

12/28/05 @ 10:48 AM EST

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife & Parks Mr. Paul Hoffman contacts Bighammer.net by phone to discuss the VCDL Petition to roll back the National Parks self defense ban.

Mr. Hoffman politely introduced himself and asked to discuss the petition, which I happily agreed to. What follows is a paraphrasing from memory, I did not take notes during the call. Mr. Hoffman indicated that they (DOI and NPS) are, and have been very busy recently with a rewrite of NPS policies, rules and regs. He indicated that basically, all of these changes are slated for imminent publication (for comment) and that adding the weapons provision – “which is not without controversy” – would potentially blow some of the changes up, or draw added scrutiny to the changes. He indicated that it could potentially ‘become an issue’. He went on to indicate that they would like to propose the regulation change after the November ’06 election.

I indicated that, while speaking only for a limited number of people, I believed that the petitioners would not support this, that 10 months was reasonable, that long was beyond reasonable. Mr. Hoffman indicated that they had a “limited stomach for taking on controversial issues” and that pushing the petition forward in the next register for comment would probably be controversial, and you never know how these things will turn out. In sympathy, I noted to Mr. Hoffman that I vividly recalled several hot issues about snowmobile use in Parks and much gyration back and forth about it across many years. However, the petitioners do not run for reelection, and have a simple and single focus and that we are not without support. Mr. Hoffman reminded me that we were not without support “there” (at DOI). However, there is no statutory time limit for petition review.

At this point having both expressed our positions, and for the record absolutely nothing herein was in any way argumentative, Mr. Hoffman was very responsive, and understanding (and it is the belief of Bighammer.net that he is also supportive) I suggested that I advise the petitioners of his communication and that we touch base after the new year. I reiterated I felt that post November ’06 was unacceptable, but perhaps there was a mutually beneficial compromise that could be reached. He asked that I call (as opposed to email) and gave me his number, we wished each other a Happy New Year and ended the call.