

# DO MORE HUNTING STUFF THIS YEAR

**Here we are at the beginning of a brand new year with several good reasons to reconsider and rededicate ourselves to those things we hold most important. For me, I am going to double down on my conservative values and do what I can to make sure there is a better tomorrow for all concerned. In the context of my hunting life, that means I am going to work harder to hone my hunting skills and reduce my reliance on technology. I further resolve to celebrate my brothers and sisters in the hunting community with greater gusto and revel in their stories of pursuit and challenge every chance I get. I will commit to learning more and more about the habits and habitats of North American big game species. And, I will invest what time, treasure and talent I can afford into the conservation movement. All in all, I am going to do more hunting stuff and less “not-hunting stuff.” By the end of this year, I will have planned and experienced more days afield, and I will have contributed to the well-being of the wild animals, wild places, and the conservationists like never before. It is going to be the best year ever!**

Perfect, right? If only everyone would do exactly the same. If only I would...

I have never been one to get easily discouraged. I suspect most folks who really know me consider me a decidedly optimistic sort. I am

planning and scheming most all the time. I wake up each day with a list of things to do and I almost always take time to look around and see what else needs doing. I pursue life in whatever form it takes.

With all this zest for life, I just don't get to hunt as much as I should. This is a problem that needs fixing. A friend of mine explained long ago that life is made up of three parts. (I am sure he didn't make this up, but I don't know who to give credit for it, so I am simply saying these are not my words.) The three parts are work, maintenance, and play (hunting is “play”). The entire process of life is an effort to trade work units for play units without giving up too many credits to maintenance. Work earns money, money buys either “stuff,” which requires maintenance, or “play,” which is the antithesis of work. (For those who work in the hunting industry, I apologize.) I am at a work/maintenance crossroad, and I need more play. One of my early hunting buddies always said that a day hunting adds two days to the end of your life. I need to adjust the ratio and work on adding days to the end.

Well, life sometimes gets in the way of the best-laid plans. It is relatively easy to get all gung-ho at this time of the year, but like a New Year's resolution, the trick is in keeping the enthusiasm and effort going through the year. When it comes to hunting, I certainly do not have this figured out, but I believe the key is to keep

one's hunting plans top-of-mind throughout the year. In order to do this, we need to justify a higher priority for our hunting stuff. The justification is that hunting our way is a good and worthy use of our precious time.

Ours is a culture of righteousness. Our reward is commensurate with the effort we put in, as long as we measure it properly. In fair chase hunting, there is integrity and honor. We are well-served by immersing ourselves in such things. Unlike so many other distractions in life, this one is worthy of our time. Our time afield as a fair chase hunter and conservationist/steward is good and proper. We are fulfilled, and we grow in our understanding and appreciation. And just in case we ever begin to take ourselves too seriously in hunting, humility is always close at hand. All in all, we are better because we hunt.

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## THE ETHICS OF FAIR CHASE



**Daniel A. Pedrotti, Jr.**  
B&C REGULAR MEMBER  
Chair, Hunter Ethics  
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I believe the good Lord wants and needs us to pay more attention and respect to living a virtuous life and being more willing to stand up for righteousness. I believe, with all my heart, that the fair chase hunting life is aligned with this objective.

The point of this particular ramble is to encourage each and every one of us to spend more time doing hunting stuff and less time doing “not-hunting stuff.” You will be better for it, and the wild animals and wild places will benefit from your time and effort. Go ahead and add a couple of months or even years to your life. ■

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Pedrotti, Jr.' with a stylized flourish at the end.