

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Education and the Future of the Hunter-Conservation Community



Robert Model
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Boone and Crockett Club

We have a wonderful opportunity to have a significant and positive impact — in terms of educational efforts, at all levels, that relates to hunting and fishing as a part of overall conservation. Many of us belong to several different conservation oriented organizations that have active educational programs directed to young hunters and fishermen, as well as the education of the next generation of wildlife and resource managers. Those efforts are important today and will be even more important as time passes. Now more than ever, we need to embrace these opportunities to influence the future and move forward with enhanced efforts.

In August 2004, the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) convened for their fifth annual meeting.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I appreciate the many thoughtful comments that we have received in response to my article titled "Tackling Controversy Head On" in the Spring 2004 issue of *Fair Chase*. As a matter of policy, the Boone and Crockett Club has not and will not accept animals taken behind a high fence in the Club's Awards Program or any of the Club's records books.

If you have specific questions about this issue, please call, write, or email me directly at:
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It was held at the Camp Fire Club of America, which was founded as a social club and included many of the early Boone and Crockett Club members. The first item on the agenda was a lengthy discussion on the topic of enhanced educational efforts relative to conservation — and the role of hunting and fishing in those

efforts. The conservation community is to be commended for the most excellent efforts in conservation education to this point. We have committed our time and our dollars to the development and funding of various education programs. But that is the past and is, now, but prologue to the future. As we move quickly into the 21st century, the changing national and global economic climate and changing demographics forces us to reevaluate how best to preserve, revamp, and enhance our efforts in conservation education *and* how this might be done most efficiently, effectively, and cooperatively. Surely, we should sustain our most effective efforts and programs. However, I believe that it is time to begin a reinvigorated dialog to ensure that we work collaboratively to combine efforts to establish expanded and enhanced programs in conservation education that will best serve to sustain and enhance conservation efforts and sustain hunting and fishing as part of our evolving culture. By pooling economic, intellectual, and political resources, we can shore up our collective efforts in conservation education area by making sure that we attract a share of the best and brightest into the conservation arena and, then, assure they receive the best possible education to equip them to perform the yeoman tasks that will be required of them as wildlife habitats shrink and the numbers of those who hunt and fish shrink as a percentage of the nation's population.

The AWCP, now 42 organizations strong, sees the value in grasping the educational opportunities provided through utilizing the wealth of resources that exists within this group. We will continue to work with and discuss the 11 recommendations we made to the Bush Administration, in *Wildlife for the 21st Century*. We will push those recommendations to whoever holds the White House after the November elections.

I would like to reiterate those recommendations here.

- Establish Federal Budget Priorities That Will Restore Wildlife Funding to the 1980 Level with adjustments for inflation since that time
- Maintain and Restore Forest and Rangeland Habitats on Public Lands in the West Through Proactive Management

- Maintain and Restore Forest Habitats in the East Through Proactive National Forest Management
- Emphasize Cooperative National Forest Decision Making
- Ensure Effective Natural Resource Leadership at All Levels
- Support Wildlife Conservation Provisions in the 2002 Farm Bill
- Reaffirm State Authority and Responsibility for Wildlife Management — Legal Issues
- Reinforce State Authority and Responsibility for Wildlife Management — Funding Issues
- Increase Funding at State and Federal Levels to Provide for Hunter Retention, Recruitment, and Education
- Remove Disincentives and Create Incentives for Private Land Wildlife Conservation
- Initiate an Assessment of Federal Land Laws to Identify Legal and Regulatory Problems Contributing to Federal Land Management "Gridlock"

The Administration has given sincere attention to *Wildlife for the 21st Century*, and has worked with AWCP and other conservation groups to discuss the viability and logistics of establishing a Conservation Education Institute to help carry out these recommendations. Our first discussions have been enlightening and encouraging. Our aim is to attract not only the leaders of hunter-conservationists, but to engage the business sector, and the government agencies that manage the public lands and wildlife resources as well. In addition to participating in ongoing AWCP meetings related to these efforts, high-level employees of the Council on Environmental Quality, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Interior have committed to attending future AWCP meetings aimed at further development of educational efforts and programs.

I encourage readers of *Fair Chase* to learn more about what the Boone and Crockett Club and other AWCP members are currently committing to education, and their plans for future activities. You may be pleasantly surprised — and encouraged. AWCP welcomes input and suggestions as to how to better enhance and execute efforts in the education of future professional and conservation activists so as to assure a future for hunting and fishing through enhanced conservation efforts. ■