

## Legislative Update

Mark Livingston

The 2008 Legislative Regular Session came to a close in mid-April. It was a very active session with baiting being the dominant topic among all the legislative wildlife bills. HB1089, which was this years baiting bill, gathered much media attention. However, despite all the press and public drama, the Governor vetoed the bill saying that the baiting issue should be a matter of science and not politics.

Ironically, at about the same time the Governor was getting out his pen to veto HB1089, the MDWFP decided to issue a new regulation on supplemental feeding as allowed by a law passed in 2007. This issue will possibly be settled for the 08-09 hunting season before you read this. The proposed regulation, as it has been issued, contains a little for both the baiter and opponent though it doesn't seem to really please anyone. I wouldn't be surprised to see changes made in it by the time you are reading this article. The MBA's standing policy is in opposition to baiting based on biological concerns brought forward by state wildlife officials.

The attention brought forward by this years baiting bill allowed many other proposed bills to fly under the radar. HB1273 mandates that the MDWFP allow a special youth season to run concurrently with the primitive weapon season. The net effect of this is that youth will be allowed to use conventional firearms in the primitive weapon season. This will likely be set up similar to the youth season that takes place the last week in November during the archery season. I have mixed emotions about this type of bill. As much as I am in favor for our youth to have the type of experience that promotes their enjoyment of hunting, I question whether such bills are good for the health of special seasons in the long run. I suppose that time will tell. There have been so many changes in the primitive weapon season in the last few years that I question its ability to survive as a separate season in the future.

HB 1 was filed to extend a repealer that allows for crossbow use for the disabled and elderly. Another aspect of the bill allowed crossbow usage in the gun and primitive weapon season. MBA Vice President Steve Welch and myself met with the Chairman of the Senate Wildlife and Fisheries Committee, Mr. Tommy Gollott, to discuss this bill. Sen. Gollott filed a mirror bill to HB1, SB2732 that would make the law exempt from future repealer dates. A repealer means that a law becomes dead after a certain point if the legislature doesn't extend it in a future session. The MBA supported this legislation and SB2732 was passed (without the repealer provision) and was sent to the Governor. This was a good bill that now is permanent thanks to Sen. Gollott and other legislative leaders. Many people feel that the MBA opposes all crossbow use.... though nothing could be further than the truth. The MBA supports the crossbows use in every aspect, except by the general public in the archery-only season. The MBA doesn't feel that the crossbow is an actual bow and that by allowing non-bow weapons in the 'archery only' season sets an expectation for more non-bow weapon inclusion in the future. The archery seasons that we enjoy are the incubator and catalyst of bowhunting's growth.

In closing, I understand that most of us would rather enjoy shooting our bows as opposed to being concerned about politics. I think very few of us actually enjoy the political process, but we have to understand that as bowhunters, politics shapes our future. The MBA is the collective whole of each and every one of you. You don't belong to the MBA...you ARE the MBA. This year was the first year since 2005 that we didn't have to send out an alert letter to ask for your individual help. That's good as it means that your involvement in the past made a difference in the present! Please make that phone call, email, or fax etc when the MBA alert letter is in your mail box. Only by working together as a team, can we preserve the bowhunting legacy for our generation and our kid's generation..

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Please contact any of the MBA Area Directors with questions, comments and suggestions for/about your organization. The MBA is only as strong as its membership.

—————> [www.mississippibowhunters.com](http://www.mississippibowhunters.com) <—————

### MISSISSIPPI BOWHUNTERS ASSOCIATION

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# MISSISSIPPI BOWHUNTER

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is odd how I, and probably you, look at the year in seasons. No! Not winter, fall, spring and summer; but deer season, turkey season, scouting season, planting season, and the often over-looked time is the "off season". As a football coach I eat sleep and breathe football in some form or fashion for 365 days a year. Our program believes the principle that winners are made in the off season. This is the time of year between the end of the regular season and the beginning of summer camp. It is in this "off-season" that we work the hardest. Lifting weights, running, attending camps, and fine tuning each player to be their best is a time consuming but essential task. Serious bowhunters also recognize the need for "off season" training. This is a time that your bow needs to be shot on a regular basis rather than leaving it in your closet until the week before the season. The off season is also a great time to make changes to your equipment, increase draw weights, and break in a new bow. I personally use the off season to tinker with my bow and arrow set up. I test the performance of different arrow shafts and try to choose the best set up well before hunting season. Many of our members keep their skills sharp by shooting 3D during the off season. This is a great way to hone you bowhunting skills of judging distance and shot placement. I even scratch the itch to hunt during the off season by slipping in a hog hunt or bowfishing trip. Instead of waiting until the week before the season, get outside now and work on your game. I am in the sunset of my tenure as MBA President. I want to thank every member in our organization and all of our board members for their efforts. I want all of our membership to get 100% behind our new President Steve Welch. Steve will take over sometime in August and I am sure he has a lot of great ideas and projects. During my tenure as MBA president, I am most satisfied with my influence in getting the MBA to play an active role as a sponsor of the National Archery in Schools Program. With the backing of our board of directors we not only vocally support the program but also contribute an annual grant of \$3000. The MBA has also sponsored an annual essay contest in which the students of the NASP program can compete to win an all expense paid hunting trip for themselves and a guardian. This year's winner, Tyler Dillon, will be in Illinois this October sitting in a treestand with a bow in his hand. A special thanks to Waldo Cleland for donating this hunt at his Hickory Hills Bowhunting operation in Cass County Illinois. Take the time to check out a new website that I am working on called hunt4jesus.net. Our group has teamed up with Mississippi Woods, Water, and Wheels to see that handicapped and disabled youth and adults get a chance to enjoy turkey and deer hunting. Our special hunts are conducted at Oxbow Plantation which is located in prime habitat along the lower reaches of the Big Black River. If you know of someone with special needs that would enjoy a deer or turkey hunt please let us know. You can find out more by logging onto [www.mswwwo.org](http://www.mswwwo.org) or [www.hunt4jesus.net](http://www.hunt4jesus.net).

God Bless

Jason >>  
John 3:16

