

No Quarter for the Coyote

GUNHAWK FIREARMS' coyote kill is spreading a national disease.

This “disease” is called lack of respect-itis. As a gun owner, hunter and outdoors person, I am appalled at the wanton killing of coyotes promoted by Gunhawk Firearms of Los Lunas in their so-called depredation hunt.

I have no problem with the killing of a coyote if it has directly affected the livelihood of a rancher, farmer or livestock-raising family. But this concept of “Kill as many as you can, pile up the carcasses and win a prize” lacks sportsmanship and sets a poor example for young people.

Kill because it is fun? Kill for the sake of killing? We already have enough young people killing or threatening to kill each other. All Gunhawk (is doing) is encouraging this wanton disrespect for life.

The idea of killing for the sake of killing is not the concept of hunting that I was brought up with. We ate what we hunted and were taught to respect those animals that nourished our bodies. Lately, on our hunting trips we have observed more and more unethical and irresponsible behavior that is making this sport less and less palatable to both true hunters and nonhunters alike. This coyote kill is a prime example of this — this is not what being a sportsman means.

Disrespectfulness is becoming more and more prevalent in our society. There is disrespect for those we don't understand —who aren't like us. We disrespect ideas that don't align with our own. We disrespect the planet that supports us by hedonistically mining its natural resources, both living and nonliving, with total disregard for what this leaves — or doesn't leave — for future generations.

And finally, Gunhawk is putting the whole sport of hunting at risk with this program. One coyote kill has already been canceled because an outraged public weighed in with letters, phone calls and emails.

The “ugly and reckless hunter” is not the image we need of our sport. Gunhawk is putting the true sport of hunting and sportsmanship at risk. Keep this attitude up and the sport will be legislated to death.

Gunhawk, please rethink this coyote kill for what it really is: total disrespect in addition to the sport's possible death sentence.

DOLORES VARELA PHILLIPS

Bosque

Contest Is Simply A Crime Against Nature

CONDEMN COYOTE killing contests! To date, the coyote is killed throughout the U.S. with no regulation or protection whatsoever. Federal, state and local governments kill one per minute.

Seventy-two point five million taxpayer dollars are spent each year on western livestock protection, mainly coyote killing. The lethal methods used are aerial gunning, poisons, leg-hold traps, neck snares, denning (the killing of coyote pups by poisoning, gas, clubbing, hounding and shooting) — all brutally inhumane.

Coyote-killing contests do not teach our young to appreciate our wildlife or to respect life. Disruption of family packs can cause orphaned juveniles to seek easy prey such as small dogs and cats, and other coyotes will move into the vacated area.

Coyote biologists have long recognized the role of coyotes in controlling rodent populations. Large carnivores also preserve species diversity of native birds by controlling numbers of smaller carnivores, such as foxes, raccoons, skunks and opossum. Coyotes are an integral, invaluable part of our ecosystem.

Instead of putting all the blame on animals, humans must take responsibility and be held accountable. Lethal force is not the answer. Livestock owners can do more to protect their animals with fences — especially electric fences — outdoor lights triggered by sensors, guard dogs and keeping in vulnerable animals.

Native to North America, coyotes occupy the biological niche between foxes and wolves, playing essential parts in the environment by helping maintain the natural ecosystem. The money and efforts used to kill coyotes needs to be redirected toward educated coexistence.

In short, coyote-killing contests cultivate violence and disrespect against wildlife and all life as a whole. A petition against the Los Lunas coyote hunt has been signed by 10,771,00 people already.

BETTY J. PRITCHARD

Bernalillo

Los Lunas Suffers Yet More Embarrassment

ON NOV. 17 and 18, coyote-killing contestants will fan out across New Mexico to shoot as many coyotes as possible in an effort to win a contest. The team with the most carcasses will win guns. This cruel coyote-killing contest is a publicity stunt conceived by Gunhawk Firearms in Los Lunas. Mark Chavez, the owner of Gunhawk Firearms and his employees have described the contest as a “win-win” and “fun.” Gunhawk Firearms further incited events by telling its critics, in essence, “bring

it on.”

We are longtime Los Lunas residents who live next to the bosque near coyote habitat. We have farm animals and have never been bothered by coyotes. Gunhawk Firearms states they are helping ranchers. But ranchers are not sponsoring this contest.

New Mexico Game & Fish, in its “Wildlife Notes,” states that the favored diet of coyotes are rabbits, mice and rodents. Coyotes also prefer to feed on dead and decaying animals. Gunhawk’s contest will not result in effective predator control.

In an effort to stop this contest, we started a coalition of people from all backgrounds who oppose the practice of coyote contest killing. We are not anti-gun, anti-ranching, or anti-hunting. We believe in managed predator control based on sound scientific principles. In addition to local residents, thousands of others from all over the United States and the world have signed petitions asking that the contest be canceled. But Gunhawk Firearms has refused to cancel the contest.

Not only is this contest lethal for coyotes, it is dangerous to others who may be using public lands on the weekend before Thanksgiving. It will also interfere with deer and elk hunts already scheduled by Game & Fish.

Los Lunas and New Mexico have already attracted national media attention this year for animal cruelty at the Southwest Livestock Auction in Los Lunas and at racetracks around New Mexico. Among all New Mexico counties, Valencia County has some of the highest rates of child, domestic and animal abuse. This is not coincidence — it is connected. This contest is not in the best interest of Los Lunas or New Mexico.

Gunhawk Firearms knows this contest is ugly because it has not disclosed where it will count the coyote carcasses. Gunhawk Firearms needs to correct its mistake by calling off its “contest” and coming up with a different promotional plan for its business.

GUY AND ELISABETH DICHARRY

Los Lunas

Be Careful With Karma Or You May Regret It

I PRAY THAT my voice is heard on behalf of the wildlife.

It seems that humans haven’t evolved on the intelligence/food chain all that much. People don’t eat coyotes. All they are doing is showing their barbaric actions and behavior.

We must have coyotes in the wild. They balance out the smaller animal population — mice, rats, rabbits, etc. If coyotes are not here, we will be overrun.

Lest we forget the black plague, the mice that carried the diseases overran everything and the death of humans began. We had the plague up there in the mountains not all that long ago. Wake up.

How dare humans think that they have the right to blow others out of the water. I assure you that if we all turned our guns on the fools who think this is funny and a joke, we'd see them all running for fear of their lives.

As they say, "what goes around, comes around." Please, do the correct thing and stop this horrific action.

Despite human ignorance, nature endures.

STEPHANIE KAYLAN

Founder and President Wanagi Wolf Fund and Rescue

Tijeras

Publicity Stunt Worthy Of Only a Pathetic Man

MARK CHAVEZ, the owner of Gunhawk Firearms, is trying to drum up publicity for his store, and also claiming ranchers need this contest to stop coyotes from killing their livestock. Really?

In reality their main prey is rabbits, squirrels, mice and other rodents, even insects. When all the coyotes are gone, will farmers then host a rabbit-killing contest? A squirrel- and mouse-killing contest?

Coyotes are an important part of the ecosystem and their numbers are being controlled quite well by the spread of humanity alone. It's shameful and disgusting that some people will find joy in personally wounding and killing these animals.

Oh, well, at least the winner will have that free gun to shoot those rabbits taking over his yard.

SUSAN HOLMAN

Rio Rancho

This Travesty a Black Mark for Gun Owners

AS A RELATIVE to the Colt .45 firearm family and one who has owned a firearm myself, I have to say I am disgusted and outraged by the irresponsible coyote killing contest Gunhawk Firearms in Los Lunas intends on holding Nov. 17 and 18. Despite public outrage, the sponsor and participants are putting ego over common sense when promoting NRA rights, and the right to kill over common decency. It does nothing but a disservice for those who believe in the right to bear arms.

Not to mention, mass body counts is absolutely not hunting. They should be ashamed, not proud in their defiance.

LORICOLT

Santa Fe