

Celebrating Success in Conservation as this year's Hunting Season nears

Texans for Saving Our Hunting Heritage Supports Deer as a Public Trust Resource

As the opening of white-tailed deer hunting season draws near, Texans for Saving Our Hunting Heritage is working to raise awareness about the important models and doctrines that define hunting as we know it. A coalition of sportsmen and women who value the rich tradition of hunting in Texas, Texans for Saving Our Hunting Heritage supports the longstanding public-private partnerships that manage wildlife in our state.

The Public Trust Doctrine (PTD), with origins in Roman civil law, establishes a trustee relationship of state government to manage wildlife. This doctrine is rooted in the idea that natural resources are universally important and should be forever sustained for the benefit of future generations—hunters and non-hunters alike. The 1842 Supreme Court ruling in *Martin v. Waddell* laid the groundwork in U.S. common law, and the public trust of wildlife has held up in subsequent U.S. Court cases. Public trust of wildlife does not supersede a private landowner's right to deny access and such right encourages free market trade, adding financial value to wildlife and incentivizing stewardship of wildlife on privately owned lands.

The PTD also serves as the foundation for the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, the most successful template for wildlife conservation in the world. This model maintains that fish and wildlife belong to the citizens of the states and is defined by seven principles:

1. Wildlife is owned by the public.
2. Prohibition on commerce of dead wildlife.
3. Democracy of hunting laws.
4. Hunting is an opportunity for all and not determined by class or social status.
5. Wildlife can only be killed for a legitimate purpose.
6. Wildlife is considered an international resource.
7. Science is the proper tool for discharge of wildlife policy.

Although North America was abundant with wildlife in the early 1800s, by the turn of the century many populations were nearly decimated by out-of-control market hunting and depletion of critical habitats. The Model, as described above, is an articulation of the principles that led to the remarkable recovery of wildlife in North America and it is these same principles that continue to successfully conserve wildlife today.

To conserve the public's natural resources, great minds, such as former President Theodore Roosevelt and renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, came forth and advocated for prudent regulatory protocols. The result of their efforts was the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, better known as the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937. This Act created an 11 percent excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition for conservation and appropriated the revenue from hunting license sales to state wildlife agencies, legitimizing the role of hunters as conservationists. Because of these regulations, species that once neared depletion are thriving today.

Texans for Saving Our Hunting Heritage believes that wildlife is a public resource, to be

managed through the private investment of landowners on their properties, with regulatory oversight from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. This model has yielded healthy and thriving wildlife populations in Texas and beyond and should remain the law of the land.

About Texans for Saving

Our Hunting Heritage

Launched in 2014, Texans for Saving Our Hunting Heritage is a coalition of sportsmen and women who value the rich tradition of hunting in Texas. The coalition seeks to promote the values and tradition of sustainable, fair chase hunting to all Texans, while exposing

practices that threaten the future of the sport. Texans for Saving our Hunting Heritage is led by Executive Director Jenny Sanders, with members Ernest Angelo, Jr., Joseph B. C. Fitzsimons, Stephen J. "Tio" Kleberg, and Dr. Wallace Klussman. Hunt Real. Hunt Wild. Hunt Texas Proud.



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