

Boone And Crockett Club
President Lowell E. Baier Wins

Conservationist of the Year

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For 13 years the Anheuser-Busch Company, through its Budweiser brand, has sponsored the Conservationist of the Year Award, the winner of which receives a \$50,000 prize for his or her designated conservation project. Four finalists each year are chosen

from more than 200 nominations received from around the country. The winner is selected by national balloting done by electronic voting or paper ballots received in St. Louis, Missouri, before the end of November each year, in addition to other criteria. The award is presented at the Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show (SHOT Show), the largest event of its kind in the world.

In July 2007, Lowell Baier was informed he was one of four finalists in Budweiser's competition, nominated for his role in putting Theodore Roosevelt's historic Elkhorn Ranch into public ownership and his record of lifetime conservation achievements.

For 24 months, Lowell Baier led an epic battle to facilitate the federal government's acquisition of the largest remaining privately owned piece of the Elkhorn Ranch. The remaining portion, 23,550 acres of the ranch, was finally acquired on April 25, 2007, following a massive national campaign to secure the Congressional political will

and funding to support the acquisition. The acquisition by the U.S. Forest Service in effect increased the size of the adjacent Theodore Roosevelt National Park by 33 percent. Key to the transaction was a \$500,000 acquisition challenge grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, one of the largest grants the foundation has ever made, validating the historic significance of the transaction to America.

The \$50,000 prize from the Anheuser-Busch competition will cap off and complete fulfilling the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's acquisition challenge. This will clear the way for more funding for habitat enhancement, including deploying additional funding



Bob Fishbeck – Budweiser Product Manager (left), presents Lowell E. Baier with the Conservationist of the Year Award at the 2008 SHOT Show. OPPOSITE: Baier in the field at the Elkhorn Ranch in August 2007.

for habitat and riparian restoration efforts. These efforts will utilize native grasses and plants, grass banking for neighboring ranchers in times of drought or grass fires, environmental mitigation, and educational and interpretive programs through the cooperative participation of the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service. The reality of the \$50,000 prize has a multiplier effect on the future funding for the enhancement of this historic landscape.

Why is Theodore Roosevelt's Elkhorn Ranch important to America?

It was here Theodore Roosevelt retreated for 3-1/2 years (1884-1887), during which time his conservation conscience fermented and crystallized. This led to his political activism to make the conservation of America's natural resources a national priority. During Roosevelt's presidency, he set aside 230 million acres to forests, parklands, wildlife refuges, and national monuments. That represented 84,000 acres a day during Roosevelt's presidency, or 10 percent of the United States. His actions led to the establishment of the national park system, the national forest reserves, the fish and wildlife refuges and the creation of national monuments.

All of this grew out of Theodore Roosevelt's concept of conservation crystallized during his time at the Elkhorn Ranch, which is why the ranch is known as the Cradle of Conservation and is considered sacred ground to the conservation and environmental movements in America.

While Lowell Baier's professional career spans 44 years, the last 37 years have been heavily invested in wildlife conservation activism. He started with the founding of the National Capital Area chapter of Safari Club International in 1972, which at the national level is a powerhouse today in conservation funding and policy initiatives. That led to his being one of the original 20 charter members that created the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep. That organization, since its inception in 1974, has raised and invested more than \$50 million in conservation projects.

In 1978, Lowell Baier helped lead the campaign to save the National Collection of Heads and Horns from being deposited into the attics of the American Museum of Natural History where they would have never been seen again by the hunting public. This worldwide collection contained 238 specimens of the largest heads and horns collected on all of the five continents in the world, including the famed Chadwick

Ram from British Columbia. The North American portion of the collection is now on display in the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, where 7.2 million visitors have viewed it since 1982. The international collection formed the nucleus for Safari Club International to build their International Wildlife Museum in Tucson, Arizona, in 1988. From a research perspective, this collection represents the largest single group of DNA specimens ever assembled of horn ungulates.

Lowell Baier's role as a major collaborative strategist in repositioning the Boone and Crockett Club, America's oldest wildlife conservation organization started by Theodore Roosevelt in 1887, has been key to the ability and success of the Club in influencing major conservation and natural resource policy issues in Washington that affect every living American today, and future generations to come. He played a principal role in the Club's establishment of a post-graduate wildlife program at the University of Montana, which has now expanded to Texas A&M, Oregon State, and Michigan State, as well as the Club's decision to move its headquarters to Missoula, Montana, in 1992.

When President George H.W. Bush asked the Club to draft a wildlife conservation agenda for his administration, Lowell Baier took the lead role for the president. When a major deficit in state and federal senior wildlife managers appeared on the horizons in 2004, he played a major role in creating the National Conservation Leadership Institute to jump-start the careers of mid-level managers to fill the looming leadership void in coming years. Today he serves as vice chairman of the board. He was also a delegate to the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation, and a member of the U.S. Forest Service Centennial Steering Committee. Currently, he is President of the Boone and Crockett Club.

Though his 37 years of experience and leadership played a key role in the acquisition, Baier is quick to acknowledge it was a team effort. "I want to thank my friends at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the American Wildlife Conservation Partners, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the 140 groups and individuals who worked so hard to make this project happen," Baier said. "This is truly cooperative conservation at its finest! And a big thank you to Budweiser for making our fundraising dreams a reality." Americans will now be able to enjoy multiple recreational opportunities on the

Elkhorn Ranch, including hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and sightseeing. The land will also be carefully managed for agricultural purposes as well as some oil and gas production. The Cradle of Conservation has been preserved for all time. ■

The following pages include Baier's Conservationist of the Year acceptance speech.



The Budweiser Conservationist Award

for 13 years has showcased the lifetime stewardship record of four people each year with distinguished service to the conservation of America's wildlife, natural resources and scenic treasures. That's now 52 people recognized by Budweiser who have each made a difference in conservation.

What the Budweiser Award celebrates in our conservation community is the "power of one," the difference one person can make in the conservation arena, and how by their courage, enthusiasm, pas-

all about, working together collectively, cooperatively and collaboratively, with great conviction and commitment, to achieve a common objective. It is both an honor and a duty to be a conservation steward. However, as noted, no one man alone achieves victory over great challenges. It is always a team effort built on cooperation and partnerships. Hence, the Budweiser Award celebrates the power of what is today called "cooperative conservation."

If you examine the service record of the four nominees for this award today, or the record of 52 nominees over the past 13 years, you'll discover a lifetime of distin-

sought courage and inspiration to achieve in the face of obstacles, to follow their dream with enthusiasm and conviction that they are doing the right thing, notwithstanding the many naysayers. Our collective stewardship in conservation always has renewed its strength and been able to mount up with wings like eagles as foretold in the Biblical chapter of Isaiah (40:31), because we do so with selfless and steadfast devotion to the conservation of our country's natural riches for the benefit of all. As Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

As we look over our life's work of stewardship, and see the difference it has made in our country's landscape, and the joy it brings to many, we are changed profoundly and forever, and we are rewarded when we recall the sights and sounds of noisy geese with their spring goslings in a reclaimed prairie pothole; or the sound of bleating big-horn lambs in a majestic mountain saddle, where their parents were transplanted just two years earlier; or the melodic sound of the bugle of a bull elk far off in the distant woodland that was silent for 100 years after being logged off and all the game killed off; or the lonely howl of a wolf in Yellowstone echoing across the glistening, snow covered Hayden Valley, under a full moon on a clear, cold, crisp winter night.

Acceptance Speech of Lowell E. Baier 2008 Conservationist of the Year Award Winner

Sponsored by Anheuser-Busch/Budweiser

February 2, 2008; Convention Center – Las Vegas, Nevada

sion and example, inspire others to follow. One of Theodore Roosevelt's most famous speeches made in 1910 characterized "the man in the arena," whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, passionately striving to do great deeds and fight worthy causes in service to his country and fellow man. One person alone always takes that first solitary step, conceives a truly inspirational idea, or embraces a formidable challenge. But conservation achievement is not the work of one person alone, but rather a partnership of many—many, many people in the arena as Roosevelt recognized.

That's what stewardship of our wildlife, natural resources and scenic lands is

guished and exemplary achievements done in partnership with others. I salute all 52 nominees for their outstanding work, and for Budweiser to showcase their illustrious record of dedication. The Budweiser Award creates a beacon to inspire others to become stewards in this noble endeavor we call conservation.

This Budweiser Award of an eagle with uplifted wings is symbolic when recognizing conservation stewards for their tireless, voluntary service and selfless devotion to our country and fellow man. Each of them have

BELOW: Baier met with Forest Service Grasslands Supervisor Dave Pieper (right) at the Elkhorn Ranch in August 2007. **TOP RIGHT:** Baier was joined by his brother Alan, center, and his wife Bonnie at the award presentation in Las Vegas. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The check for \$50,000 will go directly to the Elkhorn Ranch for habitat restoration and the development of interpretative displays.



There is only one Budweiser Award presented each year, but know that our conservation stewards are rewarded daily when they see, hear or recall the sounds of nature, for it brings joy and peace to their soul, knowing their life's work has not been in vain but rather an honor and a privilege, that has made a difference in the scenic landscapes across America.

It is with great humility that I accept this award not for myself, but for all four of the 2008 nominees, for my brethren in the Boone and Crockett Club, and all of our fellow stewards who labor selflessly in noble service to enhance our country's wildlife, and its wild and scenic lands. This award would have made Theodore Roosevelt immensely proud of his progeny in the Boone and Crockett Club, which he founded in 1887, thus making it America's oldest wildlife conservation organization.

I'd like to thank Budweiser and the Anheuser-Busch Company for sponsoring this award, represented here today by Product Manager Bob Fishbeck, and for Budweiser's partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in sponsoring this award, represented here today by the foundation's President Jeff Trandahl and Tom Kelsch, NFWF's eastern regional director. The \$50,000 award will go directly into a habitat restoration and interpretation fund for our future work at Theodore Roosevelt's historic Elkhorn Ranch in North Dakota, the birthplace of conservation in America, which the Friends of the Elkhorn Ranch facilitated acquisition by the U.S. Forest Service in 2006-07.

Our venue here at the SHOT Show is sponsored annually by the National Shooting Sports Foundation. NSSF brings our industry together each year to enhance the renewal of our mutual commitments to conservation. NSSF, thank you, and congratulations on another great SHOT Show, this their 30th consecutive show.

Most important of all, before I conclude, I want to recognize my wife of 40 years, Bonnie Baier. She has put up with my intense and driven behavior working nights, weekends and through our vacations. Thank you, Bonnie, I love you for all of your understanding and support for these past 40 years.

My family is represented here today by my brother, Alan Baier, who from child-

hood, along with my grandfather, Peter Baier, inspired my interest in the natural world of wildlife and the outdoors. Thank you, Alan, for all of our sporting adventures together, for breaking trail early on and leading the way, and especially for being here and sharing this very special moment with me today. Our granddad would have been very proud of us both.

My thanks to those two groups that nominated me for the award, the Boone and Crockett Club, represented here today by its Chairman, Bob Model, and separately, the Friends of the Elkhorn Ranch, one of the major partners of which is the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, represented here today by Chairman Andy Hoxsey. Thanks to you, Bob and Andy, for being here to share this very special moment with me.

To the many, many folks who voted for me, a very sincere "thank you," and especially to the leaders of the many wildlife groups from our American Wildlife Conservation Partners that mobilized their organizations to support me. Those that are here today are Rob Keck, CEO of the National Wild Turkey Federation; Merle Shepard, president-elect of Safari Club International; and Jeff Crane, president of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. To all, a very sincere thank you for your collective support.

Another "thank you" goes to Tony Schoonen, our Chief of Staff at the Boone and Crockett Club, and the entire "team B&C" staff that labored tirelessly to coordinate my campaign and get out the vote, and who never lost faith in our small 200-member organization's ability to win this competition. Tony, thank you, and the same to our Club's Director of Marketing, Keith Balfour, also here today.

I want to recognize all of my co-workers over the last 37 years who have labored beside me in the many, many conservation projects I've been a part of, and who have shared the highs and lows of conservation stewardship. Because that's what really makes stewardship meaningful and fulfilling. These personal relationships and bonds that one forges over the years is what gives meaning and joy to our stewardship efforts together to make this land and its wildlife better than we first found it. Thank you all. ■

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FOUNDED IN 1887
BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT**

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