



Feb. 17, 2016

RE: Depredation

My name is Tom Mosman. My family and I ranch and farm on the Clearwater breaks near Nezperce. We have been experiencing depredation for a minimum of 15 years. We have worked with the Fish and Game Department over the years. It's been pretty much a hit and miss deal.

There is a philosophical difference in how the Fish and Game perceive depredation compared to that of the landowners. It was explained to me by the Fish and Game that this is a situation of the *King's Deer* where the English kings in history owned land and would not allow the peasants to hunt and kill deer. Penalty would often be death. The sportsmen were likened to the peasants and landowners kings. This was played to make the landowner feel obliged to provide hunting regardless of the cost to provide the habitat and the loss of crops due to the wildlife depredation. All the cost was on the landowner, not the "sportsman" all the while buying tags that benefit the Fish and Game along with the money legislated to help support depredation efforts.

I don't feel like a king, nor wish to be. I pay the taxes on the land and take a loss on crops due to depredation. I also am obligated to stop my work, often during harvest season, to show the "sportsman" where my boundaries are and where the animals have been grazing. The Fish and Game are not around except to call me to fulfill this obligation. If they come, it's with a rifle in their hand.

Having the designated funds from the state in the care of Fish and Game is like having the fox guard the hen house. If depredation funds are not used to compensate the landowner, Fish and Game are allowed to keep the funds with no account to the state. My costs in time and money are not compensated. The funds not used for depredation should be returned to the state's general fund. If a program to support landowners for depredation is provided by the state, more responsibility to distribute funds need to be a priority.