

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Lowell E. Baier
PRESIDENT
Boone and Crockett Club

Envisioning a Future of The Club

The Club's first strategic plan developed in 1992, and each iteration thereafter, established as one of our goals to reestablish Boone and Crockett Club as a leader in the development of

national conservation policy. That's a lofty goal for our small Club, after years of only reflecting on our historic legacy between 1887 and 1925 when we were a national policy leader. From where I sit in a front row seat here in Washington, D.C., I am pleased to report that the Club has achieved—for now—a national leadership position in conservation policy development. We've done it not alone, but in partnership with and through the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP), a 41-member group organized in 2000 by our Club during a three-day meeting at its headquarters in Missoula.

Several hard facts support my thesis. On August 26, 2004, President Bush issued Executive Order No. 13352 entitled *Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation*. This order framed for the administration its conservation policy to achieve successful outcomes on natural resource and environmental issues by the federal government's departments and agencies working closely together, and directly in partnership with state, tribal, and local participants and NGOs in federal decision-making about wildlife.

Who advanced this idea and pushed hard for its implementation with the administration? Boone and Crockett Club's Government Affairs and Conservation Policy Committees working hand in glove with our AWCP partners.

It seems elementary on its face, but underlying the executive order were separate turfs, sometimes even within one federal department, that were fiercely guarded by career bureaucrats provoking gridlock within the Washington Beltway. This entrenchment stalled and frequently impaired the federal government's ability to promote essential sporting, natural resource, and environmental initiatives and regulations.

What our conservation partners wanted was a White House conference fo-

cused on wildlife and its future. Three earlier national wildlife policy conferences in 1908, 1930, and 1973 were initiated and organized by Club members Theodore Roosevelt, Aldo Leopold and Durward Allen. The AWCP, at the invitation of Secretary of Interior Gale Norton, and the Department of Interior, participated with her and her staff in a two-day conference in May 2005, in Washington, D.C. The scope of the conference was limited, and focused primarily on a few priority issues (i.e. energy development and wildlife) where positive resolution was likely in the short-term. Many broader issues could not be addressed in the short time-frame of the May event.

On August 29-31, 2005, pursuant to Executive Order No. 13352, the administra-

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tion then orchestrated a three-day White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation in St. Louis to demonstrate how cooperative conservation worked on the ground. Examples from across America were showcased in workshops, bringing in the many dissident parties that found a way to achieve results by working together and setting aside their entrenched differences.

Notable examples included the Malpai Borderlands Partnership; Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative; Lower Bronx River Community Restoration Initiative; Northwest Florida Greenway Project; and the Blackfoot Challenge, to name a few. The focus of the St. Louis conference was more on dispute resolution at the major landscape level, and not on the future of wildlife and game species. Nevertheless, a national precedent was set by showing how success can be achieved through altering behavior patterns in dispute resolution, thus raising the bar on civility.

During her tenure, Secretary of Interior Gale Norton aggressively promoted the concept of cooperative conservation as the 4 "C's": communication, consultation, collaboration, and consensus. The administration took its concept of cooperative conservation on the road. The cabinet secretaries from Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, and EPA held 25 listening sessions in the fall of 2006 and made speeches across the country promoting the concept and its key characteristics.

Building on the positive, and the results of these two conferences, Boone and Crockett Club's Government Affairs and Conservation Policy Committees, working with its AWCP partners, continued to get the administration to focus on the future of America's wildlife, and specifically its game species and hunting opportunities, as a matter of federal policy.

To establish this conservation policy and embed it into the consciousness of the Washington bureaucratic establishment, after enormous work by our AWCP partners led by Boone and Crockett Club, on August 6, 2007 President Bush issued Executive Order No. 13443 titled *Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation*. Boone and Crockett Club's Government Affairs Committee and our AWCP partners advised on the drafting of the order, and they hit pay dirt!

What It Does

The order facilitates the enhancement of our hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat on public lands. In its implementation, the Departments of Agriculture and Interior are directed to coordinate with state and tribal governments' game management plans to develop a comprehensive plan. The order further directs a White House conference be held in 2008. Within one year of the conference, the Chairman of the President's Council on Environmental Quality is directed to prepare a comprehensive Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Plan, setting a 10-year agenda to achieve the goals of EO 13443.

All federal employees are compelled by law to execute this order, and failure to comply is punishable by suspension or removal from office. That puts teeth in the administration's enforcement of enhanc-

ing and perpetuating our hunting heritage. Moreover, executive orders survive elections and changing administrations. So this order memorializes our sporting inheritance for future generations to enjoy, and forces the federal government to foster and enhance our game species populations. This gives our sporting community a terrific tool to use judiciously in the future when federal bureaucrats become intransigent. Unspoken but implied within the EO is that all the behavioral key characteristics of cooperation conservation at all levels will be employed to achieve its goals.

An Old Idea Reborn

The concept of cooperative conservation is not new. Early Club member Gifford Pinchot promoted the concept broadly in his role as Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, and in his notable book, *Breaking New Ground* (1947). The U.S. Forest Service has continued to embrace the concept of partnerships with private sector constituencies since Gifford Pinchot's era back in the early 1900s.

The formation of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) in 2000 was the beginning of a similar approach in the NGO arena. The AWCP formation has led to a combined voice on legislative and regulatory matters in Washington affecting our community. AWCP's "voice" has had a powerful and positive influence, since its combined membership represents a voting block of some 5-7 million Americans, and given the country's 12 million hunters, that gets the attention of the Congress and administration.

On March 23, 2006, through the efforts of the AWCP, a combined joint Federal Advisory Committee between the Departments of Agriculture and Interior was created, called the Sporting Conservation Council. Its 12 members are each appointed by the President, and 10 of the 12 members are Boone and Crockett members, and all are from member groups of the AWCP. This Council has had a measurable effect on regulatory issues, and is charged by the President pursuant to Executive Order No. 13443 to orchestrate this year's White House conference (in cooperation with the President's Council on Environmental Quality) on preserving and enhancing the hunting heritage of our country and its game species.

The Council's creation was the direct work of Boone and Crockett Club's Government Affairs and Conservation Policy Committees aligned with the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation,

and many of our key AWCP partners. The AWCP and the Sporting Conservation Council represent two fine examples of cooperative conservation in action. People and organizations partnered to achieve what none of them could do alone.

Our Plan

The new strategic plan of the Boone and Crockett Club adopted at our annual meeting on December 1, 2007, provides the following: "We envision a future in which the Boone and Crockett Club continues to be an internationally recognized conservation leader. A future in which the Club continues its legacy as a key leader in national conservation policy." This vision has been part of our strategic plan since 1992.

The events starting with the formation of the AWCP in 2000, through two presidential executive orders, two national conferences and a third scheduled for September 2008, lend support to my opening thesis that Boone and Crockett Club has re-established itself as a key leader in national conservation policy. We can all take great pride and credit in this record of achievement, none of which would have happened without the combined energies of our membership starting 25-30 years ago taking small steps, year by year, toward a grand vision. These truly are the Bull Moose years for our Club—or as TR would say—Bully! ■



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Phone: (406) 542-1888 Fax: (406) 542-0784
Email: bcclub@boone-crockett.org
Advertising Contact: Keith Balfour – Ext. 208

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