

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Working Together for Wildlife, Wild Areas, and Hunting



Earl E. Morgenroth
President
Boone and Crockett Club

AT THE BOONE AND CROCKETT Club's Annual Meeting, which was held last December in San Antonio, Texas, Earl Morgenroth was elected as its 26th President. At the traditional Black Tie dinner on Saturday night, Mr. Morgenroth gave the following speech to the assembled Members.

At one of the first meetings I attended as a Member of the Boone and Crockett Club, the President called one of those infamous 7:00 AM committee meetings. The 6:00 AM alarm meant 4:00 AM in Reno. My wife was still sleeping. I quietly shaved and showered. I kept the hotel room dark so as not to wake her. I enjoy wearing cowboy boots, and had brought two pair (black and

brown). As I walked into the meeting, someone said, "What is this, some kind of a joke?" I looked down, and I was wearing one brown boot and one black boot. Now you know why I had to work so hard to get here tonight—but it does prove anyone can be President!

It's a long way from the ranch on the plains of eastern Montana to the Presidency of the Boone and Crockett Club. Another past President made a similar transition, from a ranch 100 miles away from my birthplace.

I want to assure you that I am grateful for the opportunity to stand in the shadow of Theodore Roosevelt. I arrive at this position perhaps not with similar ability, but certainly with no less enthusiasm or dedication to the Boone and Crockett Club. It is the foremost position of my career. I consider it a great honor and will not take it lightly.

Theodore Roosevelt, without a doubt, was one of the greatest people who ever lived. The proof is in the fact that 160 members of the

Boone and Crockett Club—many sitting in this room—are still working for the ideals set forth by Theodore Roosevelt 113 years after he formed this organization.

I have served under three Boone and Crockett Club presidents, all of whom were inspiring leaders and had excellent agendas. Each brought something new and innovative to the table and a great deal of focus was put on specific events.

Steve Adams and Bill Spencer spoke of the Eastern Front of Montana as the Serengeti Plains of North America. I still hear that refrain on occasion—as recently as this year, from someone at the Murdock Foundation. Quietly, history is being made conserving habitat on the Eastern Front, primarily through conservation easements.

Easements are an excellent mechanism for conserving wildlife habitat. I'm against removing property from tax rolls. I cannot support turning additional land over to the federal government, unless there is no alternative. I have asked Dick Gooding to chair the Habitat Partners Committee. Initially, he will report directly to the President. Eventually, it will be part of the Development Committee.

Under former Club President Dan Pedrotti, one of the key focuses was the establishment of a nationwide Conservation Partners Summit. It was attended by 35 conservation organizations at the Tim Hixon Conservation Summit Center in Missoula. All of these organizations agreed that the common interest outweighed individual differences and territorial disputes; that indeed, a new community of interest would be formed that would strengthen the education efforts, interests on conservation, and wildlife policy in America. The groups also agreed to jointly present the next President and Congress with ideas for common ground on conservation and wildlife policies. It is, in effect, the essence of the Boone and Crockett Club to play a leadership role in national conservation

affairs. The National Wildlife Conservation Partners Committee requires the strongest of leaders. I have asked—and Dan Pedrotti has agreed—to chair this all important committee, and I will work directly with Dan.

Under former Club Presidents Paul Webster and Dan Pedrotti, major thrusts were fund raising, construction, and education. I wish tonight that I could declare a fundraising victory, but we are only halfway to our goal of \$10 million in endowment dollars, and as all of you know, endowment dollars must come from the membership. We desperately need your help to fund various areas of our Club activities. I am willing, as are all the Members of the Campaign Committee, to meet any time or any place to discuss your participation in the campaign. In spite of our need for current dollars, I want to emphasize the importance of planned giving and would hope that your commitment to the Boone and Crockett Club will be emphasized in your wills and trusts. I entrust this difficult task to Bob Model.

We have finished two of our construction projects. We have remodeled the Tim Hixon Conservation Summit Center, and have completed the \$1 million dollar education facility at the TRM Ranch in Montana. The Millennium Circle, a memorial to Theodore Roosevelt and other Club Members at our headquarters in Missoula, will be completed in 2001. Paul and Dan have both put a great deal of emphasis behind the educational efforts of the Club. Lisa Flowers has done an outstanding job on the K-12 program. The new educational facility at the ranch will bring additional focus to our educational efforts and will be a key future conservation effort of our Club. I want to thank Bill Spencer and CitiCorp for their outstanding support of our educational effort. We hope to expand our K-12 activities to include hunter safety, hunter ethics, and hands-on handling of firearms, including a rifle and sporting clays range.

THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB HIRES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Boone and Crockett Club and the Boone and Crockett Foundation selected Dr. George A. Bettas as its new Executive Director on February 27, 2001. Dr. Bettas will assume his new duties on April 2, 2001.

Dr. Bettas has a long list of credits in wildlife conservation organizations. He has served as a director and Chairman of the Board of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and is a past president and one of the ten founders of the Mule Deer Foundation. Dr. Bettas has been an officer of the Boone and Crockett Club for the past five years. He is a regular contributor to Fair Chase magazine, and also served as the magazine's editor for the past several years.

Before accepting his position as Executive Director of the Club, Dr. Bettas held the position of Vice Provost-Campus Life and Dean of Students for Washington State University in Pullman, Washington. Dr. Bettas grew up on a ranch in central Washington, where he developed his love of wildlife and the outdoors.

Jack Thomas, the Boone and Crockett Professor at the University of Montana, has done a good job in his position, and is a high identity spokesman for the Boone and Crockett Club. I want to also thank Jack for his help in fund raising, and to applaud the extraordinary effort of Cathy Thomas as facilitator of the National Wildlife Conservation Partners Summit. A great deal of the success is due to her efforts.

An offer of membership in the Boone and Crockett Club should be one of the extraordinary invitations one receives in life. That invitation must carry with it the responsibility of support and work for the organization. I will reiterate that refrain during this next year. We must bring the Club to full regular membership, and build a backlog of candidates to fill vacancies as they occur. We need your help in soliciting new members.

This year will be our 24th Big Game Awards ceremony, which will

be held in Springfield, Missouri, in conjunction with our June meeting. I applaud in advance the work of Randy Byers, Jack Reneau, and Fred King. This event represents a yeoman's effort of our master scorers, staff, and managers. I encourage all of you to put this meeting on your schedule for next year.

Finally, let me restate how humbled I am to stand before you as the President of the Boone and Crockett Club. Our mission is enormously important and strikes to the core of who we are. But with these challenges, in the words of the great philosopher, Pogo, "We are faced with almost insurmountable opportunities." We won't get far working individually as 160 citizens. But if we work together in the Boone and Crockett Club, pooling our ideas, our time, and our resources; if we work together, hand-in-hand with other hunter/conservation organizations; if we work together with a fo-

cus on our mission and a commitment to future generations in the unselfish spirit of sharing; if we do these things, the ideals we so cherish, the conservation of wildlife and wild areas and the perpetuation of hunting, will endure through the generations. ▲▲▲