

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

## National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress



**Ben B. Wallace**  
PRESIDENT  
Boone and Crockett Club

I had the privilege of attending the inaugural Canadian National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress (NFWCC) held in Ottawa, Ontario, May 27-31, 2012. The NFWCC was

organized by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) and spearheaded by Angelo Lombardo, executive director of OFAH, Greg Farrant, OFAH's manager of governmental affairs & policy, who also served as NFWCC's general manager, and our own Professional Member, Shane Mahoney, who served as the honorary chair of the congress.

When Shane approached me at our 2010 annual meeting in Albuquerque about whether the Boone and Crockett Club would be interested in sponsoring and participating in this historic congress, I agreed wholeheartedly on the spot. After all, our founders did not charge the Club with conservation of wildlife and habitat just in the U.S.A., but in all of North America. Indeed, strategic goal No. 1 of the Conservation Policy Committee under our newly implemented strategic plan is "to improve the system of conservation throughout North America." One of the performance measures of the goal is to "gain a full understanding of the issues, needs and opportunities in Canada and Mexico, and build alliances with the appropriate agencies and conservation organizations within those countries".

The congress itself was well-organized and went smoothly. The first three mornings were spent in plenary sessions that were focused on three topics: "Why Conservation Matters," "Challenges for Conservation," and "Opportunities." The first two afternoons offered numerous presentations on specific issues. The third afternoon was spent on five workshops with each workshop culminating in recommendations on the five separate topics. The last day focused on reviewing these recommendations. For more detail on the NFWCC and the presentations and recommendations, go to its web site, [nfwcc.com](http://nfwcc.com).

The Boone and Crockett Club was well-represented by 14 Regular and Professional members: myself, Steve Williams, Wini Kessler, Jim Heffelfinger, Ron Regan, John Organ, Paul Krausman, Pal Vahldiek, Ben

Carter, Evelyn Merrill, Gray Thornton, Jack Ward Thomas, Steve Mealey, and Shane Mahoney. Everyone gave excellent speeches and presentations and Shane, in his unique way, gave a passionate speech on "Why the Conservation of Fish and Wildlife should be a National Priority." A nice article about the NFWCC, *The Road Ahead* by assistant editor Steve Galea, can be found in the August 2012 edition of *Ontario Outdoors* magazine, [www.ontariooutdoors.com](http://www.ontariooutdoors.com)

Now that the first NFWCC has closed, OFAH and others are busy analyzing and compiling the complex issues and recommendations that came out of the congress. To me, there were four issues that became apparent. The first is that Canada has no source of dedicated conservation funding like the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act or Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. Mark Duda, executive director of Responsive Management, indicated a recent poll of Canadians showed a majority were in favor of such legislation provided the tax was not onerous and the funds were dedicated to conservation and habitat acquisition. Another issue was the lack of cooperation between the provinces and between the provinces and the federal government. The third was a lack of coordinated efforts by conservation organizations such as with the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) in the U.S. The last was the lack of a direct line of communication between the conservation community and the federal government. This issue was dealt with when, during his keynote address at Wednesday night's banquet, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced the formation of a National Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel, similar to the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council in the U.S.

The Boone and Crockett Club has the knowledge and experience to assist our Canadian brothers and sisters in these matters, as well as the other issues brought up at NFWCC, and I believe we should. It is what our Club was founded for and is an integral part of our strategic plan moving forward.

My congratulations to Angelo, Greg, Shane, and OFAH for organizing and running a very successful NFWCC inaugural event. This was the first step in unifying the conservation organizations and politicians committed to wildlife conservation, and we in the U.S. who can be of assistance should do so.

I want to thank all of the Club members who participated, especially Steve Mealey, vice president of conservation and co-chair of the Conservation Policy Committee for his hard work on the steering committee for NFWCC and his thoughtful insight. I also want to thank our Board of Directors for agreeing to have the Club be a sponsor of NFWCC and for personally putting up the funds to do so. ■

Yours in Conservation,

**BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB**  
FOUNDED IN 1887 BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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