



### Hunter and Angler Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation

- Participation in recreational hunting and angling has been generally declining in the US and Canada since the 1980s and the decline in the proportion of citizens who hunt and fish poses an ever-growing threat to wildlife and fish conservation, to cherished outdoor traditions, and to the many local economies that depend on hunter and angler related trip expenditures.
- The Wild Harvest Initiative® will enhance public awareness of the positive values of hunting and angling at a time when human health and nutrition and environmental sustainability are of increasing public concern across a wide political, gender and demographic spectrum. This will help develop social attitudes that are more favorable towards hunting and angling, encouraging participation from within traditional and non-traditional recruitment communities.
- By increasing public awareness of hunting and angling as effective conservation tools, food security strategies, and as activities that contribute to human health and nutrition, the Initiative will help dispel the myth that these traditional activities have become irrelevant in modern society, leading to new motivations to engage and increased participation in these activities.

The reach of the Wild Harvest Initiative® is already reflected in its diverse and expanding partnership that includes state governments, the outdoor industry, conservation NGOs and individuals. There can be no doubt of its potential to contribute to a normalizing of hunting and angling, to a renewed and escalated benefits assessment of wildlife's value to modern society, to increased efforts for conservation, and to encouraging hunter and angler recruitment, retention and reactivation.

# WILD HARVEST INITIATIVE®

A Program of **conservation VISIONS®**

## What would happen if hunting and angling were to disappear?

How many pounds of naturally produced, locally sourced meat do we get, on average, from a wild-harvested white-tailed deer, elk, or antelope? How many pounds come from a limit of mallards, a wild turkey, or a brace of quail? How many healthy meals can be procured from a day spent fishing for trout, bass, or salmon? How much of this food will be shared with family and friends and with people who do not themselves hunt or fish? What does this mean for our food security? What could this mean for our food insecurity?

How much would it cost to replace this wild food through agriculture and aquaculture? How much wildlife habitat would have to be destroyed and how much fuel, water, fertilizer, and pesticides would be required? What would the harvesting, processing, and transportation costs be? How much more harm would this likely bring to the environment?

Each year in the United States and Canada, nearly 45 million people hunt and fish recreationally, bringing hundreds of millions of pounds of healthy food from our fields, forests, and waterways to our tables. Yet, no serious effort has been made to assess the actual amount or the economic value and dietary significance of the wild meat and fish that we harvest and consume. While we believe the recreational harvest of wildlife in North America to be one of the most sustainable, healthy, and environmentally friendly food procurement systems in existence, the truth is that we do not know its real economic, social, or conservation value. We do not know what would happen if hunting and angling were to end.

Conservation Visions' Wild Harvest Initiative® will change this.

To learn more about the Wild Harvest Initiative®, please visit [www.conservationvisions.com](http://www.conservationvisions.com) or contact us by email at [insights@conservationvisions.com](mailto:insights@conservationvisions.com).

### WILD HARVEST INITIATIVE® ALLIANCE



*"In the harvest of wild food, we engage in the circle of life as true participants, and thus learn the realities of man's place in nature."*  
 — Shane Mahoney, President & CEO, Conservation Visions Inc.

The Wild Harvest Initiative® will influence our understanding of natural resource conservation and encourage positive attitudes towards sustainable wildlife use.



## What is Conservation Visions' Wild Harvest Initiative®?

Conservation Visions' Wild Harvest Initiative® is the first-ever attempt to synthesize and evaluate the combined economic, social, and conservation benefits of recreational wild animal harvests in American and Canadian societies. Its innovative approach will help change conversations and provide new insights concerning the relevance of hunting and angling in modern North American society. By exploring the sustainable use of wildlife in the wider social contexts of food security, rural economies, human health, fitness, and nutrition, as well as wildlife habitat and environmental management, the Initiative will deliver a reasoned and mature discussion of wildlife use to the wider public, working within emerging social concerns for food security and quality and the mounting evidence of the importance of nature experiences to human well-being. In doing so it will demonstrate the natural alliance between hunting and angling and prominent social trends, including the locavore movement, organic eating, homesteading, and "green-living," further amplifying the relevance of recreational wildlife harvests to the broadest possible audience – one that includes youth, women, minorities and, certainly, non-hunters and anglers.

In reframing the debate about the modern relevance of hunting and angling, the Initiative will positively align these activities with other natural resource use traditions such as berry-picking, wild fruit gathering, wild mushroom harvesting, beekeeping, and firewood gathering. These activities are commonly practiced by large numbers of citizens and are well-accepted as appropriate uses of nature's products. Through its communication efforts the Wild Harvest Initiative® will represent hunting and angling as philosophically consistent with these accepted practices, forecasting powerful social connections of mutual support.

By conjoining these insights with existing economic assessments of recreational hunting and angling, and by evaluating in detail the environmental costs and mechanisms that would be necessary to replace this wild food harvest, the Wild Harvest Initiative® will help focus a fundamental question for conservation policy institutions; namely, if hunting and angling were to cease tomorrow, what would be the economic, social and conservation consequences? For example, in the US alone, hunting creates more than 600,000 jobs nationwide. What would happen to these livelihoods?

## How and why is the Wild Harvest Initiative® relevant to you?

### Food Security

- Food insecurity currently affects more than 48 million Americans and more than 4 million Canadians and studies show this problem is increasing in both nations.
- The Wild Harvest Initiative® will demonstrate the magnitude of annual recreational harvests of wildlife and fish in the US and Canada in the context of food security, increasing public awareness of the positive values of wild harvested protein and the importance of wildlife and fish habitat as food reservoirs for modern society.
- This will illustrate the potential for increased contributions to food security in both nations via increased reliance on the sustainable recreational harvest of renewable, high quality and sustainable wild resources.

### Human Health

- Recreational wild harvest activities In North America should be viewed as one of the healthiest food procurement systems in existence in terms of nutrition, physical health and fitness, mental health, and emotional and spiritual well-being.
- The Wild Harvest Initiative® will establish the contribution of recreationally harvested wildlife and fish in the US and Canada to basic dietary and human health requirements, while providing empirical evidence of positive correlations between wild harvest activities, including hunting and angling, and good health.

### Wildlife, Fish and Habitat Conservation

- Biodiversity and wild spaces in the US and Canada are declining as human pressures continue to escalate; yet, wildlife conservation continues to be given a relatively low priority compared with other government policy challenges.
- As the first effort to specifically address wildlife valuation from a food perspective, the Wild Harvest Initiative® will mobilize greater advocacy for the conservation of wildlife and fish resources, helping to increase the profile of these resources in land use and policy management decisions.
- The Wild Harvest Initiative® will provide common ground for discussion and engagement in conservation issues by diverse stakeholders, laying the foundation for wider and more effective coalitions to support conservation.
- The project link with public sentiment surrounding animal health and welfare, specifically as it relates to wildlife and fish conservation, since animal welfare is a concept also applicable to wild species and should be a common concern.
- While encouraging best practices for wildlife production and management on private lands, the Wild Harvest Initiative® will also provide leverage to encourage and support the maintenance of accessible public lands.

### Ecological Benefits

- Recreational wild animal harvest is sustainable, environmentally friendly, and ecologically sound; yet, it is seldom acknowledged that regulated, science-based hunting harvests are far better than other food systems in terms of environmental impact and ecological maintenance.
- The Wild Harvest Initiative® will showcase the sustainability and low environmental impact of recreationally harvested wild meat and fish and make positive ecological comparisons with commercial fisheries, aquaculture, agriculture, and livestock production, demonstrating the advantages of hunting and angling as food procurement systems.

### Economic Contributions

- The current system of funding for American and Canadian wildlife and fish conservation programs relies heavily on contributions by hunters and anglers, and this is most evident in the US where outdoor sportsmen and sportswomen overwhelmingly remain conservation's largest funding source.
- The Wild Harvest Initiative® will substantiate and expand existing economic valuations (such as taxes paid and jobs created) of wild harvested animal protein in the US and Canada, answering the question of what it would cost from an economic perspective to replace this food through the expansion of existing agricultural, aquaculture, and livestock production.
- The Initiative will remind the public of the current cost of wildlife and fish management, how much greater this would become, and how much more of a burden would fall to the average taxpayer, if the hunters and anglers who practice wild protein harvest did not, by doing so, contribute economically to wildlife management.

Hunters and anglers have many natural allies in the sustainable harvest of wild resources.



Wildlife management is an economically viable form of land use.

