

FROM THE EDITOR

In this Issue



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This summer issue of *Fair Chase* is, in my opinion, one of our best. The overwhelming theme in our essays is that only through scientific study will the truth be known.

Most of the time, intuition, what we think or feel is correct, isn't.

Michael Wisdom and Martin Vavra's article on "Management of Elk Habitat" tells us that the instinctive repulsion to the concept of clear-cutting our forest is a false one when this system is used scientifically. In fact clear-cutting may be the tail of survival for our elk herds. William Porter shows us that the tick may be more dangerous to our moose populations than are wolves. My intuition told me otherwise. Greg Schildwacher tells the tale



Josh Hamat's hunting essay about his Alaska black bear hunt kicks off *Fair Chase's* new youth hunters section.

of the struggle between science and Congress in his wolf management article. It is a must-read if you want to understand the intricacies and at times, frustrating ways we must negotiate through our public government to achieve our conservation goals. No single group can do this—influence must come from coalitions. And the Boone and Crockett Club was front and center marshaling coalitions to help legislators understand science behind delisting the wolf, which ultimately resulted in the Legislature's April 14, 2011, vote delisting the wolf in Montana and Idaho. The theme permeating these articles is that preservationists, if not guided by scientific knowledge, can be destructive to conservation of wildlife species and forest management. Success with scientific study and its proper application is a story told by Bill Cooper in "Kentucky's Trophy White-tails." How scientific study starts its process is reflected in Dustin Hollowell's article on "West Texas Mule Deer in Changing Landscapes." Cristina Eisenberg's article, "Hunting and the Land Ethic" demonstrates how private landowner and Boone and Crockett member Paul Vahldiek's inspiring vision can "serve as a land-ethic blueprint for private lands."

We must first gather the data, then implement the scientific knowledge we have gained. It is an easy formula not so easily achieved in our complex society. This requires money! Steve Williams writes a disturbing tale in his "Capital Comments" of our narrow escape from draconian reductions in funding of our wildlife agencies and forest service. This budget battle is just beginning and if not won, has the potential to be one of the most influential decisions concerning the future of our conservation efforts. We must all join his call for action to preserve this heritage!

The future of the conservation heritage is the theme behind our new "youth series." We have asked our young hunters to tell us of their experiences in the field. Most of you may know that starting with last year's awards banquet, the Boone and Crockett Club began recognizing trophies taken by young hunters less than 18 years of age. Josh Hamat's essay is the first of our youth series. His story, recounting the record-book hunt for black bear in Alaska, tells us that it is his generation and those who follow that the Boone and Crockett Club works for.

In conjunction with these essays, *Fair Chase* magazine will also highlight outstanding groups that are contributing to this youth legacy. These persons or groups have taken the extra effort to ensure the hunter-conservationist tradition is passed down to the next generation. The first to be recognized is Ted Nugent's Kamp for Kids. For nearly a quarter century, Nugent's camp has introduced, promoted and brought recognition of our North American wildlife model to thousands of our young generation. This is the future heritage of our conservation and hunting legacy.

As usual, we still have our outstanding articles on hunting led by one of my favorites, Wayne van Zwoll. Please also check out "Beyond the Score."

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Fair Chase*. ■

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