

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Robert Model
PRESIDENT
Boone and Crockett Club

Preserving Our Future Hunting Heritage

My tenure as President of the Boone and Crockett Club has been an interesting and fulfilling journey. As my three-year term comes to a close in December, I wish to thank all of

you within our greater Boone and Crockett Club family for the contributions and sacrifices you have made to allow the Club to regain its influence and become the leading hunter-conservation organization in the country. It is a privilege to be a part of this Club, as it re-captures the goals and visions of our earlier Club members. We may be 100-plus years away from the early founders, but their unselfish vision is one that is still timely today and is still a great template for the years going forward. I wish to thank all the members, our professional staff and my family for their support and understanding during the past three years. I have felt privileged that our membership entrusted the Club to my temporary care; I look forward to what is to come for our community.

As the oldest national conservation organization, we have been the leading participant in many significant accomplishments in recent years. These accomplishments became a reality by the hard work of many of our regular and professional members. What we all have come to realize is that the 21st century will be

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much more complex and difficult than the 20th century. We can debate the pros and cons about which countries will be the leaders of the world community at the end of this century. The key contribution the United States can provide will be our leadership and our management of our wildlife, public lands, and environmental issues.

I am sure some of you are weary of my repetition the past three years on why it is so important to not only articulate, but take action on the hunter conversation community's priorities. With the Club's emergence as the leader in founding the American Wildlife Conservation Partners, the result was unprecedented access for our community at the national level to help identify issues and bring solutions to the many environmental challenges that face our country. AWCP presented concrete recommendations to the first Bush Administration in 2001 by way of our "Wildlife for the 21st Century."

We pointed out that our forests were unhealthy and needed management. Catastrophic fires have taken untold millions of acres, primarily because there was not a clear management plan. The result of this work is the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

We also recognize that another challenge for this century is to preserve private lands and open space to sustain our wildlife and our wildlife areas. The issue of land fragmentation of private lands has created a disturbing trend that, if not managed properly, will jeopardize our vast public lands that the Club has worked so hard to preserve.

As the first Bush Administration became the second Bush Administration, it became evident that sportsmen, hunters, and fishermen, became a recognized political force. The Club took a leadership role in asking this Administration for a White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. In August 2004, the President issued an Executive Order that there be a conference within a year. That Conference took place in August 2005 in St. Louis, Missouri. As sometimes happens with a bureaucratic process, it became more than what we had recommended. Recognizing that was the case, Interior Secretary Gale Norton provided an opportunity for the American Wildlife Conservation Partners to spend a day where we had her full attention to present White Papers on the issues

that we feel are critical to the success of our vision in the second Bush Administration, as well as for years to come. These White Papers included:

- American Wildlife Assessment
- Expanding the Federal Invasive Species Program
- Incentives for Conservation of Private Land
- Public Access to Public Lands Initiative
- Funding Wildlife Conservation in America
- Conservation Leadership Training Initiative
- Healthy Wildlife Initiative
- Comparative Ecological Risk Assessment

Anyone who wants to know more about the topics that were presented to Secretary Norton, please feel free to contact me. I would be happy to provide any additional information.

It is more important than ever that we, as sportsmen, hunters, and fishermen, pay close attention to what is being done on our behalf by all of the different groups that are part of the hunter-conservation community. If we do not become active in some way to preserve our future hunting heritage, we will wake up in the not too distant future and find hunting and fishing are no longer a part of our recreational pastime and heritage.

These concerns are real. As our population increases, urban and suburban life overtakes the rural life of past generations. We see land fragmentation occurring at an exponential rate. We have a responsibility to pass on to the next generations the value of hunting and fishing to our lands, our wildlife, and our own quality of life.

I have so many people to thank. It would probably take many pages here to do that adequately. Hopefully you know who you are, and you know how much your advice, counsel, and support have meant to me. You are in good hands with your Board of Directors and Officers.

So, in closing, it is with great pleasure I introduce my successor, Robert Palmer, who will become President on January 1, 2006. Bob has been part of the work that has been going on in the Club for many years. He truly exemplifies the Club tradition of the hunter/naturalist. ■