

FROM THE EDITOR

Boone and Crockett . . . the Club



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WHEN IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT I was leaving the Washington State University campus this spring after 32 years I found myself spending a lot of time talking to people about the Boone and Crockett Club. Everywhere I went someone was curious about the position that had lured me away from my previous role as a university administrator and faculty member. The first comments were always, "Congratulations . . . I can't believe you are leaving." Invariably what followed was a query about Boone and Crockett.

During that last month on campus I spent a lot of time telling people about the Club, its history and its future. As I told the story over and over I added details in response to questions posed by the curious. Near the end of my tenure on campus a student greeted me as I was walking across the campus. Her question was, "So why is it called a club?" My response was, "The fact that Boone and Crockett is a club is what sets it apart from all of the other conservation organizations. It truly is a club. That's what makes it so special." As I walked back to my office I began to think about what I had said. It truly is a club . . .

The Boone and Crockett Club is an "inside out" organization when compared to organizations with similar missions. As we have charted our plans for the next 100 years we have had conversations with consultants who study organizations and organizational structures. These individuals have marveled at what we have accomplished and what we plan to do. They have also suggested the Club's

organization is not well suited to facilitate the accomplishment of what we intend to do.

Given these "odds" against the Club's organizational structure not working, why does it work? In Club member Ken Davis' words, "Its very uniqueness is what has made it so successful and has enabled it to flourish for over a 100 years. The Boone and Crockett Club is a *member run* organization as opposed to a *staff run* organization. The Club's volunteer members provide the vision, develop the strategic plan, and set Club policy. The Club members and their individual, as well as group commitment, to the collective vision of the organization are vital to its success. It is the *members* who do the work of the Club. That's what makes it so unique and so successful."

When I think about my tenure on the boards of directors of staff run organizations, Ken's comment takes on significant meaning. As a member of the board of a staff run organization you have three to six years to influence the vision, culture and direction of the organization. When you leave, new board members who may or may not share your vision take your place. Your vision will most certainly fade in time, regardless how popular it was during your tenure. Although the collective leadership of a strong team of board members may shape the direction of most major staff run organizations, in the end the professional staff calls most of the "shots."

Success in the Boone and Crockett Club comes from a strong commitment of each member to the vision of the Club. Core values of the Club are characterized by friendship, companionship, camaraderie, closeness, familiarity, care, and most of all, involvement. These core values combine to provide a powerful synergy within the Club and contribute immensely to its success. Each member is empowered to do the work of the Club. These values guide the Club in its

work, its everyday decisions, and ultimately how the members interact with each other. These values enable the Club to function effectively in spite of its "inside out" organizational structure. They also create a sense of closeness and care for one another that gets the Club through the rough spots and enables it to overcome the challenges it faces while it asserts the members' vision for wildlife and wild places.

There is one final value transcending everything the members do in the Club that makes it truly unique. The commitment Boone and Crockett Club members make is different than the commitment they might make to another organization. Again to quote Ken Davis, "The commitment to the Boone and Crockett Club is a lifetime commitment. That's what makes the Boone and Crockett Club so very special."

Under the leadership of our past president, Dan Pedrotti, the Club's new initiatives included the expansion of the K-12 conservation program including the completion of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Wildlife Conservation Center, completion of the first phase the Club's Campaign for Wildlife, the initiation of the Millennium Circle project and the establishment of the Wildlife Conservation Partners. Under our new president, Earl Morgenroth, the Club is charting a path for expanding its role in conservation education, developing new initiatives in habitat protection, completing the second phase of our Campaign for Wildlife, expanding the Associates program, and continuing the refinement of the Club's big game records program in the promotion of hunter ethics and fair chase. As the new executive director, a small, dedicated staff and I will be working with the Club's members facilitating their work and enabling them to accomplish their collective vision. I am honored to serve the Club in this capacity and eagerly look forward to the challenges and good work that lie ahead. ▲▲▲