

FROM THE PRESIDENT

B&C Professional Members



Ben B. Wallace
PRESIDENT
Boone and Crockett Club

When I sat down to write this column, I intended to let you know what the first six months of my presidency has been like. While you will still get a feel for that, the more I thought

about the events leading up to this writing, the more it became apparent there was a common thread weaving throughout my first six months as president: how critically important the wonderfully talented and dedicated Professional Members are to the Boone and Crockett Club and the North American wildlife conservation movement. As I lay out these first six months, I'm sure you will agree with my previous statement.

The first few weeks of my presidency were rather benign. I'm sure this was due to hunting season, Christmas and New Years. However, the beginning of 2011 opened the floodgates of the sometimes turbulent, sometimes docile, but always moving river of being president of the Boone and Crockett Club.

My first stop was at the Dallas Safari Club (DSC) convention, where I and other members of our Club were there to enjoy the convention and to pay tribute to our past president, Dan Pedrotti, who received the Peter Hathaway Capstick Hunting Heritage Award. This award is DSC's most prestigious conservation and service award. As a side note, the Boone and Crockett Club won the award in 2009. While at the DSC convention, it struck me how well-run and organized the convention was. I haven't attended the DSC convention since it was moved to the convention center, and it was very impressive. Ben Carter is the executive director of DSC and a Professional Member of B&C. While I know Ben would be the first to credit the volunteer members of DSC, Ben is the person who oversees his small number of staff and makes sure everything runs well. My congratulations to Ben on an excellent convention.

My next stop was at the National Shooting Sports Foundation's SHOT Show. Here, several of our staff, Tony Schoonen, chief of staff, Keith Balfour, director of marketing, and Julie Houk, director of publications, all three Professional Members, organized and ran me and Regular Members Marc Mondavi and Howard Monsour through 25 meetings with industry leaders in two days.

After the SHOT Show, I was to go to the Safari Club International (SCI) Convention, but it was at the same time as a previous commitment, the South Texas Charity Quail Hunt (STCQH), a primary fundraiser for the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (CKWRI), headed by its director, Fred Bryant, also a B&C Professional Member. As usual, Fred and his staff put on quite an event and raised a ton of money for CKWRI and several other South Texas charities. For those of you not familiar with CKWRI, it is the leading wildlife research organization in Texas. Its research helps ignorant ranch owners like me become better land stewards.

Next stop was at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, which is put on by the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI). WMI is headed up by Steve Williams, president, and Dick McCabe, vice president, both B&C Professional Members. The conference is an intense week-long gathering of industry leaders dedicated to the conservation, enhancement and management of North America's wildlife and other natural resources. Again, another well-run conference spearheaded by two more B&C Professional Members. Two other side notes—I had the privilege of awarding WMI the B&C Theodore Roosevelt Legacy Award for its partnership with B&C in cooperative conservation efforts and watching our B&C Professional Member, Alan Wentz, receive Ducks Unlimited's prestigious Canvasback Award.

I then attended the Pope and Young Club convention and celebrated its 50th anniversary. I must say, this year's P&Y convention was the largest, best attended, and most lucrative P&Y convention I've ever been to. Kudos to the Pope and Young Club, its members, and to the man who ran the convention, Kevin Hisey, P&Y's executive secretary and a B&C Professional Member.

My latest stop was in Washington D.C., where our past president and current Conservation Policy Committee co-chair, Bob Model, and I met with senators, congressmen and staff to go over several major issues. I want to thank our B&C Professional Members Greg Schildwachter, David Anderson, and Mitch Butler for opening doors for us and for having incredible insight of the people and the issues we dealt with. In addition to meetings, Bob and I attended the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF)'s Congressional Shoot Out. The Shoot Out is for industry leaders one day and members of the Congressional

Sportsmen's Caucus the next. CSF's top two executives are B&C Professional Members: Jeff Crane, president, and Gary Kania, vice-president. Jeff and Gary put on a great shoot. Also attending were B&C Professional Members Melissa Simpson, now with SCI and Tim Wigley with PAC/WEST Communications. Furthermore, I had the privilege of shooting with B&C Professional Member, the Honorable Don Young, Congressman from Alaska, who kicked my you-know-what in total clay pigeons hit!

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I could go on and on about the deeds and achievements of all our B&C Professional Members, but I regret space will not allow me to do so. Let me end with a quote from one of our honorary presidents for life, Robert Munro Ferguson: "As in the past, our Professional Membership should be held to a select group from all manners of careers—academic, government careers, museum types, other conservation organizations, writers, artists and other. You name it, but here again, as in the past, their selection should be based on achievement, position, usefulness and dedication as well as personality. I have always felt that election to Professional Membership should be considered an honor and recognition." I believe Mr. Ferguson would be proud of the Professional Membership we have today and I hope you are too. ■