

# THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

An Invitation from the Past... for the Future



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## PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Archery Manufacturers and Merchants Organization ▫  
Bear Trust International ▫ Boone and Crockett Club ▫  
Camp Fire Club of America ▫ Congressional  
Sportsman's Foundation ▫ Conservation Force ▫  
Dallas Safari Club ▫ Ducks Unlimited ▫ Foundation  
for North American Wild Sheep ▫ International  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies ▫  
International Hunter Education Association ▫  
Izaak Walton League of America ▫ National  
Rifle Association of America ▫ National  
Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc. ▫  
National Trappers Association ▫  
National Wild Turkey Federation, Inc. ▫  
▫ North American Grouse Partnership  
▫ Orion - The Hunter's Institute ▫  
Pheasants Forever, Inc. ▫ Pope and  
Young Club ▫ Quail Unlimited, Inc. ▫  
▫ Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
▫ Safari Club International ▫  
Shikar Safari Club ▫ Texas  
Wildlife Association ▫ Theodore  
Roosevelt Conservation Alliance  
▫ The Conservation Fund ▫ The  
Mule Deer Foundation ▫ The  
Ruffed Grouse Society ▫ The  
Wildlife Society ▫ Whitetails  
Unlimited ▫ Wildlife Forever ▫  
Wildlife Habitat Council  
▫ The Wildlife Legislative  
Fund of America ▫ Wildlife  
Management Institute

**By now**, most of you know that last month in Missoula at Boone and Crockett Club Headquarters, the Club hosted the National Wildlife Conservation Partners Summit. The Summit had participants from 35 organizations, representing roughly 4.3 million hunter/conservationists. The Summit was called to build unity and harness the collective strength of participants to address present and future wildlife conservation challenges. The results and outcomes of the Summit will be reported in the next issue of *Fair Chase*.

In this column, I want to share, in its entirety, the Summit invitation letter "from" Theodore Roosevelt sent last spring. It states most clearly and eloquently the challenges and opportunities of the Summit. As I write this in late July, I am fully confident the challenges will be successfully met, the opportunities realized and that you will be proud to read the Summit results.

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## National Wildlife Conservation Partners SUMMIT AUGUST 2000

Spring 2000

My Dear Brother and Sister Hunter-Conservationists:

I have been watching, with some pride, as you folks have carried on with what my colleagues and I started in 1887. My protégé Gifford Pinchot coined the term for our movement - conservation, or "wise use". Bully for you! You have done well with the birthright we created and left for you. The period between 1895 and 1905 was a critical time for our young movement. It was in those years that the critical turn was taken by our young country. We, with deliberate and resolute leadership by a dedicated few, turned back the tide that threatened extinction for our big game. We, against all odds set aside the first National Parks and what became the first National Forests.

We, dedicated few - hunters all, by the way - stood firm when others shied away from the fierce struggle. And, by god, we succeeded when many more timid souls gave way to what they considered a foregone conclusion.

I can think of several meetings of fellows of like mind where the mix of intellect, heart and a deep caring produced what some have called magic moments. One such meeting happened in December 1887, in my home in New York City. The 10 gentlemen present had several things in common, the most important being they were enthusiastic American hunting riflemen - all - who were committed equally to promoting hunting and preserving large game.

That meeting produced the Boone and Crockett Club. Over the next several decades these sportsmen and others, supporting one another with their talents, wealth, political and family connections, and sheer force of will, turned the tide. And, as that tide turned and game numbers rebounded, other private groups began to form around specific conservation interests. But in total and in varying combinations this produced a conservation force that was too powerful to ignore.

Another magic moment occurred in early May 1908, when as President, I called all the Governors together for a national conference on conservation. With the able assistance of Forest Service Chief Pinchot, I gained the commitment from the Governors that the waste of the past must stop and that the states must join in husbanding the nation's precious natural resources.

We all certainly made a discovery then that served us well. When we were separate entities we were as the fingers of an open hand that was little effective in the combat that always surrounded the proper and wise use of natural resources where so much was at stake in both dollars and conservation for future generations. But, when those fingers were folded into a fist, there my friends, was a hand more suited for winning combat. After my valiant colleagues and I departed the scene, our spiritual progeny and their progeny - you among them - never let us down. They, and you, carried our banners.

But as you work your way through the critical decade of 1995 to 2005, you, with all due respect, now seem a bit confused and uncertain. You, with pure hearts, - hunters all - have formed your ranks behind a multitude of banners. I am impressed with your zeal and dedication, and your good works for conservation. But, my friends, this is your critical decade as the die is being cast for what will happen with wildlife and the precious land that produces and secures the wonderful creatures we love, and to whose welfare you are so devoted. And, this is likely the decade when the future of hunting, and the way of life that hunting personifies may well be decided.

If I were there I would, as always, try to lead, to organize, to create another magic moment in which you could seize what should be your golden decade. But now, only you can act. We, my stalwart companions and I, provided you with your legacy and your chance to choose to pass on that legacy to those who will follow - it is not only your opportunity - it is, I think, your solemn obligation.

You - hunters all - must, very soon, wrap your separate fingers into closed fists and harness your collective strength. Whether you so choose or not, there is a bully struggle well under way that you must join and win.

You have a much better chance to win, to hold onto those things we, and you, so value if you close your fingers. You - hunters all - are being invited to a "summit" of leaders of groups of hunter-conservationists of every interest. There can be magic in that meeting as in the meetings I called during a similar critical period. Much depends on you. But, you must believe in yourselves, in the potential of magic moments, and in the success of your cause. I do.

Sincerely,  
*Theodore Roosevelt*  
Theodore Roosevelt

WE BELIEVE IN MAGIC