

OUR GOOD WORK

FROM THE
PRESIDENT



Timothy C. Brady
PRESIDENT

Shortly after our annual meeting in Tucson, I joined a childhood friend on an elk hunt in New Mexico. After the frenzied pace of our conference, it was great to enjoy the solitude and beauty of the western landscape. I have always believed this time afield gives one the unique opportunity to reflect, consider, and appreciate what matters in our lives. I spent a lot of time thinking about how the activities of the Boone and Crockett Club can have a positive influence not just on the hunter-conservationist community, but everyone who enjoys wild places and wild things.

Just as we have done over the last 133 years, our members continue to form and shape conservation policy in the United States. Our Conservation Policy Committee co-chairs, Paul Phillips and James Cummins, provided the following recap of the Club's efforts in 2019 for our Club newsletter. I believe the significance of our engagement and positive outcomes needed to be shared with a larger audience, so I asked that the article be reprinted in this edition of *Fair Chase*. Please note their request for increased member participation in their good work. Your help goes a long way.

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BOONE AND CROCKETT ENDS A SUCCESSFUL YEAR WITH POLICY

This past year has certainly been an active one in the conservation policy arena. New leadership is gradually taking over, especially with a new secretary of the Interior and a new director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

(FWS). Congress is moving into the next election cycle, and that will bring changes too. Our Conservation Policy Committee has made some great progress on many fronts, but some items still need attention, as will probably always be the case.

The Senate confirmed David Bernhardt as the new Interior secretary. David Bernhardt had served as the department's deputy secretary under President Trump, as well as its top lawyer during the second Bush administration. Between those appointments, he worked as a lawyer and lobbyist. The Club supported his confirmation and continues to work on the Department of the Interior's sportsmen's agenda. One important item is the secretary issuing Secretarial Order 3373 urging the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to consider hunting and fishing access on public lands. Specifically, this order directs the BLM to adequately weigh public access for outdoor recreation—including hunting and fishing—when determining the appropriateness of the disposal or exchange of public lands.

Congress passed a landmark public lands package (S. 47—John D. Dingell, Jr., Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act) that included many Club priorities. This law enhances hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting opportunities; helps restore primacy of state jurisdiction over the management of fish and wildlife; affirms the rights of law-abiding hunters and recreational shooters; and fairly examines the role and cost of litigation in federal decisions. The bill enacted into law the effort by B&C President Emeritus

Lowell Baier to begin reforming the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA).

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is quickly developing a highway bill that will have important wildlife conservation implications. The Club is getting involved to ensure that conservation measures like wildlife crossings and adequate funding for Forest Service roads are considered

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) continues to attract attention. In our work with Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue through our seat on the Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation Council, we are urging a joint approach to CWD between U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Interior. USDA has recently issued the latest version of herd certification standards that pertain to interstate transportation. We are engaging with the sponsors of the eight separate but similar bills in Congress that address financial assistance to states. We hope that a consolidated approach to new programming could attract enough of the co-sponsors behind one measure to achieve enactment.

The Club is working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to improve the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). The Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) is a

component of ACEP that is largely responsible for restoring bottomland hardwood and wetland habitat. For example, WRE helped the delisting of the Louisiana black bear. Specifically, the Club is requesting:

- 1) NRCS provide a minimum of \$30 million in funding annually, beginning in FY19, for wetland reserve enhancement partnership opportunities;
- 2) Funding allocations between Agricultural Land Easement and WRE programs follow historic allocations of legacy programs, and;
- 3) In determining criteria for environmentally sensitive land of special significance for waiving the adjusted gross income limitation for ACEP, that NRCS give the most consideration to lands that can demonstrate significant linkages with the conservation objectives of migratory corridors, wetlands conservation, and water quality programs, plans, or initiatives.

With a rich history that spans three centuries, our thoughtful, science-based approach to resolving complex issues gives the Boone and Crockett Club credibility that few organizations possess.

The Club worked to obtain \$480 million for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program to restore forests damaged from hurricanes Michael and Florence, as well as wildfires, tornadoes, and floods occurring in FY2018 and FY2019. We also worked to obtain \$435 million for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program, which includes the Floodplain Easements Program, to restore floodplains damaged from hurricanes Michael and Florence, as well as wildfires, tornadoes, and floods occurring in FY2018 and FY2019. The Club worked to help obtain \$720 million to repay borrowed funds from the non-fire accounts of the U.S. Forest Service to cover costs of the FY2018 wildfire suppression activities.

The Club is engaging with the USDA, Justice Department, and the Administrative Conference of the U.S. on implementation of the EAJA amendment enacted earlier this year. This work will publicize for the first time in more than 20 years the important details of lawsuits against conservation agencies. The data will show who is filing, why the government loses (when it loses), and how much money is paid to litigators. Before this law passed, the Department of Interior and Forest Service were already organizing this data. The Department of Justice is responsible for reporting on payments from the Judgment Fund (separately from EAJA).

The Club remains engaged in helping to advance meaningful reforms to the

Endangered Species Act that would fix the listing and delisting process and create more opportunities for state management of predator species. Lowell Baier's new book on private land conservation for species is soon to publish. See page 71 for more information. Promoting private-land incentives for conservation is the focus of recent Club conversations at the Department of Interior. We are developing policy that enables private investment to pay landowners for conservation achievements that can later be reimbursed to offset future habitat losses. We continue to support state management of the gray wolf and the grizzly bear, and the FWS's decisions to delist these species.

The Club supports the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which would provide \$1.3 billion annual mandatory funding for state fish and wildlife agencies to fund their most urgent species conservation needs. This funding would go towards meeting the state fish and wildlife plans. This legislation has passed the full House and is out of committee in the Senate.

In September, several Club members joined for a two-hour conservation roundtable that was co-hosted by Club Members Simon Roosevelt and Interior Secretary David Bernhardt. B&C Club President Tim Brady, in an effort to advance the need for protection of summer range, made progress at the roundtable by suggesting the migratory corridors initiative be expanded to include summer

range. Secretary Bernhardt put that issue as well as the potential for Endangered Species Act mitigation policy on the list for follow-up work.

These are just the highlights from this past year. However, none of this would have been possible without the help from our Club's members and key partner organizations.

For the policy program to be more effective, we need more members volunteering their time. If you want to assist the Club's policy team in helping us to communicate with elected officials you know, please tell us. If you want to go to Washington, D.C., or you periodically go to D.C. anyway and want to help, tell us.

James L. Cummins and Paul Phillips
- Conservation Committee Co-Chairs

For an organization small in number, our efforts and influence continue to impact almost every American in some way. With a rich history that spans three centuries, our thoughtful, science-based approach to resolving complex issues gives the Boone and Crockett Club credibility that few organizations possess. Just as our predecessors did so effectively, we will continue to utilize our resources and influence to benefit the hunter-conservation community and the conservation community at large. ■




The Secretary of the Interior's 2019 Conservation Roundtable



THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB ASKS THAT YOU PLEASE THANK OUR TRAILBLAZERS WITH YOUR PATRONAGE.