

FROM THE EDITOR



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Be Prepared... Physically, Mentally, and Ethically

As summer approaches, many of you are hopefully preparing for your fall hunts. Most of the state drawings are completed. Planning, at times, is almost as good as the hunt itself. Being prepared physically, mentally,

and need I say, ethically, should be a top priority for everyone.

In this issue of *Fair Chase*, Wayne van Zwoll has tackled a delicate subject—long-range shooting. Some have compared the hunter to the golfer. Each participates in an individual sport where the success or failure relies on the single participant mixed with a little luck now and then. Practice for golf is swinging at the ball; for hunting, it's shooting your rifle. Both are necessary to become proficient. When you are on the golf course, you alone know the rules and are expected to follow them. Much like hunting, your internal consciousness and sense of fair play is what others rely on to keep the game fair. Breaking the rules by moving your ball to a better location in order to help your score may only be known to you, but it demeans the entire sport. The foundation of fairness and the purity of the sport is kept alive by the individual who plays by the rules when others aren't watching. But this is where, I believe, the similarity stops. Hunting goes one step further.

In our beloved sport, we cannot forget the fact that we take a living thing from our precious Earth. We take a life. In doing this, I believe, we are held by our Creator to a higher standard. The beauty of what we harvest is a majestic animal, surviving all the hardships nature has to offer—some by luck, but mostly by skill and fortitude. The moment I pull the trigger, life ends. As hunters, we need to respect and honor this. It sets a demand for ethics above all other sports. We must take into account the team of resources that went into the production of this magnificent animal. The thousands of hours spent by our game biologists and natural resource managers in stewarding the land that produces such a trophy. No one can tell

you how far you should shoot. You alone are in charge of making sure you achieved an ethical kill. All of us in the conservation community count on your judgment. The nature of our sport depends on it!

Our conservation articles are my favorite section in *Fair Chase*. Dr. Todd Brinkman's piece exemplifies the study that benefits all of us. The beauty in this article lies in the ingenious method of measuring fecal DNA to help to identify and count the populations of scattered herds. It also shows that through scientific study we can quell the emotional challenges of bias and misunderstanding that can play between hunters and their communities. Too often what seems like a logical assumption is not. We must remember that science or scientific study rules.

The Boone and Crockett measuring system is utilized for many things. In our final piece of our law enforcement series, Mike Korn shows us how it's used to help quantify an animal's worth in calculating restitution poachers must pay to the state of Montana for their deeds. Personally, I think we should fine them more!

Our Club President Lowell Baier shows us how federal legislation has unintentionally usurped states' rights in managing wildlife. This "unintended consequence" has allowed some groups to literally set science on the back burner. It can prevent our wildlife biologists from doing their jobs. The recent wolf issue is a prime example.

Finally, I want to bring to your attention that our book *Theodore Roosevelt Hunter Conservationist* has been awarded some of the highest honors in the publication world. It has received the Independent Book Publishers (IBPA) Benjamin Franklin Gold Award as best biography of the year and the Silver Award for history. PubWest Book Design Awards gave the book its Gold Award for history/biography. You must consider buying this gem. See page 24 for details.

In closing, we at *Fair Chase* want to wish all of our readers the best of experiences in the field. Our love of nature and its bounty is our bond. *Fair Chase* will continue to serve that purpose for all of us. ■



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