

Genesee County SCOPE Report

13 January 2008

Subject: Closing of the Reynolds Game Farm and destruction of pheasant stocks.

Sponsor: Governor Patterson and DEC Commissioner Alex Grannis.

Website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/49071.html>

Status: 2009 NYS budget delivered December 16, 2008; Scheduled to be enacted on March 01, 2009 with an effective fiscal year start date of March 01, 2009.

Action: SCOPE NY Protest [petition, mail or phone].

Response: Each SCOPE chapter to prepare a petition, mailing, or organized phone protest opposing the closing of Reynolds game farm.

Significance:

The Reynolds Game Farm, located on Game Farm Road in Dryden NY is the last DEC pheasant-breeding farm in NYS. It has operated since 1926 and releases about 27,000 pheasants to public lands open for hunting.

The closing of this game farm was an executive decision, and was advanced without the consultation or vote of New York State citizens or conservation organizations.

Justification 1:

Through this action the governor claims to save the state \$750,000 in annual operating costs that will assist the state in closing its \$12,000,000,000 (twelve billion) budget deficit.

Justification 2:

The donation of 8,000 pheasants to needy Southern-tier families through the Southern-tier food bank would provide healthily low cost meals during the current economic crisis.

The remaining stock of pheasants at Reynolds Farm cannot be released into the wild because their wing feathers have been clipped and they cannot fly. Additionally, because all other NYS pheasant breeding sites were closed and the operation was consolidated at Reynolds Game Farm, no other facility is equipped to house these birds.

Alternate Justification:

The state may seek to sell this land to Cornell University for \$630,000.

Logical inconstancies and obfuscation of the issue:

The pheasant-stocking program is NOT funded through NYS tax dollars; it is funded by the NYS conservation fund and the allocation of funds obtained through the Pittman-Robinson Act of 1937 (an 11% federal tax on sporting equipment). This fund alone provides \$700 million a year for protection of wildlife habitat on public lands for the purpose of sport and conservation.

These are fees and taxes paid by sportsmen and women who essentially fund their sport of choice through these fees.

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Point of contention 1:

The misallocation of these fees and taxes to offset NYS budgetary shortfalls may lack proper legal precedence. Fees paid by sportsmen and women should support designated sporting activities. Misappropriating these monies without either notification or opportunity to challenge this decision by vote is an unambiguous case of taxation without political representation.

Point of Contention 2:

The loss of the pheasant-restocking program will have a negative economic impact on local commerce in areas where pheasant hunting is rich. Businesses that profit from this sporting activity will be affected such as: sporting supply sales, restaurant, hotel, gasoline sales and other incidental consumption.

Point of Contention 3:

The loss of the pheasant-restocking program will limit the available game for sport (including hunting, photography and general bird spotting) and eventually eliminate an activity that is a well-appreciated part of New York State's outdoor sporting heritage.

Although this loss cannot be measured financially, its loss to quality of life in our region is significant.

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