

TOO MANY SO-CALLED EXPERTS LACK REAL WORLD EXPERIENCES

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There is no substitute for experience. You can read everything ever written on a given subject but until you have experienced it or done it yourself, one can never really be sure.

As I write this, the temperature is about 17 degrees below zero. Looking out my living room window I can see two turkeys roosting in the trees. It's a sight I never expected to see here in the Adirondacks. I believed our weather conditions would preclude their every surviving our winters. A good many others, like myself, have found out differently. They are here and the taxpayers have not had to fund an expensive and ill-conceived boondoggle trying to introduce them

The lynx introduction fiasco is a prime example of a recent such boondoggle that cost how many millions? It gladdened the hearts of a great number of environmentalists and brought trauma, grief and death to the lynx. Was their goal to establish a population of endangered wildlife to an area for the animals' benefit or to make another excuse to remove more private property rights from citizens and residents?

Any Adirondack rabbit hunter worth his salt could have told the proponents of the enterprise that there are currently not enough rabbits (or hares if you will) to support the lynx. Coyote, fisher, foxes, marten and great horned owls are hard pressed to find enough hares to support themselves. Coyotes, fisher and marten populations are much higher than they were in the '50's and '60's. All three have had an impact on the hare population to the extent it hardly pays to keep a rabbit hound anymore.

The same thing goes for any deer hunter worth his salt who could tell the timber wolf experts that their darlings would be hard pressed to find enough deer to satisfy their needs.

One had to be actively involved in hunting and trapping in the '50's and '60's to note the relative differences in wildlife populations then and now. Years of experience and observations by indigenous people are never seriously considered when making decision on rules and regulations affecting them directly. People with no experience, expertise or knowledge of a particular subject - except for what they were taught in a school or read in a book - are too often classified as experts.

A prime example is what youngsters learn about forestry and hunting and trapping in grade school. I well remember my six-year-old granddaughter accompanying me on a log job I was managing and her

telling me I should stop cutting the trees. Where did she get her perspective? Where did the people influencing her get their information on the subject? Certainly not from experts who were well versed and had actual experience.

] The same is true with many things in life. Well-intentioned people are often convinced that they are well informed and right in their convictions when, in fact, they are dead wrong. All of us are guilty of it at one time or another. It's a fact of life and human nature.

We should not be ashamed of falling into such a trap. If one is honest about it and has a different outlook when faced with facts, the worst one can say about them is that they are naïve. But what do you call the person who refuses to change an opinion refuted by facts?