

October 5, 1949

TO: H. D. Ruhl, Chief, Game Division
FROM: F. W. Stuewer, Game Biologist, Game Division
SUBJECT: Meeting at Kellogg Farm concerning goose hunter situation

I attended a meeting at the Kellogg Farm on September 27, called by Mr. McCrary who asked that someone from the Game Division attend. Also invited and in attendance were a Sgt. Moore of the Battle Creek post of the State Police, a representative of the Kalamazoo County Sheriffs office, Conservation Officer Weaver, Dr. Staebler who is in charge of the sanctuary and Bill Fisher, who is the farm manager.

The meeting was called to discuss the difficult situation which arises each year as a result of the behaviour of goose hunters, primarily along the roads bordering the sanctuary. McCrary and Staebler had acted upon your suggestion that they attempt to work out a solution to the problem with the farmers.

McCrary started out by reading a copy of a letter written by him last fall to Dean Anthony of M. S. C. As he put it, the letter was to place himself on record as to the unhappy situation which develops there each fall. His letter resulted in the meeting last winter in M. S. C. President Hannah's office which you attended.

It seems that the fairly large kill of geese does not give the sanctuary people cause for concern. The kill may reach 1,500 in some years, but with 40,000 to 60,000 passing through the area each fall, such a kill does not seem excessive to them.

Trouble develops because hundreds of hunters concentrate along roads. Even though most may be hunting legally, having secured permission from the farmers on whose lands the highway right-of-ways lie, the congestion and resulting danger to traffic, school buses, school children walking, and others is an annual headache.

Assault cases have occurred. McCrary was put into his car at the point of a gun last year. Telephone wires have been shot away several times.

The farmers are in no mood to prohibit hunting. They collect 50¢ per hunter for permission to hunt on their land and the income amounts to as much as \$1,000 to \$1,500 to one man and lesser, but substantial, sums to others.

October 5, 1949

Briefly here is what McCrary and Staebler have done. They have brought the farmers into agreement to handle their hunting privileges uniformly. They will allow hunters on their land but not ahead of a line approximately 40 rods back from the road. This will mean that road hunters will be trespassing without question. Staebler is furnishing the signs and is going to post them to establish the forward line of the area open to hunting on each farm.

With such plans made, McCrary wanted to learn more exactly what authority State Police, sheriff's men and conservation officers have in apprehending trespassers and to learn what help they could expect from them in controlling the hunters. Ill will toward the Kellogg Farm and Sanctuary people, because the attraction furnished by their geese causes the trouble, is the main reason McCrary has taken the initiative in trying to bring about more order to the hunting and among the hunters.

Sgt. Moore of the State Police and the sheriff's representative committed themselves to help to the extent possible in consideration of other demands upon them. Their help will consist mainly in patrolling the area with official cars. McCrary strongly feels that the effect of the presence of such official cars on the hunters will be considerable. Neither of these civil officers were sure of the attitude of the prosecuting attorney in handling trespass cases.

Conservation Officer Weaver pointed out his responsibilities in enforcing conservation laws but emphasized that he had no authority in apprehending trespassers.

At my suggestion McCrary and Staebler will contact the prosecutor to learn his attitude on trespass and also to hear his opinion as to whether hunters along the road will be trespassing or not, in view of permission being given by the farmers to hunt only up to a line 40 rods back from the road. Sgt. Moore had raised this latter question. This point seems to me to be the weak spot in their plan. If hunters "get away" with road hunting once or twice, their line away from the road will mean nothing.

I also suggested a ticket system of permits similar to Wm. Plan tickets, but they thought it too late to work it out for this year.

McCrary expected no special help from the Game Division, but wanted us to be fully informed about the situation and their plans to improve the situation.

I mentioned multiflora rose hedges as a possibility for helping to control hunters along the roads in the future and educational posters which might help to influence hunters. They may try both ideas in another year.

JWS*pc

Copied - Game Division
10/13/49