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## Interview with Michael Miller

Michael Davis

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Researcher's Name: Michael Davis

Event: Interview with Michael Miller

Place: Rural Life Center in Gambier, OH

MD: My name is Michael Davis and it is the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, it's about 10:00 AM here at the Rural Life Center, and I'm going to be interviewing Michael Miller, who's the Knox County Wildlife Officer. (Adjusts microphone toward Mr. Miller) Most of the questions I'll just let you answer because I'm not going to talk too much here. I know you went over most of this in your interview with Peter, but how long have you been in Knox County now?

MM: About four years.

MD: And that's as a result of the job?

MM: Yeah, I transferred out of Franklin County to move up here.

MD: So how exactly there wasn't a lot of it in the first interview about this but how exactly did you get involved in wildlife and hunting?

MM: Because my dad liked to fish so, we fished a lot growing up. He hunted a little bit. But I think influence from grandparents cause all of my family is from Germany. We moved to Cincinnati in like the late 1860's and they were involved in that type of stuff. But then the largest part of my family lived in eastern Kentucky they were coalminers, hill-billies is what they were, and they grew up hunting, fishing, trapping, that type of stuff. I think probably just growing up listening to stories from family and the things that they did growing up, and fishing, and that's just where my interests went. And then you start reading, and my interests in reading like what they got in high school, William Eckert books about Tecumseh and the settling of the wilderness, road, I can't name all those books. But *The Frontiersman*, I think there's the *Wilderness Road* and a bunch of others we had that whole series. Reading stuff like that, and I kinda gravitated toward outdoor magazines, hunting and fishing magazines and things like that. And then, you know, scouting in those days involved a lot of camping, canoeing, stuff like that. So I just kinda moved towards that. But it starts with, I think, family, for the most part, and it made me interested in it, and I was always you always heard because my dad worked in factory and he still does, and my grandparents worked in coalmines and factories trying to do something you liked, I mean you can spend your whole life working and not enjoying anything you do, but if you can do it, do what you life to do. So, I thought, being a game warden would be a good job.

MD: Do you remember any stories in particular that your family would tell?

MM: Yeah, they talked all kinda weird stories, a lot of the traditional folklore like ghost story type things. But fishing and stuff like that, a lot of stories from grandpa because they grew up, they lived in a coalmine, the whole thing, a company store and they had scrip(?), as far as the company money, and the whole thing. They owned nothing but what was given to them and so a lot of their extra, well, their food would come from whatever they killed, basically, and you

know, just stories about fishing and how they would catch fish, you know, they would do a lot of illegal things, using dynamite and explosives to kill fish, catching and killing things like deer out of season and things like that. A lot of stories like using different types of soaps to catch catfish, just odd things like that. Or using different things to catch muskrats or something like that. So they were always kinda neat stories to listen to. And some of them turned out to be true, some of them didn't turn out to be true. Like fishing for catfish with soap, use Ivory soap, but it only works because we didn't believe my grandpa, then one day we actually went and did it. Is you cut Ivory soap in little chunks and put it on a hook and you throw it out there and you catch fish. It's for catfish. But it only works when the river's like, if you're fishing in a river and it's real muddy. And that's what's kinda odd. If you go out at a normal time when it's not up and muddy, then it doesn't work. But for whatever reason, it works then. So it's kind of an odd thing. But it's just things like that and they would develop to use things like that cause you might set a trout line or something like that and you might not be able to check it for three or four days. But the soap would stay on the hook for three or four days, you know, it wouldn't wash off and it would be constantly attracting fish, I guess, because of it's scent or whatever it was. So different things like that. And a lot of folklore about snakes and it still persists today. Like copperheads smell like cucumbers and weird things like that. And you know, my grandparents talked about going to the outhouse and there'd be a rattlesnake in there and all kinds of weird things. And they had a lot of the folk talkes snakes grabbing the tail and rolling down hills and things like that. So it's just interesting. It's just a general life about how they grew up. It's hard, you know, when you're eighty years old and you grew up like that, it's kind of amazing to think about that he shoveled coal for a couple pennies a day, and that's kind of amazing to think about.

MD: Do you remember the first time you went hunting?

MM: Yeah, the first time I went was, probably, I think I was about thirteen. That was when I went and we went rabbit hunting.

MD: What were the first few things you went hunting for? Rabbits and...?

MM: Most people that go hunting start off on rabbits or squirrels or something like that, small game for the most part. Now it's kinda changed around because thirty years ago we didn't have the deer population we have today. Most people hunt deer now in the state of Ohio. So a lot of people, that's the first thing they hunt. But back then it was small game because we didn't have the habitat for large game like deer and turkeys in Ohio. So I started out on rabbits and squirrels and slowly moved up. I think that was when I was thirteen, sometime around 1983 I went deer hunting for the first time. But in 1983 in Ohio, they killed, I don't know, right around 50,000 deer. Now we're up around 150,000. So in ten years, well, a little better than ten years, the population of deer has increased dramatically, but small game is what I started out hunting.

MD: Now you teach hunter education courses, so those are people who are just starting out hunting, what's involved in a hunter education course?

MM: It covers all the bases as far as hunting rules and regulations, ethics, safety, care of game, little bit about wildlife management principles as far as how you manage wildlife populations

and why. Those are pretty much the basics. It's a basic course, is required by every state in the country for all first time hunters, they are required to take this course, cause you can't get a hunting license anywhere unless you've taken it. So, it covers all the bare bones basics. And then we also teach extra specialty courses like you have deer hunting clinics and waterfowl hunting clinics, things like that, where people can participate in those. There's a bow-hunter safety program where if you want to get into bow hunting, you can learn about tracking skills as far as for blood trails and things like that, and a little bit, it gets a lot more specific about the habits and behavior of deer, for the most part, since that's what most people bow hunt. It depends, I know people who bow hunt everything ducks, pheasants, rabbits, doesn't matter, cause they like archery. What's odd is I can remember, and it's been proven, kids remember their hunter safety class, people that go hunting, they remember that. They might not remember their instructors names but they remember the whole thing. And I can, I don't remember the names, but I can remember the class and I can remember the faces of the instructors and some of the things they talked about. You know, and the very first time I went hunting, I can still remember that day, and it's the same thing like with fishing and all that, because hunting is usually introduced to people by close friends and family, cause that's the type of activity that it is. So it has a lot to do BI mean, hunting is a great thing Bbut it has to do with being out with friends and family, cause that's when most people go, that's who they spend their time with so, but it's kinda interesting the things that stick out in people's minds.

MD: Do you have a lot of families come to courses together?

MM: Oh yeah, it's usually the dad that brings the kids. Nowadays it's a lot more single families, a lot of mothers are bringing their kids, which is good to see, because the kids are expressing interest in it and it's good to see the mothers letting them see if that's their bag, you know, are they going to enjoy it or not. And we encourage, I always encourage people to take hunter safety classes cause it's firearms safety, cause when you're hunting you're carrying guns or bows and arrows. And you get a good basic of how to safely handle firearms, and that's what drives me nuts in our society, all this talk, I'm a very anti-gun control person. I'm very firm, the second ammendment is straight how it was written, you don't need to interpret it anymore. I feel that way for the whole constitution. But there are free hunter education courses in this entire country and you gotta do is go to it, and yet people won't do it. You know, that's what's so odd, all this talk about, you know, it's just Bwell, some schools we teach kids to put condoms on and how to have safe sex but we don't want to teach them how to be safe around guns. And there's a free class that they could go to and that class is paid for by the DNRs around the country. And the instructors, most of them are volunteers, but everything is supplied. They get a nice book to take home with them to show their family. So I encourage everyone to take a hunter safety class, even if you're not around guns, because with the number of guns in this country, everyone's going to be around guns at some point in time. And whether you're going to touch a gun or not, it helps you to know that the guy next to you isn't safely handling a gun, so if he starts doing something he shouldn't do, you know either to get out of the way or yell at him or something.

MD: You mentioned a lot of moms taking kids, are there a lot of young people getting into hunting here in Knox County?

MM: Yeah, Knox County pretty much holds its own. It's based on the more classes we hold the more young people get to attend. We teach statewide but fluctuates between 23,000 and 26,000 kids per year hunter safety, hunter education, throughout the state. Knox county, it fluctuates, I don't know, 250 to 520 kids a year. It just depends on the number of classes. You know, some years we can only have time to hold three classes but other years we've had as many as ten classes in the county. But the division has also started a home study program, where you call in, they send you a packet of material, you have to complete all of that information, then you show up for just four hours. Cause state law used to mandate ten hours, but it doesn't anymore, but most instructors spend anywhere from ten to eighteen hours of class time. You take a test at the end. Now we've got it down to the home study course, the first Saturday of each month you can, here in Knox county, go to the 4H center, you can take, basically, a hands-on review of how to safely handle firearms and all the different types of actions. And it goes hands on as far as how to, well, climbing fences and ditches, shooting lanes and things like that, and then also on ammunition and how it's made and how it works and things like that and then you take a test. So that works out a lot better because the book, the information, it's designed where you have to read it all, you can't just flip through to find the answers. It's all jumbled up where you can't do that. And then it's held at the 4H center because it's central, easy for most people to get there. But kind of, so it's a good program.

MD: So do you see more people getting into hunting with deer guns? Do you see more people doing bow hunting? What's the most common thing?

MM: The trend is, well, deer hunting's popular, it's pretty much, I think it's pretty much peaked out. Cause actually hunting is kind of on a slight decline and it has been for about the last fifteen years. And there's a multitude of factors involved in that, everything from time, as far as people having time to go out and do things, the number of activities that people have to choose from now. You know, like thirty years ago kids didn't play soccer, but now every kid plays soccer. Now, there's just a lot of different things kids can do now, a lot of different things families can do, as far as activities to do, a lot more single family households, people mostly in urban environments now versus a rural setting. I think we passed that point ten or fifteen years ago in this country where most people live in an urban environment now. So just the opportunity you have to drive an hour to go hunting. So say you only have two or three hours to do something, you have to drive an hour there and an hour back to do that type of activity. And you gotta pay to do that now, you can't just go out your back door, you gotta spend the time and the effort to go and do that. Then places to go, you know, urban sprawl affects that, you have to drive so far to participate in hunting. So it does affect that. That, like I said, and the family issue. In some sense, just our culture's changed cause with the urban culture, a lot more people don't understand wildlife. I mean, we as a society get everything we get from a thirty second soundbite on TV and that's the truth. Or we might watch Nova or Nature on PBS or something or the Discovery Channel, that's what everybody learns. So we sit back in our chair and think we can go pet a lion or we sit back in our chair and think we can go the the Smokeys and feed black bears out of our cars and they're all cute and cuddly. People don't really truly learn what it's like to be outside. Everybody kinda armchair quarterbacks everything now. And you can throw the animal rights movement in there and that just has completely messed up a lot of things. And

just their ability to persuade people to not hunt, for whatever reason that they have and there's a lot of complicating factors. In Knox county the hunting population has pretty much stayed the same cause it's still a rural atmosphere in the county. A lot of families, they may not own a farm themselves, but their family does, they have a lot of opportunity to do that. There's a real difference between living in Columbus and driving an hour to go hunting versus living in Mount Vernon and driving ten minutes. Like I know people who through the course of my job, doing investigations I look through the books when you kill a deer or a turkey you have to take it to a check station, check it in. Well, I go through those forms, those receipts, look through there to look for violations, like people go out and kill a deer and then go buy their deer permit. You can't do things, you gotta buy your deer permit first and then go. Or say, you buy a deer permit and then ten minutes later you kill a deer, because on the deer permit you have to write the date and time you killed the deer. Well, if there's a ten minute period, I usually go and talk to that person, but depending on where you live at, it's entirely possible to do that. Go buy a deer tag and then in ten minutes go out and shoot a deer or a turkey. It just depends on where you live. You couldn't do that in Columbus but here you can, so it's kinda interesting.

MD: Do a lot of people go hunting on their farms?

MM: A lot, yeah, probably. I think for deer season we estimate the total number of deer permits sold is somewhere from around 325,000 to 375,000 deer permits. In general there's about 500,000 to 560,000 people who go deer hunting during that one week of deer hunting season. So you're looking at at least another third are people who hunt in their own property cause they're not required to purchase a tag, but they still have to abide by the seasons and regulations. So yeah, there's quite a few people who hunt on their own farm, and in Knox county, it's at least a third, if not closer to forty percent. And not fifty percent quite, but it's getting close.

MD: How many deer check stations are there in Knox county?

MM: Seven. I think, seven altogether.

MD: And how does a deer check station work?

MM: Basically, they're volunteer, they volunteer to be open during certain hours, during certain seasons. And you know, we give them the metal tags that they place on the deer. And they fill out a form which is the information like number of antlers, the person who killed the deer, the place and time it was killed, what it was killed with, was this their first, second, up to fifth deer in some counties, and then the sex of the deer and how large the antlers are. So just general basic information, get a count, that helps us to get a count on the exact population of deer, because you manage wildlife populations based on long term trends, but it does give you some idea of how many deer are taken out of the county. Then you add roadkills in there and other things, and you get an idea of how many deer are actually in the county. The number of deer in Ohio, the deer are managed on a per county basis and they're managed based on the number of antlered deer killed per square mile during the deer gun season. And there's some sort of mathematical formula that someone designed thirty, forty years ago to come up with

roughly how many deer are in the county. And that's what it's managed on, it's managed on, in Knox county, the goal for surveys, surveys with land owners, hunters, and then just the general public, show that people in Knox county, they want a deer population that is roughly 1.97, 1.98 deer killed per square mile during the antlered deer season. So last year, a year ago this past season, it was 1.27, so it was still down, so we made the seasons a little bit more restrictive, to get that population number to come up. Next year we're probably going to work on getting that population come down. We'll probably have really liberal seasons, cause the deer herd grows sixty percent a year, so it can bounce back really quick.

MD: So how do you change restrictions? What do you say?

MM: Every year they change the laws for deer hunting. As a governmental agency, we have law changes every year, for everything, fishing and hunting. It's a continual process of doing surveys. And wildlife is managed by public opinion, it's not managed based on biology. I mean, you use those factors, the biology of the animal and habitat to manage population, but in Ohio, with most populations of wildlife we're way, way below carrying capacity. Ohio can support a little over a million deer in the state, but the ideal population that people are willing to put up with is somewhere between 420,00 and 550,000 deer. And that's it, cause just with the number of people we have, it's just too much. I returned a call to a lady this morning that has thirty deer in her barley field. And you know, this time of year with the prolonged snow cover and cold weather, deer behave a little differently than they normally would. They're mostly browsers, they're like goats. But you see, Ohio's habitat has matured, thirty years ago we were twelve or thirteen percent forested, now we're around thirty, thirty-three percent forested. That habitat has matured into large stands of trees. Well, deer do eat nuts and acorns and things like that, but their primary source of food is boughs, the twigs and buds of trees. Well, that is out of reach of most deer except in areas where you have clear cuts and timbering, so the next thing is agricultural production, the corn, beans, barley, wheat, soybeans, all that stuff, that's what they eat. So that causes, well, if you have too many deer then the farmers get upset. If you have too many deer, the people are on the roads hitting them. So it's managed all by public opinion and that's every bit of it. And public opinion changes from day to day, hour to hour. And that's how we manage most wildlife populations, all on public opinion. And the deer, that's how we manage them.

MD: What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of bowhunting versus deer gun hunting?

MM: Bow hunting, it's harder, it takes a lot more practice, and a lot more time out in the field hunting. Because you're dealing with a short range type of hunting equipment, you know, bow and arrow, the effective range. Say, you can kill a deer at fifty yards or sixty yards, it's not ethical to be shooting that far, but you can kill a deer that far, because it is so hard to shoot well that far, to be able to hit what you're shooting at. You have to use a tremendous amount of practice. Then you've got other factors like small twigs or limbs, just a wind gust or breeze, will affect the flight of an arrow. So a lot of factors comes into play there. But you're looking at basically a twenty yard instrument for actually most people to accurately shoot and kill deer the way they should as far as, well, not really humanely, but the right way to do it, is twenty

yards or less. And that requires a lot of skill to get that close to deer. So that takes a lot of practice. Now the indians shoot, now they were even closer, with the type of equipment they used. They weren't shooting at thirty yards with their bows, and half the time they just ran them into a river and clubbed them to death anyway or shot them out of canoes. But now you can't cut it that way. Only cause of law you can't hunt wildlife over fire. You know, so you can't set fire to something, use that to drive animals to you. You're not allowed to shoot deer if they're in the river swimming, if they're in the lake swimming. And a lot of those laws, actually, they vary from state to state, are from the methods people used to kill things years ago because it was so effective. And so you can't do those things. But you got to be really close, a lot of practice, you have to practice a lot to be good. Most people that bow hunt take it very seriously, they practice a lot year round. I know guys that practice everyday year round. Guys that really seriously bowhunt, they're out scouting right now for deer to hunt next fall and that, they do it every day. Every single day they get out and drive around, they take their video cameras and videotape deer, and they go around and get permission for farms to hunt on, and they practice every day. And that's what they do. Now there are some people with a stroke of luck, they say "Oh I'm going to buy a bow and go out bow hunting," they go out, sit down, the deer walks up to them, and they shoot it. That doesn't happen very often. Takes a lot of time to find where deer are moving through, cause their habits change, based on the seasons as far as their food, what they're eating at the time of the year, and that can change. So their travel lanes, where they're moving here and there. Takes a lot of practice, you have to be close, that's why guys climb up in trees, to help get their scent above the ground and things like that. And the last fifteen years, hunter technology, of course, has tried to assist people, cause Americans are gimmick orientated, so they have all these scents, so guys will spend eight or ten dollars for a one ounce bottle of deer pee, you know, cause it's supposed to help them get closer to deer. They buy all these skunk scents and acorn scent, they buy now what they call scent-lock suits. Basically what they are is military chemical warfare suits because they're charcoal lined to absorb all your odor and not allow that odor to escape. The archery equipment has improved drastically as far as making it easier for people to shoot and to shoot more accurately. And that's helped a lot. So then you have a movement of guys progress. You see, there are different stages in hunting. And like archery hunting, you know, you might start out hunting with a cross bow or a compound bow, and maybe using a release. And then eventually you get good at what you're doing, so you make it a greater challenge, so you switch to a recur or just a long bow. And you know, you might make your own cedar shafter arrows and you put your own feathers on your arrows, and a lot of guys move to that because it makes it harder. So now you're talking maybe you have to be ten yards away and you have to practice a lot more because you're not using sights to help you. So it takes a lot of time and effort for bow hunting. It really does. And gun season, you know, it still takes some effort, but during deer gun season there are so many people out walking around the woods, the deer just kinda running all over the place looking for a safe place to lie down in and just to get away from people. And you have people moving around. You still have to sight your guns in and practice and be proficient, but that doesn't require the time it does with archery equipment. And of course, small twigs or gusts of wind, they do affect deer slugs and that, but not as much as it would affect an arrow. So it just varies

MD: Are more people bow hunting in Knox county, do you think?



MM: Yeah, it's a growing trend, it still is. At the River's Edge, most depend on archery and bow hunters to keep going. They do, but it's still a growing sport.

MD: What are some of the biggest misconceptions about hunting? What do you think the public in general, and also the animal rights groups, just don't understand?

MM: They don't understand what it's actually like to go hunting as far as how hard it is, what a challenge it is, and why people do it. Cause it's many factors, you can't say it's just cause they like to kill something, that's just not it. There's 500,000 to 550,000 people go deer hunting, that many people are out in the woods on the opening day of deer hunting season. There's only, this past year, the estimated deer herd population was 450,000 deer. If hunting was as easy as PETA and HHUS would lead you to believe, there would be no deer left, plain and simple. And it's not just something you can go out and do, and it's not for everyone. But it's not easy like they make it seem to be, it does require a lot of time and effort for people to do that. The other misconception is, you know, the first word everyone says is **A**cruel and inhumane. I just had a call, I called a lady this morning because some five coyotes pulled down a deer in her backyard and ate it while it was alive. And that's what happens, that's life. So in my mind, what is more humane? To shoot a deer and have it die in three or four seconds or to be pulled down and eaten alive? The definition of humane is up to a certain individual in his opinion and the other thing is the animal rights movement is kind of a religion. It's kind of people who don't like what someone else is doing and they're trying to force everyone else to go along with their opinion cause they don't like something. But you know, those people live in a house that have trees, you know, somebody cut down trees to build their house, they drive cars, oil is a non-renewable resource, life is a renewable resource. I was raised that wildlife is a renewable resource. The Division of Wildlife and all state agencies manage it as a renewable resource. You know, we have some finite resources **B**oil, gas, coal, they're finite **B**it takes billions of years for that stuff to form. But as far as pollution, geez, wearing a bunch of nylon and polyester clothing causes more pollution than wearing a fur coat, and causes, it's actually harder on the environment for the production of all that than it is going out and trapping a red fox and then killing the fox and using its coat as fur, because as long as its managed properly, you're going to have that resource. There's a lot of misconceptions out there, geez, I could go on, it doesn't seem like it, it's kinda hard, the animal rights movement has greatly set back wildlife management. It's the biggest threat to wildlife in this country. People who hunt, fish, and trap pay for wildlife. The Division of Wildlife's budget **B**I think we have about \$46 million a year **B**out of that \$2 million comes from the non-hunting/fishing license dollars. It comes from hunting/fishing permit sales, the excise tax on hunting and fishing equipment. That's what pays for wildlife in this country and in Ohio. The rest, I think about \$500,000 a year comes from cardinal license plates here in Ohio and maybe \$300,000 from the income tax check off. (Coughing, explained by crushed larynx from training program). But the little bit of money comes from, I think a million dollars, the state legislature reimburses the Division of Wildlife for the free hunting and fishing license that we provide to senior citizens and certain people with disabilities, with certain disabilities. So it's a refund for that. But these groups of PETA and HHUS are the two largest. They do nothing for wildlife but lobby to stop hunting fishing, and trapping. These same groups, they're against zoos, they're against rodeos, they're against everything. Basically they want everyone to be a vegetarian. And that's your choice if you want to do that. You know, I don't play golf,

I don't care to play golf, I don't do that. There's certain types of foods I don't like to eat and that's my choice. As long as it's not hurting anybody else and it's not hurting society, it shouldn't matter. But that's not what these groups are about. HHUS spends about \$34 million a year, give or take a few million, but they don't operate a single humane society anywhere, like a dog pound, dog shelters, cat shelters. They don't assist in running those. They don't provide any money for research or wildlife populations. They don't purchase property for habitat. They don't have any programs to educate people, well, they started a program, HHUS did, about wildlife habitat programs. But they don't do anything like that. Their whole goal is to stop wildlife use period. That's their ultimate goal. And the information that they provide a lot of people is absolutely false. The easiest thing I can point out with that is last year is Issue 1, which is whether or not people should hunt mourning doves in the state of Ohio, and it was a big issue. HHUS and PETA, they paid a group from Arizona, I think it was, to come to the state of Ohio to collect signatures to get it on the ballot. Why? Cause there weren't even enough people who cared one way or the other to get it on the ballot. So they paid someone else to come here and get it on the ballot. Then they financed their entire campaign from Washington, D.C. with money, is what they did. And the information that they provided was that hunters go out and shoot mourning doves just for target practice, they don't eat those things, they're inedible, which is false. You know, a mourning dove, one dove has as much meat on it as two hot dogs and I don't know, six shrimp or something like that. (Tape stops for water break).

MD: We were talking about mourning doves.

MM: Mourning doves, so like six shrimp, couple hotdogs. They also said that mourning doves were the bird of peace, the biblical bird from the bible, which they're not. There's three hundred and sixty something, four hundred species of doves and pigeons in the world. The mourning dove is not the bird of peace, that is the turtle dove, it is in the Mideast. Those are, were three falsehoods right off the bat that they advertized, that they put on television and told everybody, this is what people, this is the facts as they called them of doves. Are all false, every one of them. And that's not right. I mean, I don't have a problem with people making up their mind about one thing or the other, but do it on factual information, don't just spread lies and rumors. And that's what they did. The other things they were hiding from people is, cause I know some of the people who were in charge of that whole issue, well, the animal rights movement with HHUS and PETA and Save The Doves is I think what they were called, but POET (Protect Our Earth's Treasures) located in Columbus, they're probably one of the more active animal rights groups in the state. Their whole agenda is no pets, zoos, rodeos, circuses, no nothing. Animals have the same rights as human beings, so they're all free-ranging, free-roaming, they take care of themselves, which is an impracticability, that's not going to happen. We have a big enough problem with feral dogs and cats in this country and I wish, it would be nice if people were responsible to deal with their problems as far as taking care of their pets. But what they do is they pick something that they feel is so small that they can win, and then they come back the next year for something else. So in other words, if they won the mourning dove issue, they would come back the next year and say we're going to do away with trapping. If they won the trapping, the next thing you know, well, they'll come back and say they'll do away with rabbit hunting or crows or groundhogs. But they never stop, cause they won't stop until they've done away with all animal use period. And that's their ultimate goal. You can

just look at the western states **B**in the state of California, they kill more mountain lions now that are causing damage and creating a nuisance than what they ever did during the legal hunting season. Now we have cougars that attack people every year in the western states **B**California, Washington, Oregon, Colorado. Although they still hunt some cougars in Colorado, it's been greatly restricted, and methods of hunting cougars. But now we have cougar populations that are actually threatening endangered species of, other endangered species, like Sonora, not Sonora, there's a sub-species of big-horned sheep in California now that are threatened just because of the cougar population. They're looking at severe depletions in mule-deer populations because of cougars. In Santa Barbara, I went to a training seminar, not Santa Barbara, it's not too far from Santa Barbara, begins with an M out there, no, it's Monterrey. Monterrey, California. He lives right in the middle of town and he's had cougars in his back yard. And that's all a result of the animal rights movement shutting down cougar hunting in that state, because now it's not managed, it's not taken care of. You know, cougars eat people if cougars don't have anything else to eat. And there's a happy medium for all species of wildlife, that's just typical. But these groups are about nothing but controlling what people do because that's what they want. Because they want a certain thing that they want to do away with what other people want to deal with. It's kinda odd, actually, that would make a good research paper, just truly studying the animal rights movement. I mean, the other day in the news they had some people roller-skate or ice-skate naked in New York City. You know, **A**I'd rather be dead than wear furs<sup>©</sup> or something like that. And that was PETA. But all those people drive cars and all those fancy models that run around and do topless or naked billboards for them, let's see, they wear polyester and they wear rayon and well, they don't wear silk, if you're a true animal rights person because that comes from a silkworm. But look at what goes into the production of our clothing, you know, my whole uniform is polyester and I don't know how many quarts of oil are in this, and that oil's taken from the ground and all the processing and pollution that's caused by that. People don't look at that. This building's made from trees. You know that lady that sat in that tree in California for I don't know how many weeks to save them. I mean, granted, we should save trees but actually look at our history of our culture as far as managing our resources. We've got a lot of trees in Ohio. We've done a good job **B**we've increased our timber resources from 13% to 33% over fifty years. We've done a pretty good job. Wildlife populations, for the most part, are at all time highs-----[End of tape]

(Continuing on side 2)

MM: well the biggest thing is those groups really threaten good management of our resources. We're learning now **B**and I'm not big, talk to the county forester **B**certain species of trees, like oak and hickory forest, they require clear cutting, they require fire management. Without that, you don't have that **B**they're taken over by beech maple climax forest, eventually. We have to have clear cutting, we have to have fire management. If not, we don't have those species of trees. Those species of trees creates a greater diversity of wildlife populations. That's management. But you know, the southern Ohio Wayne national Forest, the Mohican State Forest, going to try and shut down timbering. You know, in Ohio, most clear cuts they weren't any larger than twenty or forty acres to begin with, in Ohio on public land. And they just went to the state Supreme Court again last summer to be able to do clear cutting again in the national.

These groups threaten modern wildlife management, modern timber management, and I think if you just look at the history of what's happened in our country over the last fifty years, a hundred years, I'd say people, once we learned how to manage resources, we've done a pretty good job of it. You know there was a point in our history when we didn't know anything, we thought it was endless, I think we've matured and realize things are limited. But with good management it's fine, it's just like managing your checkbook at home. You don't manage your money, you're going to be broke, you're not going to have anything. If we don't manage our resources, we won't have anything. But the biggest thing is these groups don't spend any money for doing any kind of research with anything. They're not, as I mentioned before, they're not purchasing property for endangered species for habitat, they're not contributing any funds for doing research on the biology or life history of anything. Maybe like in Ohio, we classify the Lake Erie water snake, and Eastern Plains Garter Snake, Massauga, Timber Rattlesnake, Copper Belly Water snake or something like that, are endangered species. POET and PETA aren't giving us any money to study the life history of these species for reintroduction efforts, they're actually working against us to not do it. You know, we're working with the Columbus Zoo, the Cleveland Metroparks, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the Toledo Zoo, the Cincinnati Zoo, we work with all these other organizations to reintroduce endangered species in the state of Ohio, and the animal rights groups fights us on that. And they're actually against the whole purpose of the Columbus Zoo. And that's what's going to hurt wildlife in the future, because the misinformation that's spread out there, it hinders things is what it does. And it's just like for the school here, all the students should have to go to school, but you don't have to pay tuition. How's the school going to be here? There's no way. It's like the Division of Wildlife Management managing wildlife resources. Everybody stops hunting and fishing, there's no money to manage the agency, so you don't have the agency, so therefore you don't have any management of natural resources. So we go back to what it was 200 years ago with no seasons or regulations on anything and then there's nothing left. So I mean, you have to look at the outcome of what they actually want and that's a scary thought in my mind. To go back to what it was 250 years ago where we don't have management of timber resources, wildlife resources, we have no environmental quality, as far as water quality, all that. And it was the people who hunted, and fished, and trapped that were the very first people to say, "We need to do something, because we don't have any deer to go hunt anymore." And those are the first people who. I mean Teddy Roosevelt is probably one of the greatest conservationists we have in the time. John Muir hunted a little bit. Audubon, geez, we always have a standing joke, "Let's just go out and Audubon things." He didn't paint those portraits of birds while they were flying around in the air. He went out and shot them and then he laid them down just to paint them. And a lot of people they use as quotes, that's what they did, they hunted, they fished. And that is what noticed our wildlife populations in the past. Also if you look at the species of wildlife that have really had the best comebacks from near extinction. Beaver, wood ducks would be good ones, Canada geese were almost extinct at one time in our country, very few white tailed deer, antelope, bison, a lot of those things. They were hunted, they were used for food and clothing, for the most part, and well shelter, buffalo hides, elk hides, stuff like that to make wigwams and teepees and stuff. But those species, those were the first to be protected, those were the first to be brought into that fold of having seasons and regulations to bring their populations back, because human beings had a use for them. It wasn't until the late 60's and 70's that people even thought anything about birds of prey. In our society today, most people

don't want to protect reptiles and amphibians, they hate snakes, you get a hole and chop them up, you know, that's what you do with snakes. The Division of Wildlife, we now have regulations governing the taking and possession of all reptiles and amphibians in the state of Ohio. That was done without any help from any of these organizations. They're hindrances, they're spreading misinformation and people need to realize what they're about. They're about basically attacking, well they're about of no use at all. That's their ultimate goal. And they will take one thing at a time and they will never stop. You know, they stand in fish costumes to protest fishing. But let me stress again, it's your personal choice whether you want to hunt or not. It doesn't make any difference to me one way or the other. If you want to that's fine, if you don't want to that's fine. I don't care, I mean, it's up to you to decide. And that's all there is to it. And look at Michigan, oh my. Michigan is in the top three states in licensed hunters and fishermen, it's in the top one or two, I think. It's way up there. They have tremendous, well, their forestry museum, at Hartwick Pines, I stopped by there that's a fantastic museum, but could you imagine Michigan not having a timber industry? And I think I read something actually about Michigan has, oh my, what was that thing? The amount of timber Michigan has now, where it was a hundred years ago, but it's managed. I don't know, there's a lot of information out there and people need to realize what these groups are about. And they're not really what they're all about. I mean, it's easier to send a postcard of a rabbit that's had a graze (sp.?) test done on it than send me five dollars. I mean, they pull heart strings to get money, but out of \$34 million per year, they don't contribute anything to anybody for endangered species research or that's what's so scary. Their whole goal is to do away with animals, that's what people don't realize. So I can just kind of babble about stuff without specific instances, but another example would be some falsehoods. We legalized snaring in the state of Ohio, four years ago was it, the use of snares for trapping. Why? Because the coyote population was increased, we have populations of beaver in the state where they've reached numbers that they're actually becoming a nuisance. The easiest and most efficient way to catch those animals are to use snares, but we have regulations governing the types of snares you can use. Actually, in the trapper education course, we had a whole separate thing about how to use snares. You know, the rumors were out there dogs and cats are all going to be killed swinging from trees, small children are going to be swinging from trees, all kinds of stuff. It hasn't happened. We've been using snares in the state of Ohio for four years and we haven't had any of those problems and we won't have any of those problems, because those things just don't happen with snares. Leghole traps, leghole traps are highly regulated things for trapping trapping has a tremendous number of regulations. You know, some simple ones are you can only use certain size traps on land, you have to check them every twenty-four hours, your name and address have to attached to them, plus you have seasons that govern when you can trap and things like that. I trapped a lot growing up I trapped peoples cats and dogs in traps that shouldn't have gotten there most of the time they have to be species specific, but every now and then dogs are just going to roll in stuff, cats are going to do the same thing. You know what? I never had a problem. You just let the cat out. Now if you don't check your trap for four days, that can cause a problem, cause it's just how traps are designed what they conjure up are the old traps that people used two hundred years ago with big teeth on them, and the traps were too big. So in other words, you don't use a bear trap to catch a muskrat, cause you'll do damage to the muskrat. You know when you trap animals, you're trapping them for the fur. If you cause damage to the animal with the fur, then you've made the fur less valuable to sell. So

traps are not designed to cause damage. But if you don't follow the rules and regulations and you don't come back til three or four days later, then that can cause problems. As long as you abide by the regulations, then it can cause problems. In fifteen years of hunting and trapping, I've let plenty of cats and dogs out of traps with no problems whatsoever. Then again, if you don't do things right, it can cause problems. It's like driving down the road, drive left of center, and the front end of another car comes, then that's going to cause a problem. As long as you stay in your lane of traffic, you're fine. There's just a lot of information, and it's getting tough for people **BA** who do I believe and who do I ask my questions to? **©** And that's what people need to realize. You need to look at the source of your information. At the Division of Wildlife, if there's something bad, we're going to tell you there's something bad plain and simple. Cause there are certain types of traps you can't use in the state of Ohio, there's certain methods of trapping you can't use in the state of Ohio. For example, you know, in Michigan you can use 220 and 230 Connabears (sp.?) on land in some parts of Michigan cause they're very rural, you don't have to worry about cats and dogs. They're like Fisher, I think they have up there, or Martin **B** one of those two they have up there that they use those to trap because those types of traps kill instantly, but the size of those traps would kill a dog or cat instantly, so you don't use those in areas where there's a lot of dogs and cats. In Ohio, those types of traps have to be completely submerged underwater when you're trapping for beaver, cause dogs and cats don't jump in the river and swim underwater. That's why they have to be used in certain ways. So we have plenty of regulations, but there's plenty of misinformation that's generated out there. So, you just have to look at the source of information

MD: We covered most of this but, let me see how to put this. If at all, and I'm sure some, how does the Kokosing relate to hunting? Do people do a lot of hunting along the river corridor?

MM: A lot, yep, a lot of deer hunting, a lot of duck hunting, squirrel hunting, even if just floating in a canoe down the river for squirrels. Quite a bit because water—the Kokosing River is extremely high water quality, it's got a lot of species of fish that are indicators of that. Scalpons, you know, that's the first one that pops in my mind, a lot of scalpons are in the river. It's a fantastic smallmouth bass fishing stream. River corridors—wood ducks for duck production, as far as trees hollowed out, have a lot of nesting cavities. So a lot of people like ducks—wood ducks are the number two duck in a hunters bag each year, so you know, as far as ducks, geese, mallard, gadwall, wigeon, different species of ducks, wood ducks are number two that people actually kill during the hunting seasons.

MD: Is mallard number one?

MM: It's like mallard—mallard, wood ducks, Canada geese, then blue wing or green wing teal are in there. But mallards, wood ducks, and geese are the top three. And so you have that type of activity as far as wildlife along the river. The fishing opportunities are actually—the Kokosing's probably one of the best, if not the best smallmouth stream in the state of Ohio, as far as streams. You can go down there and catch in five hours, you can catch, say, thirty to fifty smallmouth bass, if you have any idea what you're doing at all. You can catch a lot of fish. But a lot of hunting activity takes place along the river during the deer season, because mostly along the river is a wooded corridor for the most part. And deer tend to hang out in woody areas or

brushy areas. Fur bearing animals, you know animals that you trap for—muskrats, mink, beaver—are in the river, so a lot of trapping takes place along the river banks. Raccoons, of course, they require trees and things for getting, for the most part. Most species of wildlife use river corridors or wooded areas for travel and migration routes. A lot of the agriculture, actually some of the best agricultural soils are in river bottoms and that draws wildlife there to the river bottoms itself. So yeah, actually, the Kokosing is a big part of hunting in the county.

MD: So is that—a lot of families go along in there?

MM: Yep, yep, it's real popular. And yeah, people are drawn to water, like to be around water, like to look at lakes. Get down close to the Coshocton County line, down there, there's a lot of summer camps on the river down there between right with Chapel Road and I don't know the other bridge down there, there's a couple bridges. Down there in that stretch of the road there's a lot of summer camps in the summer time. It's a good area for sightseeing as far as for wanting to look at wildlife. Like this time of year, everything's frozen except for ripple areas on the rivers and streams, so that's where all the ducks and geese are at for the most part. That's where they'll roost at, that's where they'll be during the daytime. But yeah, it gets a tremendous amount of use and it's probably actually going to increase over the years.

MD: I guess this covers my questions pretty well, but is there anything else you want to add about hunting or recreation along the river here?

MM: Just, people take care of things. Because, you know, what shuts down access is when people don't take care of things. You know, like under state law, you're required to have written permission of the landowner for recreational use on their property. So to just go down to fish in the river and wade, you're required to have written permission of the landowner. If you're floating in the river, you're fine. But what shuts down more property to access by people is trespassing and by littering and by just not taking care of things. Because you know, you're a guest to the landowner when you're on his property and that can shut down access to the river, cause it's all private property around the river. And by people not taking care of things, that's the surest way to shut down access for anybody to do anything down there. And that would be the number one thing. That, and make up your own mind on issues, get all the facts before you make up your mind, don't get it from a thirty second television commercial. But I think somewhere, my generation and younger, they don't vote—go out and vote, and pay attention to things. Like, I try and twist peoples' arms to go to the wildlife hearings, which the wildlife hearings are where the proposals for next year's hunting and fishing regulations are available for public input. And people don't go to those, so they don't have input, but then they'll whine and complain about what happened. But you had your opportunity to go down in there and be a participant in it. So be involved, be involved in government and know what's going on. And get all the facts before you make up your mind on any one issue. So that would probably be the only things.

[end of interview, now just some talk about deer seasons and when people go hunting mostly which is early couple weeks]