

On Montana's Rocky Mountain Front the most productive private lands are managed increasingly for wildlife values in either one of two extremes, neither of which is beneficial in the long run. Either land is set aside as a wildlife preserve and closed to all public hunting or it is managed as a hunting preserve with access rights available to a privileged few.

Many of the most productive private lands are currently changing ownership as family-owned ranches are sold to individuals who purchase these properties for their wildlife value rather than for agricultural purposes. Often with little interest in hunting itself, these modern landowners have generally low tolerance for public hunting.

With this in mind, the hunter as a conservationist has to develop alternatives for private landowners to enhance the value of their land for the benefit of diverse wildlife as well as for people.

This is partly due to the negative exposure hunting has received in the media. The perception is that hunters are disrespectful of private property. The problem is exacerbated by persuasive entrepreneurial outfitters who employ negative campaigns in hopes of obtaining exclusive access rights to potentially wealth-generating properties.

Persuaded landowners tend to opt for regulated fee hunting under the supervision of an outfitter who, besides controlling access, will generate revenue for the landowner. In

the absence of other viable alternatives, commercialization of wildlife for profit may be the chosen, although not necessarily the preferred, option by the landowner. Thus, the sharp rise in fee

hunting on large private land holdings may be an indication that too few viable alternatives exist for landowners in appraising the value of wildlife on private lands.

Once wildlife is allocated through markets rather than law, there is little turning back. Since markets are difficult to regulate, exclusive hunting opportunities are in great demand, and the often *de facto* ownership of wildlife by landowners through controlled access can easily translate into political clout. Under these types of market-based developments, public hunters are afforded few rights which, instead, are often relegated to simply controlling burgeoning wildlife populations. Furthermore, the long-term consequences of privatization and commercialization may harm the integrity of wildlife populations. Besides limiting management options, the specialization for marketable wildlife leads to losses of biodiversity and local adaptations. With this in mind, the hunter as conservationist has to develop alternatives for private landowners to enhance the value of their land for the benefit of diverse wildlife as well as for people. We need to conserve our public hunting heritage while avoiding the extremes of the privatization and commercialization of wildlife.

Even though economic incentives in marketing wildlife are powerful tools in influencing behavior, there are other options that need to be explored. Hunters need to address, at a minimum, the following aspects.

FAIR CHASE ETHIC

The hunter has the continued obligation to refine the ethic of *fair chase* as societal and ecological changes demand. Neither landowners nor society at large will accept or endorse hunting as a legitimate activity without a widely supported definition of socially acceptable and ecological

compatible forms of hunting. The chase and its ethical dimensions are the essential elements through which the public can extend and grant to the hunter the privilege of wildlife ownership.

FRONTIER MYTH VERSUS RESTORATION REALITY

With the mind-set of performing a public service, many buyers have acquired large tracts of unspoiled Montana land in hopes of protecting a piece of the western frontier. The truth, however, is that the wildlife frontier ceased to exist 100 years ago with the unregulated exploitation of wildlife for markets. Since then, conservation-minded hunters have restored species from the brink of extinction, in some cases to unprecedented abundance. It is this restoration that has led to the proliferation of diverse and abundant wildlife, which is not the wilderness ideal. With that, the story of the modern hunter as conservationist is unparalleled in human history.

PRIVATE LANDS-PUBLIC WILDLIFE

It is the responsibility of hunters to safeguard the beneficial concept of public ownership to society by developing innovative alternatives of integrating property rights of landowners with those of the public. Praised worldwide for its success in recovering wildlife, the North American system of wildlife management is built on the notion of public ownership of wildlife. That is, wildlife belongs to everybody and one can only acquire actual ownership through privileges granted by the public. Public ownership is the cornerstone of the human/wildlife relationship in North America, and it must be recognized by all wishing to insure the well-being of wildlife. Recognition of this and its implications need to be fused with the production of wildlife on private lands through market incentives. The hunter should be challenged to develop these incentives. Yet, this may be as simple as sharing information

so that public interests of private land use are integrated with private interests. For example, some landowners may only be vaguely familiar with property rights and, thus, may confuse ownership of land with that of owning the wildlife residing on it. Much of this confusion may stem from western frontier times when individuals were encouraged to take ownership of land with which came the right to control wildlife.

UNDERSTANDING LANDOWNER MOTIVATIONS

Individuals respond not only to market incentives. Perhaps modern landowners seek emotional, aesthetic, intellectual, and/or spiritual meaning and satisfaction from owning large tracts of unspoiled Montana land. These yearnings go well beyond the mere rationalization of enhanced material well-being. Clearly, these individuals express a wish to experience nature more closely. With that in mind, hunters need to understand why individuals decide to acquire these lands, and it may be that their motivation is to enhance individual meaning and fulfillment. In other words, modern landowners may have attained a level of material well-being that allows them to pursue alternative motives for the conservation of nature. Hunters as conservationists may assist the landowner in this quest by framing the social and ecological conditions for such fulfillment. Further, keeping the legacy of North American wildlife conservation alive may hold unimaginable rewards for the individual.

In the final analysis, it is the role of the hunter as conservationist to help develop an ethic for private landowners to secure the needs of wildlife as well as to provide an opportunity for people to experience rewarding relationships with nature. This can be achieved while avoiding extremes in the privatization and commercialization of wildlife. ▲▲▲

WANTED: A FEW GOOD TROPHIES

The National Collection of Heads and Horns Needs Your Help!

The Marines may be looking for a few good men, but the Boone and Crockett Club is looking for a number of trophies to add to the National Collection of Heads and Horns. Now housed at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, the Club's National Collection has long been recognized as the most outstanding display of trophy North American big game ever assembled at one location. Among the trophies in the Collection are the famous Chadwick Stone's sheep, considered by many to be the greatest sport-hunted trophy ever taken in North America. Also in the Collection are the following World's Record heads: the de Rham Woodland caribou, the Elbow Quebec-Labrador caribou and the Haase Rocky

Mountain goat. The Club is looking for a few good men on a permanent basis, and not rely on short and long term loans. In fact, due to the return of certain loaned heads, the Collection is not now represented by several species - most notably in the deer categories.

We would ask every Associate to think of the National Collection of Heads and Horns when an outstanding head comes to his or her attention. Donations to the Collection are generally tax deductible, and the Club office will be happy to assist any prospective donor with respect to the procedures involved in making a gift.

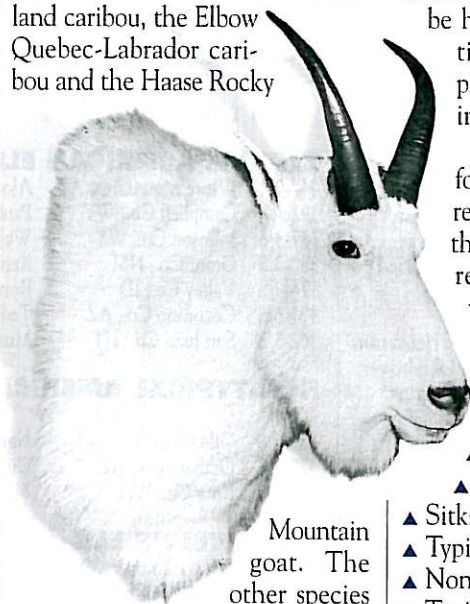
At the present time the following species are not represented in the Collection, and the Club would be grateful if readers could be especially vigilant in alerting the office to the possibility of securing an outstanding trophy, preferably on a donation basis:

- ▲ Non-Typical Wapiti
- ▲ Columbia Blacktail Deer
- ▲ Sitka Blacktail Deer
- ▲ Typical Whitetail Deer
- ▲ Non-Typical Whitetail Deer
- ▲ Typical Coues' Whitetail Deer

Many other heads now in the collection are on loan, so we urge readers to alert us to any head of any species that could be acquired by the Club. Inquires may be directed to Jack Reneau, Director of Big Game Records, at the Club office. Call 406 542-1888 or write to: Boone and Crockett Club, 250 Station Drive, Missoula, MT 59081.



ABOVE: THE WORLD'S RECORD WOODLAND CARIBOU WAS DONATED TO THE NATIONAL COLLECTION OF HEADS AND HORNS BY CASIMIR DE RHAM. LEFT: THE E.C. HAASE ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT IS ALSO A PERMANENT FIXTURE IN THE NATIONAL COLLECTION OF HEADS AND HORNS.



Mountain goat. The other species represented in the Collection include a number of high-ranking heads and horns.

Unfortunately, the National Collection owns only 11 of the trophies which are now on display in Cody. Considering the fact that the Club accepts record book entries for 35 different species (including the non-typical versions of several antlered species), it is clear that the Collection needs to acquire trophies