

CLUB PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Challenge of the Next Century

ALTHOUGH TO MANY HUNTERS, THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB IS BEST KNOWN FOR Records of North American Big Game, THE CLUB'S MAJOR THRUST HAS BEEN AND WILL CERTAINLY CONTINUE TO BE, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION. SINCE TEDDY ROOSEVELT'S INITIAL GATHERING IN HIS NEW YORK CITY HOME, OF FRIENDS THAT WOULD BECOME THE CLUB'S CHARTER MEETING IN 1887, THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB HAS BEEN THE A PRIMARY LEADER IN AMERICA'S NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT. DURING ITS ONE HUNDRED AND SEVEN YEAR HISTORY, THE CLUB HELPED TO ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM, THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM, AND ESTABLISH, EXPAND, AND PROTECT THE NATIONAL PARKS SYSTEM.

The Boone and Crockett Club's current role is an evolving one, as it always has been. At the turn of the century, the most primary natural resource issue was how to deal with the wholesale decimation of big game animals, mostly in the west, where there was considerable evidence that most major game species were at risk. The nation's wildlife was being slaughtered for subsistence and commercial markets. Poaching and unregulated hunting were combining to drive many species to near extinction. In addition, wildlife habitat was being destroyed by change associated with the opening of the wilderness.

In response, Theodore Roosevelt, and other charter Club members used their considerable political influence and financial resources to establish federal laws to protect fish and game, and migratory birds. The Club was also instrumental in protecting wildlife and wildlife habitat through establishing the forest reserves (later known as National Forests), National Parks, and the national wildlife refuge system. The Boone and Crockett Club's concern over the decimation of big game populations also resulted in the creation of the National Collection of Heads and Horns in 1906. At that time, the Club believed that this col-

lection might be the only way for future generations to see examples of big game as they appeared in their natural habitat.

From the 1920s to the 1940s, many other conservation organizations came into being, often founded or influenced by Boone and Crockett Club members. During this time, Club member Jay N. "Ding" Darling and several fellow members joined other conservationists to create the National Wildlife Federation. The Club often joined other conservation organizations to advance specific legislation that would promote wildlife conservation. For example, from the late 1920s to early 1930s, the Club worked with the predecessor of Ducks Unlimited to secure passage of federal legislation creating waterfowl refuges and the Federal Duck Stamp Program designed to fund these refuges. During this era, the Club also helped to refine the idea of conservation through scientifically sound wildlife management policies advocated by Club member Aldo Leopold. The wildlife management policies advanced by the Club during this era became the fundamental tenets of modern wildlife conservation and management.

Due to public interest generated by the National Collection of Heads and Horns and increased recreational hunting in the 1920s, the Boone and Crockett Club established an official measurement and scoring system for trophy animals. The system was developed under the leadership of Club members Grancel Fitz and Prentiss N. Gray, and was first published in 1932. Although the measurement system was initially conceived to record species of North American big game thought to be "vanishing," the Club soon recognized that the system was an effective means of tracking the success of new conservation policies. Moreover, the Boone and Crockett Club utilized the Records of North American Big Game system to spread the notion of conservation to the general hunting

public; the 1932 and 1939 publication of Records of Big Game noted that a keen understanding of the animal and its habitat and proper game management was necessary to producing superior trophies.

In the 1950s through 1980, the Boone and Crockett Club continued its focus on the measurement and scoring of trophies and record keeping functions. The initial 1932 measuring system has been revised and refined many times. The current system was adopted in 1950.

During the last ten years, the Boone and Crockett Club has sought to reestablish and reemphasize its historic role in conserving wildlife and wildlife habitat. To implement that goal, the Club established a living legacy in habitat protection, research, education and demonstration by purchasing a 6,000 acre ranch on the Eastern Front of the Rockies, southeast of Glacier National Park and adjacent to the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This habitat acquisition was coupled with the Club's endowment of the Boone and Crockett Professor's Chair of Wildlife Conservation at the University of Montana.

What is to be the ongoing focus of the Boone and Crockett Club? Decimation or extinction of big game animals is no longer an immediate problem. To the contrary, wildlife management generally is an enormous success story. The whitetail deer population in this country has increased to over 14 million today compared with less than 500,000 deer in 1920; the wild turkey population today numbers over 2 million compared with "scarce" non-huntable numbers in 1920; the elk population has increased fivefold to approximately 500,000 animals today compared with less than 100,000 in 1920; compare today's pronghorn population of over 1 million animals with 25,000 animals in 1920. Moreover, the big game animals of today are comparable, if not superior, in size and genetics with their ancestors



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ninety years ago. The Boone and Crockett Club has accepted new World's Records during each new record scoring period since 1947, when Club held its first competition. Hunters today are accounting for new world records some of which have stood for decades.

Although our natural wildlife resource is in significantly better condition today than it was a century ago, the Boone and Crockett Club now believes we are facing a new, serious, compelling, and growing problem: the problem of sustainability. We must decide how to wisely use and manage our natural resources to meet increasing human demands and population growth while facilitating economic growth in an environmentally sensitive manner. In the next several decades, our natural resources will become scarcer relative to demand. By 2050, our nation's population is projected to be more than 340 million, growing forty percent in less than sixty years. The amount of land available to support our population will remain the same or possibly decrease. There will be an increasing demand for land, fuels, minerals, and other finite resources. Growing urbanization, affluence, and mobility, will continue to change the expectations and demands placed on wildlife and wildlife habitat. Wildlife habitat can no longer be viewed as just a "public lands" issue — private lands are and will be an important component of habitat. Wildlife habitat can no longer be

viewed in isolation, and must be studied as a part of a larger ecosystem, which includes air, soil, watershed, and human uses of the land.

We are grateful for the extraordinary measures taken by the concerned founding members of the Boone and Crockett Club, who at the turn of the century developed a concept of conservation that truly worked.

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However, we must constantly be redefining the concept of conservation for the 1990s and beyond, if we are to protect and enhance the legacy left by our early members. Jack Ward Thomas, Chief of the United States Forest Service, spoke about conservation and resource use levels at the 1994 annual

meeting of the Boone and Crockett Club in Houston, Texas. (This speech has been reproduced on page 22 of this issue.) He said that in order to define a resource use level that is socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable, we must take two steps: (1) develop scientifically sound ecosystem-based management strategies; and (2) develop regional forums that describe common ground for sustaining use and ecosystems. He also

challenged current Club members to step forward and "be leaders in finding common ground for solutions to regional and local problems" designed to address sound ecosystem management.

The ongoing focus of the Club is to meet this challenge through our "Strategic Plan for the Boone and Crockett Club in its Second Century". Three primary focus areas are the cornerstones of the Strategic Plan: Hunter and Conservation Ethics, Big Game Records Keeping and Recognition, Conservation Research, Education and Demonstration. Each of these areas will receive major emphasis in future activities. A fundamental assumption of all of the Club's work is that healthy ecosystems are key to natural resource and sustainability. We believe the four key elements to successful ecosystem management: healthy land, a decent living for those who rely on these resources, cultural, economic and biological diversity to ensure adaptation to change, and balance and sharing in the wise use of and responsibility for natural resources. The Club is particularly focused on encouraging rural families who make their living through the shared uses and management of natural resources to take a stewardship role, and thus, help create the wealth of the nation.

As we approach the conservation challenges of the present and future, we will be guided by the Boone and Crockett Club's visions of the future. We hope you will join in their spirit.

- ▲ We envision a future in which wildlife and wildlife habitat, in all their natural diversity, are maintained and enhanced in North America;
- ▲ A future in which hunting continues to be enjoyed under rules of Fair Chase and ethical respect for nature;
- ▲ A future in which all users of natural resources respect the rights of others in the spirit of sharing;
- ▲ A future in which all North Americans are committed to the principle that their use of resources must be sustainable both for themselves and for future generations.



THE MISSION

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB TO PROMOTE THE GUARDIANSHIP AND PROVIDENT MANAGEMENT OF BIG GAME AND ASSOCIATED WILDLIFE IN NORTH AMERICA AND TO MAINTAIN THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF FAIR CHASE AND SPORTSMANSHIP IN ALL ASPECTS OF BIG GAME HUNTING, IN ORDER THAT THIS RESOURCE OF ALL THE PEOPLE MAY SURVIVE AND PROSPER IN ITS NATURAL HABITATS. CONSISTENT WITH THIS OBJECTIVE, THE CLUB SUPPORTS THE USE AND ENJOYMENT OF OUR WILDLIFE HERITAGE TO THE FULLEST EXTENT BY THIS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
BOONE & CROCKETT CLUB
December 4, 1974