

HIS VIEW

America's hunters ought to thank Obama

William Brock/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

Every right-thinking patriot knows President Barack Obama is intent on destroying America. That's pretty much a given, right?

But did you know Obama also helped raise more money for state fish and game agencies and, ultimately, America's hunters than any president in U.S. history?

How is that possible, what with Obama being a gun-snatchin' socialist and all?

Here's how.

The National Rifle Association and other shrill apparatchiks of the firearms industry have convinced a lot of people that Obama is coming for their guns. The upshot is that firearms sales have gone through the roof.

Yessir, gun sales are up here, there and everywhere across this well-armed country of ours. And thanks to an 11 percent federal excise tax on guns and ammo, there is more money than ever to pay for hunter safety programs, wildlife habitat and other projects that directly benefit hunters.

Don't take my word for it. Take Steve Barton's word instead.

Barton works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, D.C., where he is the agency's Wildlife and Restoration Funds coordinator. Rich Landers, Outdoors editor of The Spokesman-Review newspaper in Spokane, spoke with him recently about this very topic.

As Landers noted in Sunday's Spokesman, the federal excise tax - commonly known as the Pittman-Robertson Act - has generated \$8.1 billion for state wildlife agencies since it was first levied in 1938. Though it is a federal tax, the money is channeled back to state wildlife agencies to pay for research, animal management, wildlife surveys, habitat improvement and the purchase or lease of additional lands.

Awww. What a nice thing to do for Bambi and all the other woodland creatures.

Now take a moment to ponder the actual numbers, and their startling upward trend as the years unfolded.

- In 2008, the last year we had a Texan masquerading as president, Pittman-Robertson receipts were a respectable \$347 million.

- In 2009, the first year Mr. You-Know-Who was in the White House, tax receipts increased nearly 40 percent - to \$484.8 million.
- In 2010, people began to realize that Obama wasn't coming for their guns and tax receipts dwindled to \$396.6 million.
- In 2011, the figure sank to \$388.2 million because Obama still hadn't seized anyone's guns.
- In 2012, an election year that offered Obama yet-another chance to come for your guns, Pittman-Robertson tax collections shot up to \$553.2 million.

Add it all up and you'll discover that 22.5 percent of all the money accumulated by the Pittman-Robertson Act in its 74-year history was collected under the administration of President Barack Hussein Obama.

And he still hasn't come for your guns!

In the interest of full disclosure, I'll concede that I bought a few boxes of 16-gauge shotgun shells during Obama's first term in office. I wasn't motivated by fear of a munitions embargo; heck, I just like to hunt chukar, quail, Huns and pheasant.

My conservative critics will point out, accurately, that it was fear of Obama and his presumptive gun-snatching agenda that drove sales to such dizzying heights. Thus,

the logic goes, Obama doesn't deserve any credit for raising all that money for wildlife and, ultimately, hunters.

Well, OK, if he doesn't deserve credit for raising all that money, then the people who spent it on the premise that Obama was coming for their guns don't deserve any credit for intelligence, now do they?

Folks who ran out to buy more guns because Obama might get re-elected were chummed, pure and simple, by firearms manufacturers with an obvious interest in selling more guns.

In fact, selling more guns is how they boost their profits.

Seen through clear eyes, the caricature of Obama as a gun-snatching Godzilla is like the house that didn't burn down. Or the asteroid that didn't hit the Earth. The feared outcome never materialized.

To those who succumbed to that fear, I'd like to ask: Do you feel silly now?

William Brock lives in Pullman.