GRANTS-IN-AID

Investing in Knowledge and Future Wildlife Professionals

By Winifred B. Kessler, Ph.D.
Chair, Grants-in-Aid Committee

I am eager to tell you about the Boone and Crockett grants-in-aid recipients for 2002 and the work they will be doing on behalf of wildlife conservation. But first, here is a bit of background information for those who may not be familiar with the program's history and recent developments.

55 YEARS OF INVESTMENT

Supporting the development of new knowledge has been, and remains, an important element of the Boone and Crockett Club's mission. In 1948 the Club's Conservation Committee launched the grants-in-aid program to identify, on an annual basis, research efforts deserving of the Club's support. Our grants-in-aid seeded the early careers of some of the wildlife profession's best and brightest. Examples include David Mech's early wolf and moose studies on Isle Royale; Lynn Rogers' work on black bears in Minnesota; and, Maurice Hornocker's pioneering research on mountain lions in Idaho. As problems in wildlife management evolved, so have the topics supported through the Club's grants-in-aid. Examples of recent studies include landscape ecology of British Columbia caribou, urban deer conflicts, private land issues concerning elk and deer, and reintroduction assessments for black bear in the deep South.

The grants-in-aid program was the Club's sole research instrument until the establishment of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch in 1986 and the Boone and Crockett Professorship five years later. While offering new opportunities to participate in research relevant to the Club's mission, these programs required a major portion of the yearly funding that had been available for grants-in-aid. Funding for grants-in-aid reached a low point in 1998, and the program was put on hold in 1999 as part of a major initiative to endow the Club's programs. A goal of $1.4 million was established for the grants-in-aid program.

Although the annual competition was put on hold, work on behalf of the program continued. One milestone in 2001 was the completion of a business plan for grants-in-aid, and the incorporation of that plan in the Club's Strategic Plan. The plan establishes a three-part goal for the program: 1) Support the Club's mission to promote the guardianship and provident management of big game and associated wildlife in North America by funding research required by managers and policy-makers; 2) Complement the Club's research programs (T.R. Memorial Ranch, B&C Professorship) by supporting the work of others at diverse locations across North America; 3) Assist

The criteria for the 2002 G.I.A. selections were as follows:

- Does the proposal meet the guideline of being relevant to big game biology or management? How responsive is it to this year's theme?
- Does the study address a significant biological, ecological, policy, or social science problem?
- Does the study have scientific merit? In other words, will it produce new knowledge or test existing theory or assumptions?
- How well qualified is the proponent and/or the academic supervisor to undertake the study?
- Is there potential for widespread application of findings?
- Are the objectives clearly stated? How sound is the proposed approach with respect to the objectives?

and encourage promising graduate students who have chosen careers in the wildlife profession.

At the same time, vigorous fund-raising was underway to accelerate progress toward the endowment goal. Another milestone in 2001 was the naming of the program the William I. Spencer Conservation Grants Program in honor of this late, great leader and Boone and Crockett Member.

Although fund-raising efforts continue, a decision was made to reactivate the program with a modest level of funding in 2002. Once again, the grants-in-aid program is in the business of supporting high-priority work and the career development of promising young researchers.

THE TRADITION CONTINUES

The competition for 2002 funding was launched at the Club's June 2001 meeting in Springfield, Missouri. The Grants-in-Aid Committee decided to focus the Club's 2002 investments on the theme of "Sustainable Use of Wildlife on Private Lands and the Private/Public Land Interface." In a letter to prospective applicants, we explained that the proposals could address the ecological, economic, social, or policy aspects of this theme, and that interdisciplinary proposals would be especially welcomed. The application packets were mailed in July to all U.S. and Canadian universities with programs in wildlife biology or management.

By the deadline of October 12, we had received 21 applications of which 11 were from Masters students, seven from Ph.D. students, and three from non-students. These came from Alberta, Arizona, British Columbia (three proposals), California, Colorado, Idaho, Louisiana, Montana (three proposals), Michigan, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The applications, evaluation criteria, and rating forms were distributed to all members of the Grants-in-Aid Committee.

The selection process was particularly difficult in this re-startup year because funding was very limited. We anticipate better funding in the future, which will allow the Club to support more worthy projects by aspiring professionals. In the meantime, the Grants-in-Aid Committee is pleased to announce the successful applicants in the 2002 competition.

THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE...

JESSICA MONTAG

Jessica will receive $5,000 in support of her project titled "Evaluating Predator Compensation Programs as a Means of Resolving Social Conflict and Promoting Social Tolerance." Jessica is pursuing her Ph.D. in the Wildlife Biology Program at the University of Montana, under the supervision of Dr. Michael Patterson. Her prior education includes an M.S. in Recreation Management at the University of Montana, and a B.S. in Recreation Resource Management at the University of Minnesota. Jessica has held a variety of jobs including research assistant, technical writing instructor, and community grants intern for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Before entering the natural resources field, she was a Corporal in the University of Minnesota Police Department—a position that included the supervision of 80 security personnel. She remains an active search and rescue volunteer.

Jessica's study will explore questions relating to the effect and effectiveness of predator compensation programs in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The goal is to provide an in-depth understanding of: 1) beliefs, values, meanings, and perceived conflicts that characterize stakeholders' perceptions of predator compensation programs; 2) views about the administration and effectiveness of compensation programs; 3) how individuals frame the underlying issues and conflicts relating to predator conservation; and 4) how individuals conceive of concepts like equity, fairness, individual versus societal responsibilities, and the public interest in regard to predator conservation. She has obtained the bulk of her funding from a variety of agencies and non-government organizations.

JAMES W. CAIN

James was awarded $10,000 toward his study titled "Influence of Artificial Water Sources on Desert Bighorn Sheep." James is enrolled in the Ph.D. program at the University of Arizona, working under the supervision of B&C Professional Member, Dr. Paul Krausman. James holds an M.S. in Biological Science from California State University, Sacramento, and a B.S. in Biological Science from Colorado State University. His previous research experience is varied, including nest predation studies of willow flycatchers and yellow warblers, hazard assessments associated with bird-aircraft strikes, demography of willow flycatchers, bird mortality associated with wind turbines at Altamont Pass, and other studies.

Most of the support for James' work will be provided by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The project will examine a long-standing assumption that water is one of the primary factors limiting the distribution and productivity of big game species in the arid southwest. The study objectives are to determine if the presence of artificial water sources influence survivorship, recruitment, productivity, and home range sizes of desert bighorn sheep in southwestern Arizona. This experiment will be carried out by closing selected water sources and documenting effects on survivorship, productivity, recruitment, and home range sizes of desert bighorn. The development of artificial water sources is an expensive management practice. This study will help substantiate whether the practice actually provides benefits, or should be discontinued in favor of other conservation investments.

CHERYL-LESLEY CHETKIEWICZ

Cheryl-Lesley Chetkiewicz will receive a $5,000 contribution toward her research titled "Conservation of Large Carnivores in Fragmented Landscapes of the Canadian Rocky Mountains." Cheryl-Lesley is pursuing the Ph.D. in Environmental Biology and Ecology at the University of Alberta, under the direction of Dr. Mark Boyce. She holds an M.S. in Animal Productivity from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and a B.S. in Zoology from the University of Alberta. Cheryl-Lesley's experience in wildlife research and conservation spans the western hemisphere. She studied kittiwakes on the Pribiloff Islands, mountain lion and mule deer interactions in California, and small cats in Peru. Employed as a biologist for the Gwich'in First Nation in Northwest Territories, she developed cooperative research and community-based plans for caribou, grizzly bears, and fisheries. Recently she worked with the Jaguar Conservation Program and Global Carnivore Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society, and directed carnivore projects in Central and South America.

Cheryl-Lesley's ambitious project, supported by numerous partners, is valued

at over $400,000 U.S. The study addresses the problems that habitat loss and fragmentation pose for the conservation of large carnivores. The location is the Canmore region of the Bow Valley and the Crowsnest Pass area in the Canadian Rockies of Alberta. Using a suite of new tools and technology, the researchers will locate wildlife habitat and movement corridors in fragmented landscapes, and evaluate their utility with respect to grizzly bear and cougar conservation. The results will help resource planners and wildlife managers to focus habitat retention and protection investments, and to identify mitigation options in areas under development pressure.

KYLE VAN WHY

Kyle was awarded $5,000 toward his project titled "Restoration of the Louisiana Black Bear into Suitable Habitats." Kyle is an M.S. student at Louisiana State University, working under the supervision of Dr. Michael Chamberlain. Kyle Received his B.S. at the California University of Pennsylvania. He has worked as a wildlife technician for the Kansas Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks, and the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation.

Kyle's project is part of a larger study on the Louisiana black bear. Funding partners include the CoyPu Foundation, Black Bear Conservation Committee, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Louisiana Nature Conservancy, and Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries. One objective of Kyle's project is to monitor success of relocation and restoration efforts for Louisiana black bears. Biology is only one factor in the success of restoration efforts such as this. Therefore, a second objective is to examine public perceptions and opinions relating to the restoration effort. The study complements an earlier study of black bear restoration in Mississippi for which B&C provided a grant-in-aid (see *Fair Chase* Magazine, Spring 2000 issue).

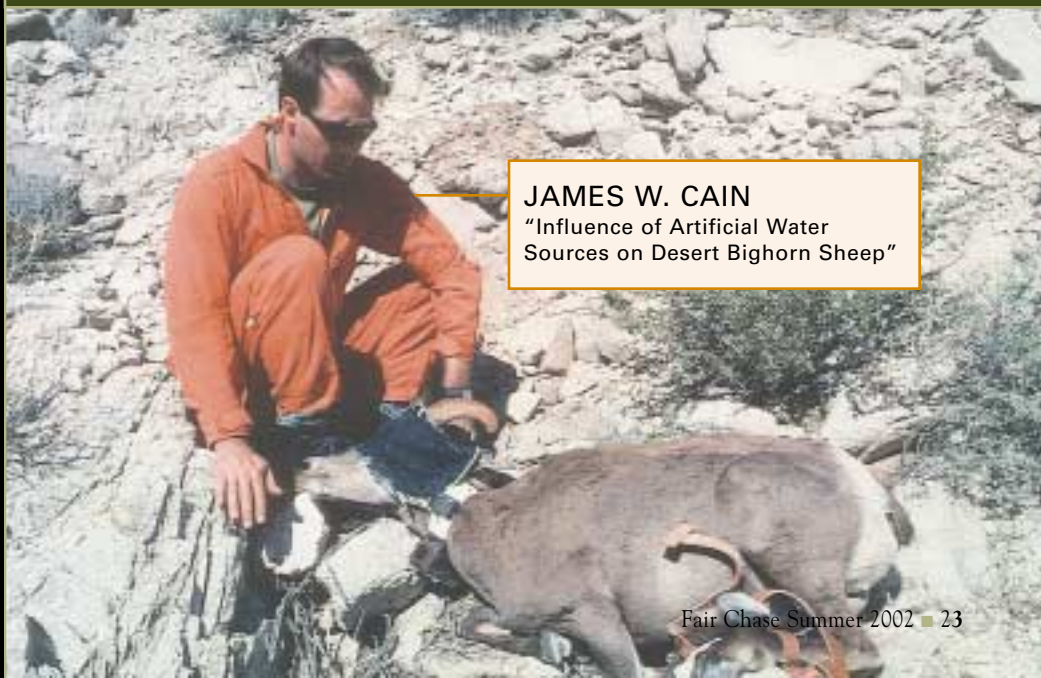
The Grants-in-Aid Committee looks forward to sharing the progress and results of these studies with Members and Associates of the Boone and Crockett Club. Looking ahead, we see a bright future for the program and for the young professionals whose careers we are trying to encourage. ■

KYLE VAN WHY
"Restoration of the Black Bear into Suitable Habitats"

CHERYL-LESLEY CHETKIEWICZ
"Conservation of Large Carnivores in Fragmented Landscapes of the Canadian Rocky Mountains"

JESSICA MONTAG
"Evaluating Predator Compensation Programs as a Means of Social Conflict and Promoting Social Tolerance"

GIA 2002 RECIPIENTS



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