



(AP) Outdoor enthusiasts and business groups are forming a new group to promote hunting in hopes of reversing declining interest in the activity. Iowa Retail Federation President Jim Henter says hunters spend more than \$288 million in Iowa every year and have a big impact on the state's economy. Iowa Department of Natural Resources Director Roger Lande says part of the hunting decline has been because the state has had a series of harsh winters that cut into wildlife population. Last year's mild winter could help that population. Lande says a loss of habitat also has contributed to the wildlife decline. Statistics from the DNR bear out the trend, with the number of hunting licenses issued in Iowa dropping for 10 straight years.