing. They have been sent a copy and acknowledged they received it.

Currently 36 states allow the use of a leashed tracking dog to aid in the recovery of mortally wounded big game animals. Pennsylvania has been trying for 18 years and the bill was finally passed in 2018.

One of the major reasons we would like to see this passed is as a conservation effort. It will potentially decrease the number of additional animals harvested. Once the animal is recovered, the hunter will tag that animal, and an additional animal will not be taken due to the first one being lost. We see this as a great asset for younger, inexperienced hunters that may make a bad shot due to excitement or inexperience.

Use of tracking dogs started and was highly developed in Germany (dates?)

Misconceptions:

Use of leashed tracking dogs might lead to the illegal hunting of deer with dogs

Dogs used for hunting are unleashed and running free. None of the states that have legalized the use of LEASHED tracking dogs have gone on to later legalize HUNTING deer off leash nor have they experienced a problem with illegal hunting of deer with a dog under the guise of tracking a wounded deer

Dogs will chase healthy deer

The dogs will be on leash (generally shorter than 50 feet) so it would be impossible to actually chase a deer. The dogs are trained to follow the blood scent and track of only the wounded deer that they have been put on. There would be no reward for the dog or the handler if they didn't follow and recover the wounded deer.

The availability of tracking dogs will increase the amount of unethical shots hunters will take.

Unethical hunters are taking marginal shots right now and hoping for the best. Dogs aren't going to change that. But what dogs can do is possibly aid in the recovery so that the hunter can learn from his/her mistake and/or will not have the opportunity to attempt to harvest another animal.

Some Stats and Studies

1. WI has 600,000 hunters out on opening deer gun season every year and in the last 16 years there has been only 1 hunter arrested for hunting with a dog.
2. SC study conducted by Richard Morton: Wanted to determine the efficacy of archery equipment in conjunction with tracking dogs. 22 experienced hunters shot 61 deer. 20 fell within sight of the archer. 40 others were recovered using a tracking dog. 60 out of 61 deer were found and the 1 that wasn't was reported to have been hit in a non-vital area. It took an average of 30 minutes to recover a deer once the dog was released and 95% were found within 4 hours.

We have personally called the G&F departments on MT, SD, NE, and MI and none of them could ever recall a scenario where dogs were used to illegally hunt big game animals.

In addition, we have attended numerous G&F advisory board meetings and have received positive feedback from the public and G&F employees about this topic. There were some of the above misconceptions, but with proper education based on facts, all of the concerned individuals left the meetings feeling better about the subject.

WHICH STATES ALLOW TRACKING WOUNDED DEER WITH DOGS? 30 States allow tracking wounded game with dogs, with various regulations (on lead or off lead, handler or tracker may or may not carry a weapon, etc.) Five additional States allow tracking in some area of the State or allow tracking under certain circumstances. There are 15 States that prohibit the use of tracking dogs for recovering wounded deer.

Tracking allowed:

Alabama
Alaska
Arkansas
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Michigan
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
New Hampshire
New York
North Carolina
Ohio
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Wisconsin

Tracking allowed in some areas or under certain circumstances:

California (restrictions vary across State)
Delaware (up to game wardens in each area)
New Jersey (trackers must be listed on a special permit)
New Mexico (varies by local jurisdictions)
Texas (allowed in most of State except some Eastern counties)

Not allowed:

Arizona
Colorado
Connecticut
Iowa* efforts to allow use of dogs underway
Massachusetts
Minnesota
Nevada
North Dakota
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania* efforts to allow use of dogs underway
Rhode Island
Washington
West Virginia
Wyoming

HISTORY OF TRACKING WOUNDED DEER WITH DOGS IN THE UNITED STATES: Blood tracking dogs as they are typically called, even though they don't need blood present to follow the trail of a wounded animal, have always been legal for use in many of the southern states. However around the beginning of the 20th century most of the rest of the United States outlawed the use of dogs in any way for deer hunting. This coincided with those states formalizing their game laws as state game agencies began regulating hunting activities. Over hunting of whitetail deer

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3.15.19
#2
pg. 4

by market hunters using dogs to actually hunt, not just recover deer, is often cited as the cause of the ban.

The use of blood tracking dogs stayed illegal in all but a few southern states for the next 80 years or so until a movement for their use got started in New York in 1976. Once **New York legalized the use of leashed tracking dogs for wounded deer recovery in 1985**, six other states followed suit over the next few years but then things stayed quiet until about 2004. **In the last ten years 20 more states, most recently Kansas (August 2014), have changed their laws and regulations to allow leashed tracking dogs to be used in big game recovery.** As of the fall of 2014, there are 35 states where a hunter now has this valuable resource.

SO WHAT'S WRONG IN THE 15 NON-LEGAL STATES? WHAT'S HOLDING UP LEGALIZATION?

Why are some deer, bear, and other big game animals that could easily be recovered with the use of a leashed dog going to waste in states like Minnesota? There are many reasons for sure, but the 2 major impediments to legalization in most states seem to be **lack of awareness** and **politics**.

LACK OF AWARENESS is easily overcome. Here are the most common misconceptions about the use of leashed tracking dogs and their simple clarification.

Misconception 1. The use of leashed tracking dogs might lead to the illegal hunting of deer with dogs.

Clarification – Note that the word “leashed” is part of the description of how dogs may be used. Dogs that are used for hunting deer are unleashed and running free. None of the 27 states that have legalized the use of leashed tracking dogs in recent years have gone on to later legalize hunting deer off leash with dogs, nor have they experienced a problem with illegal hunting of deer with a dog under the guise of tracking a wounded deer.

Misconception 2. The dogs will disturb other hunters.

Clarification - How disturbing is it to have a single dog on a leash walking through the forest with a dog handler and a hunter walking single file right behind him as he follows the footsteps the deer took earlier? Compare that to a single hunter or perhaps the hunter and 4 or 5 buddies grid searching the forest or field for hours when the blood trail disappears. Leashed tracking dogs almost never bark on the trail and the rare ones that do may only bark when they find the quarry at the end of the trail. The use of a leashed dog to recover game does not give the hunter or tracker permission to trespass; land owner permission still must be secured.

Misconception 3. There might be throngs of handlers using untrained dogs in the field.

Clarification - This has not ever been a problem in any state. Actually, the opposite is true. During the height of deer season trackers are the busiest and some hunters can't be helped due to the lack of enough dog/handler teams to go around. The use of leashed tracking dogs is self-limiting in regards to untrained dogs and quite frankly poorly skilled handlers as well. Following a dog around on a leash through thick and thin and over hill and dale gets pretty uncomfortable pretty quick if the dog is not doing a good job and you are not finding anything. These trackers

quickly quit or get better training for themselves and their dogs. Hunters in a geographic area also figure out pretty quickly who are the capable teams and only call on the handlers with a successful reputation.

Misconception 4 - The dogs will chase healthy deer.

Clarification - First of all the dogs are on a leash so it is impossible for them to actually "chase" a deer unless the dog's handler is a world class cross country athlete. Putting that aside, much like the clarification for number 3 above, tracking the wrong healthy deer by mistake is self-limiting. The dogs are trained to follow the track of only the specific wounded deer they are originally put on. There is no reward at the end for the handler or dog if a healthy deer is followed. A dog that is not good at staying on the correct deer is no fun for the dog's handler and quickly is left at home for a dog that is better.

Misconception 5. The availability of tracking dogs will increase the amount of unethical shots hunters will take.

Clarification – Unethical hunters are taking those marginal shots right now and hoping for the best. Dogs are not going to change that. A hunter takes ethical shots or he doesn't. Andy Bensing, President of United Blood Trackers, states, "In 14 years of handling blood tracking dogs I have spoken directly to over 1,000 hunters who have called me for help in locating a wounded animal. As they describe to me what has happened, I can assure you that some of them describe what most hunters would consider an unethical shot, but I have never once gotten the impression they took the shot because they knew if it went wrong a dog could help them out." Actually, when most tracking dog handlers speak to hunters who have taken poor shots, they take the opportunity to try and educate the hunters as to why they should not have taken the shot in the first place.

Misconception 6. Blood tracking dogs are just one more new gadget to take the challenge out of hunting and make it easier.

Clarification - Tracking dogs are not anything new. The use of dogs to recover wounded big game goes back 100's of years to well before the middle ages from our traditional European hunting roots where it has always been part of the hunt. In some European countries, having a tracking dog available to assist with the search is one of the requirements to be allowed to hunt! It is only in the last 100 years, and only in some parts of the United States, where the tradition was lost. Restarting an old tradition is certainly not something new - especially when some parts of the country never stopped!

Secondly, **POLITICS** often rears its ugly head even after the common misconceptions have been addressed. Here are some typical examples of how politics can hold up legalization.

Wildlife law enforcement agencies within a state sometimes erroneously believe tracking dogs will somehow make their jobs more difficult and vigorously work in the political shadows to defeat it. Facts to the contrary are often just ignored. Interestingly, no matter how the tracking regulations in each new legalized state have been written, leashed tracking dog programs have caused no problems for hunters or Law Enforcement in those states. **There is no evidence to**

show a down side for law enforcement agencies to any leashed tracking dog program anywhere.

In some states, not all of the sportsmen's clubs who represent the hunters of the state get on board right away. They all have an agenda of items they want to accomplish. Legalization of leashed tracking dogs often starts out low on that list. They don't want to waste any political "chips" they might have on the issue.

Then there is the State government politics. In the luckier states, only regulations directly controlled by the wildlife management agencies need to be changed. In those scenarios it typically only takes the convincing of a few key individuals to get the regulations changed but even here sometimes intradepartmental political conflicts can arise.

It is hard enough to change a bureaucratic regulation within a state but when an actual state law has to be changed, that process can get particularly difficult.

Luckily hunters in many states have been able to overcome the above challenges and get leashed tracking dogs legalized in their state. These hunters have the obvious benefit of an additional tool to recover their game but more importantly they are demonstrating to the non-hunting public that hunters take all ethical means possible to retrieve game that has been shot. In today's society our hunting traditions are often under attack. Anything we can do to put a more positive light on hunting to the general public is a plus for the survival of our hunting heritage. Leashed tracking dogs can only help to strengthen the public's attitude in a very positive way.

WHAT TYPES OF DOGS ARE USED?: The New York Deer Search project began with one German Wirehaired Dachshund and Dachshunds from European bloodlines have remained the predominate dog used. Other breeds used successfully have been Drahthaars, Labrador and Golden Retrievers, Southern Cur breeds, Beagles, Basset Hounds, Texas Blue Lacys and Bloodhounds. Whether you use a large dog like a Bloodhound or a small dog like a Dachshund is a matter of personal preference. What is essential is a dog with a good nose, intelligence and a desire to please the handler. The dogs must learn to track scent lines of wounded deer, which are a day or more old, and they must ignore the fresher scent of healthy deer which have recently passed.

ABOUT UNITED BLOOD TRACKERS: United Blood Trackers is dedicated to promoting resource conservation through the use of trained tracking dogs in the ethical recovery of big game. We support recovery efforts afield, the education of hunters, the training and testing of dog handlers and their dogs, and legislative efforts to promote blood tracking.

HOW WE FULFILL OUR MISSION: Making hunters and future handlers aware of how a good tracking dog can reduce the loss of big game.

- Providing support to handlers training their dogs.
- Encouraging our members to assist hunters with lost game recovery afield. UBT's

website at www.unitedbloodtrackers.org has a **"Find A Tracker"** resource to connect hunters and tracking teams.

- Sharing information and advice with those who seek to establish the legal and ethical use of tracking dogs in their own states.
- Sponsoring testing opportunities for those who would like to document the capabilities of their dogs.
- Organizing blood tracking workshops as a means of promoting excellence and encouraging fellowship among members.

WHEN WAS UBT FOUNDED? United Blood Trackers was incorporated in 2005 by founding members John and Jolanta Jeanneney (NY), Larry Gohlke (WI), Cheri Faust (WI), Ken Parker (GA), Andy Bensing (PA), Susanne Hamilton (ME) and David Johnson (IL).

HOW MANY MEMBERS DOES UBT HAVE? United Blood Trackers has over 250 members in the United States and Canada.

Link to blog post opposing the use of dogs in Minnesota:

<http://www.sportsmansblog.com/2009/02/08/minnesota-considers-allowing-dogs-to-recover-shot-big-game/>

Link to an article in response to the above blog post by Jim Braaten:

<http://www.simplyoutdoors.net/2009/02/17/dogs-a-blood-trailing-hunters-best-friend/>

Another article in response to Jim Braaten's blog post:

<http://www.skinnymoose.com/hogblog/2009/02/17/using-tracking-dogs-to-recover-game/>

Link to article supporting the use of dogs in Minnesota:

<http://www.fieldandstream.com/blogs/whitetail-365/2013/10/finding-lost-deer-it%E2%80%99s-time-tracking-dogs-go-national>

The Hiddenwood Sportmens Club

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First for conservation, this will allow for the retrieval of more mortally wounded animals that would otherwise be unrecoverable. This will positively change the overall number of animals taken allowing for better conservation practices in the future. Currently there are over 35 states that already allow the use of recovery dogs including Montana and South Dakota. These states have seen a higher percentage of recovered animals.

Second, we would be encouraging young hunters to use every ethical resource available to retrieve a wounded animal and express the importance of what each animal life means for the current and future ecosystems that they are involved in. This also is more likely to keep youth involved in outdoor activities by allowing a better chance to recover an animal leaving a positive experience instead of them losing one of the first animals they hunt leaving a negative situation.

The North Dakota Tracking Dog Group has worked with the ND Game and Fish developing an agreed upon wording that would allow for tracking dogs to become an excellent resource in the recovery of big game animals while still retaining the pursuit and fair chase elements of section 20.1-05-04 of the North Dakota Century Code. We have found positive feedback in our area when we have expressed the ideas at our meetings as well.

Sincerely,

Amanda Hauf, President

Hiddenwood Sportsmens Club

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Bob Hauser <bobhauser1@gmail.com>
Mon 10/1/2018, 2:00 PM
You;
Heidi Miller;
Marilyn_vetter@yahoo.com;
NAOFFICE@NAVHDA.org;
Sean Timmens;
andydoak@hotmail.com;
davidt@onpointkennel.com

Jason,

On behalf of the NAVHDA Executive Council, I wish to express agreement with and support for your efforts to legalize the use of using leashed dogs for tracking mortally wounded big game. The North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association is the largest sporting dog organization, with over 7,000 members, focused on the versatile hunting dog. A primary goal of NAVHDA is to "prevent cruelty to animals by the use of properly trained hunting dogs". The use of dogs for tracking as you propose is unambiguously consistent with this goal.

Thank you for your efforts with this, and we wish you the best.

Regards,
Robert Hauser
Vice President
NAVHDA

On Mon, Sep 17, 2018 at 7:37 AM Jason Babinchak <ffbabs@hotmail.com> wrote:
Hello All,

I hope the Invitational went well this last weekend! This is Jason Babinchak in North Dakota. I am a NAVHDA Int'l member, as well as a member of the Central Dakota Chapter in Bismarck, ND. I am reaching out to all of you a second time. There is a group of us in ND trying to legalize the use of leashed dogs for blood tracking mortally wounded big game in the state. We are pursuing this as a game conservation effort, and a way to use our dogs in a more versatile manner. We are calling ourselves the ND Tracking Dog Group, and would like you to consider supporting our efforts. We have been working with our state G&F Dept. through the entire process, and now have a legislator willing to sponsor our bill. The bill writing session was moved from the 18th of this month to the 25th. I spoke with our legislator yesterday, and he feels very confident in the bill we have proposed. He is asking us to get as much support from hunting and conservation groups as we can. We have several national, state and local groups supporting our efforts thus far, but would like more. I am attaching our proposed bill, along with some other documentation. Feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns. Thank you for your consideration on this matter

Regards,

Jason Babinchak
ND Tracking Dog Group

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Darrell Belisle <bigbucks@westriv.com>

Wed 12/19/2018. 8:48 AM

You;

bowhuntnd@gmail.com;

bryan.triebold@live.com;

audubonarchery@gmail.com;

helphrey@bis.midco.net;

kaarndt@live.com;

mingman@steffes.com;

lh_equine@msn.com

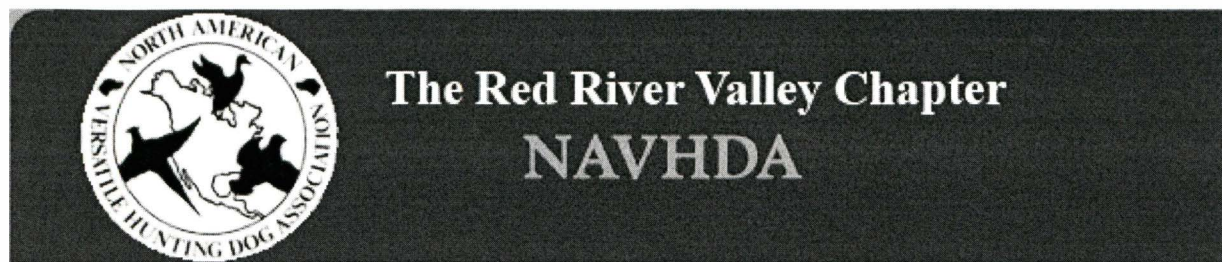
+13 others

Jason,

The NDBA will be in line with the G&F position on your bill. We feel the opportunity to increase recovery is beneficial to Bowhunters. We also appreciate all the work you have done to satisfy those with concerns.

We will keep track of your bill and most likely be on hand to help push it along.

Thanks,



Mr. Ruby or whom it may concern,

We, the Red River Valley chapter of the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association are writing to express our **full endorsement and support of Recovery of Big Game Animal Bill 20.1-08-09** to adopt the use of leashed blood-tracking dogs for the recovery of big game. Many of our chapter members actively pursue big game here in North Dakota and across the country. We have first hand accounts of the success of utilizing leashed tracking dogs for big game recovery as is currently legal and practiced in 36 other states. As North Dakota hunters, our goal in the ethical pursuit of any animal is conservation. It is our duty to make every reasonable effort possible to recover a mortally wounded animal, and there is significant evidence that blood-tracking dogs can help aid hunters in making those recoveries.

The North Dakota Tracking Dog Group with guidance from United Blood Trackers have worked closely with ND Game & Fish in developing the wording for the proposed bill and to address some misconceptions and provide education about the use and history of blood-tracking dogs. When attending G&F advisory board meeting the feedback about introduction of this bill has been very positive. Our conservation effort is noted and it is understood that more successful harvests and recoveries leads to fewer animals taken overall.

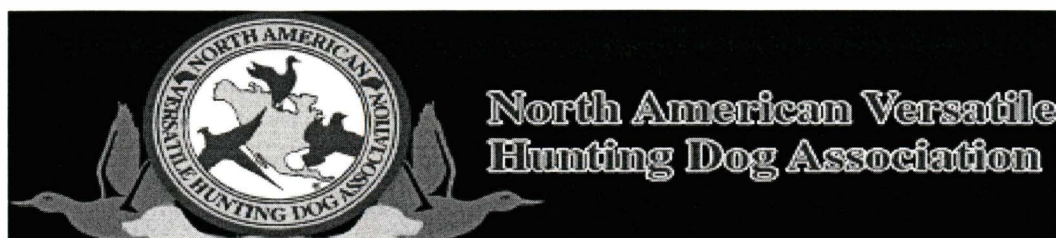
In our encouragement for you bring of Recovery of Big Game Animal Bill 20.1-08-09 to vote we hope you will consider the following:

- Leashed blood-tracking dogs have been very successful in 35+ states across the country.
- In these states there has been no evidence of increased workload for G&F employees or Law Enforcement.
- By demonstrating our commitment to game recovery, we can spread our mission of conservation to the public.

Sincerely,

Dillon Grose, Director of Promotions

Red River Valley NAVHDA



HB 1209
3.15.19
#2
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Tyler Webster <westernwingshooter@yahoo.com>

Tue 1/22/2019 11:01 PM

You

My name is Tyler Webster. Born and raised in North Dakota. I was raised an avid outdoorsman. My Grandfather raised me in the outdoors while my mom worked two jobs. My Grandfather taught me that there were certain things in hunting and fishing and trapping that were cardinal sins. If you catch and keep a fish, you clean it and take care of the meat. If you trap an animal, you take care of the fur. And if you shoot an animal you do everything.... EVERYTHING... in your power to find it and take care of the meat.

I was shocked a few months ago when I learned that the use of tracking dogs in the case of a wounded big game animal is illegal. I just couldn't believe it. As much as we try as hunters we are human and bad shots happen. I feel it is my responsibility as a hunter and the person that wounded an animal to find it as fast as possible to ensure that the meat doesn't spoil in the warmer months and isn't eaten by coyotes if left over night. I just feel it is wrong to leave a tool in the tool box if all other options have been used.

I enthusiastically want to voice my support of HB1209. I feel that it is our responsibility as hunters to empty the tool box in the effort of recovery of downed or wounded game.

Tyler Webster

North Dakota hunter

Host of The Birds, Booze, and Buds Podcast.

Sent from my iPhone

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Subject: Re: North Dakota Blood Tracking Support

Mr. Ruby,

We at the Midwest North Chapter of VDD-GNA would like to express our support of HB 1209. The ND Tracking Dog Group has spent considerable time on this matter, and have put together a reasonable bill. They have also worked with their state wildlife agency on this successfully.

This conservation effort will undoubtedly help the hunters of North Dakota have every chance to find a lost big game animal. The MWN VDD-GNA believes in game conservation and the use of leashed dogs to track and recover wounded big game.

Please pass on our support of this bill to any and all committees that will be hearing it.

Best Regards,

Ned Sorley, Chairman
Midwest North Chapter of VDD-GNA
nedsorley@frontiernet.net

HB 1209
3.15.19
#2
95.19

David Trahan <davidt@onpointkennel.com>

Thu 1/24/2019, 8:01 AM

You:

Alli Morris;

Heidi Miller;

andydoak@hotmail.com;

Sean Timmens;

rhett hall;

Marilyn_vetter@yahoo.com ;

Marilyn Vetter;

Bob Hauser

Hi Jason

Please read this to your legislators.

Good morning Mr. Chairman and committee members I am here on behalf of the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association.

I would like to read a statement from the board of directors.

The North American Versatile Hunting dog Association is the largest hunting dog group in this country. With close to 8000 members our mission statement is the Foster good game management and well-trained dogs. We are in full support of this piece of legislative work. Just like in other states throughout the US this type of activity to recover game is permitted. European countries have been doing this for many years. We see this as a good game management tool for wildlife.

We hope the committee will see that this is good game management.

Thank you for your time.

David A Trahan

President NAVHDA

Sent from my Verizon 4G LTE Droid

September 4, 2018

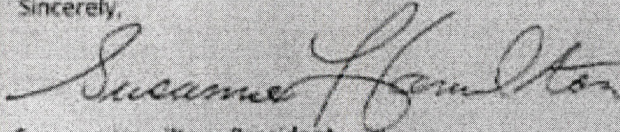
Dear Mr. Ruby,

Every hunting season deer that are shot by hunters die in North Dakota and are unable to be found by the hunter. Despite the hunter's best tracking efforts these deer go to waste. This unnecessary waste of a valuable North Dakota natural resource could be greatly reduced by a simple amendment to the hunting regulations that would allow the use of leashed tracking dogs for the recovery of wounded big game that has been legally killed or wounded by a hunter. This practice is currently legal in 35 states.

- Leashed tracking dog regulations vary by State. Regardless of degree of regulation, the use of leashed tracking dogs has been successful in all States where legalized.
- No States where leashed tracking dogs have been legalized report problems created for law enforcement.
- The use of leashed tracking dogs demonstrate to the non-hunting public that hunters are using all ethical means to recover game.
- Leashed tracking dog legislation has been supported by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for some time. HB451 from the 2013-2014 session passed unanimously.

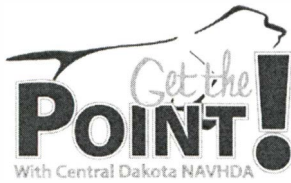
United Blood Trackers, Inc. supports the proposed Recovery of Big Game Animal Bill 20.1-08-09 and encourages you to bring it up for vote.

Sincerely,



Susanne Hamilton, President
United Blood Trackers, Inc.

United Blood Trackers, Inc. is the preeminent organization in North America dedicated to promoting resource conservation through the use of trained tracking dogs in the ethical recovery of big game.



Central Dakota NAVHDA



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To whom it may concern,

The Central Dakota chapter of NAVHDA, North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association, wants to give our full support for HB 1209. We believe that recovery of shot game is of the highest importance when hunting ethically. We believe this bill, allowing leashed dogs to aid in recovery, will result in less big game animals being shot and being wasted because they aren't found. This is important to conservation because a hunter that doesn't recover their shot animal will most likely harvest another. This will result in more animals taken overall. As hunters and conservationists representing western and central ND, we urge you to vote in support of this bill.

Bryan D. Guillory
President, Central Dakota NAVHDA
701-818-0277