



TITLE: DEFINING WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

REVISED DATE: JULY 11, 2014

SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW:

Conservation and preservation are two different philosophies. Since the early 20th century, conservation has meant the wise and prudent use of natural resources without waste. Preservation means protection from use.

The diverse and abundant wildlife populations that exist in Canada and America today are primarily the result of conservation and not preservation, as many are now being led to believe. Preservationists are calling themselves conservationists and the preservation organizations that have emerged are being referred to in the media as conservation organizations. Consequently, the successful track record of conservation is being confused with and undermined by preservationist philosophies that alone, can never achieve effective wildlife conservation.

When the Boone and Crockett Club was founded in 1887 by Theodore Roosevelt and George Bird Grinnell, they introduced an overall philosophy of ethically using natural resources in a limited but sustainable way. This conservation philosophy was actually counter to the prevailing belief at the time that natural

resources, especially wildlife, were inexhaustible, there for unlimited take, and by any means possible. As a result of widespread market hunting of many species of wildlife and outright extinction of some, a new governing principle was needed for the human-natural resources relationship. Some proposed that non-use or preservation—preserving wildlife and other natural resources without consumptive use by humans—was the answer. The Boone and Crockett Club believed this view was unrealistic, and that attempting to remove humans from the equation would devalue and thereby diminish wildlife resources even further. The Club championed an approach that would balance human needs with those of wildlife, and would create a concept of sustainable use.

With the support of the Club and through his presidential administration, Theodore Roosevelt nationalized the concept of conservation. Wise and prudent use backed by laws and science became the widely accepted model for the treatment of natural resources, including wildlife, timber, water and soils.

Preservationists think that our

current wildlife and natural resource diversity and abundance happened by accident and not by active management, commonly referred to as “the balance of nature” or letting nature take its course. This belief is based on the notion that if we remove human access, use, and active management from the equation and set aside protected areas; wildlife and natural systems will thrive on their own. This may have been true 10,000 years ago; not so in today’s human-dominated landscape.

Preservationists further believe that wildlife is not a resource to use, that wildlife should only have an esthetic and not an economic or consumptive value, and that killing wildlife through regulated hunting or any active management is unnecessary. Unfortunately, the “balance of nature” that produces pristine wilderness is a myth. Science has shown there is no such thing as a balance of nature. The wildlife and natural resource diversity and abundance that now exists in countries that embrace conservation is the result of hands-on active management and sustainable use of ever-changing ecosystems, not in spite of it.

POSITION:

The Boone and Crockett Club believes that conservation and conservationist organizations should not be confused with preservation and preservationist organizations and that the two distinctly different concepts and their respective ethics should not be confused either. The Club supports the definition of conservation as wise and prudent use, without waste. The Club supports the principle, as did our founder, Theodore Roosevelt, “that conservation means development as much as it does protection.”

The Club adopts the view that complete preservation of wildlife and other natural resources from ethical and sustainable consumptive uses by humans breaks the fundamental roles that humans have always played in the ecosystems they inhabit and depend upon for meaning and well-being. The Club further finds that conserving wildlife and other natural resources into the future will require the same advocacy and funding for active management that historical access to regulated, ethical and sustainable uses of wildlife and other natural resources has proven to provide.

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BOONE AND CROCKETT ADDRESSES WESTERN GOVERNORS IN THE PRESS JULY 06, 2017

The state of our Western federal forests was a primary topic of discussion at the recently concluded Western Governors' Association conference held in Whitefish, Montana. In attendance were governors and staffers from nine Western states, as well as industry, tribal, and Canadian representatives including the Canadian ambassador to the United States. Also present was the group behind the creation of our national forest system - the Boone and Crockett Club.

Under the leadership of Montana Governor Steve Bullock, The Western Governors' National Forest and Rangeland Management Report was unveiled and discussed. This seminal document sets forth the steps required to restore our forests and rangelands and provides guidance to our congressional leadership to affect the necessary changes that presently inhibit the process.

"This is exactly what our federal forest land needs right now, bright minds and leaders coming together to work for the common good," said Tony Schoonen, chief of staff for the Boone and Crockett Club. "The health of our forest lands should be a concern to all citizens. They certainly are for those in charge of their care and those who recreate on these federal public lands."

Boone and Crockett Club member, Marc Brinkmeyer, owner and chairman of the Idaho Forest Group, addressed the group and stressed the issue of forest management, fuel build up, catastrophic wildfires, and the leadership needed to bring back healthy and productive forest ecosystems.

"Our company is striving to be a leader in all these areas, but we're only a tool in the USDA and Interior toolbox," explained Brinkmeyer. "The governors have the loudest and most effective voice. While we are excited about the details of the WGA Report, the governors must take action and guide the Senate and House and help the new Administration implement these recommendations. And, they must be clear with Congress that legislation on these broad agreements should not fall prey to partisan politics. Lastly, they must hold us all accountable so the results, so carefully outlined in the report, are accomplished."

Healthy forests and rangelands have been a long-standing priority of the Boone and Crockett Club, as is investing in wildlife and habitat conservation at the state level through increased appropriations and modernizing funding models.

Schoonen said, "Improving working relationships is the key. The relationship among the state agencies, federal agencies, and the private sector, including



B&C Members Marc Brinkmeyer and Tom Tidwell were in attendance at this years Western Governors Association Conference.



non-profit conservation organizations, landowners, businesses, and industry needs significant improvement to achieve the desired wildlife and habitat conservation and management objectives for sportsmen, as well as all citizens.”

What’s preventing healthy forest management is an entanglement of overlapping and conflicting policies, massive chunks of the Forest Service’s budget going toward fighting larger and hotter wildfires, and the expense of roundtable litigation against the Forest Service filed by groups opposed to the use of these lands for supplying timber.

“Our leaders in both the U.S. and Canada have their hands full in modernizing forest and range health. They have our gratitude for a great conference and they should know that those of us in the conservation community will do our part,” Schoonen concluded. ■

BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB: WILDFIRE FUNDING FIX PICKS UP SUPPORT JULY 18, 2017

The group behind the creation of our national forest system—the Boone and Crockett Club—applauds Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID) for introducing a bill to fix the chronic funding shortfall for catastrophic wildfires. The National Flood Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2017 includes a title allowing the Forest Service to tap disaster funding, appropriately treating catastrophic wildfires like hurricanes and other natural disasters.


Fighting forest fires is the responsibility of the U.S. Forest Service, as is maintaining these lands for the betterment of the people. In a bad fire year fighting wildfires eats up to 53 percent of the Forest Service’s annual budget. The consequence of which is the Forest Service’s inability to do the forest thinning work necessary to keep fire events small and contained in the first place.

“This year’s crop of forest fires is already springing up, and just like in years past we’ll see more and more of the Forest Service’s management budget go up in smoke,” said Ben B. Hollingsworth, Jr., president of the Boone and Crockett Club. “In the legacy of our founder, Idaho’s U.S. Senator Mike Crapo is to be commended for stepping up with common sense legislation to deal with keeping our federal forest lands in healthy, productive condition.”

Club founder Theodore Roosevelt was a strong advocate for federal public lands managed for multiple use. When Club members established the national forest system and then the U.S. Forest Service, Roosevelt appointed fellow Club member Gifford Pinchot as its first chief in 1905. Roosevelt and the Club viewed federal public lands as not only critical habitat for wildlife, but critical recreational grounds for all people.

“It’s a vicious cycle we’ve been in,” explained Hollingsworth. “So much of the agency’s funds are going toward extinguishing larger and hotter fires that could have been minimized by maintaining roads and managing overcrowded forest stands that fuel these disasters. But the funds they have for maintenance and prevention are spent fighting more frequent fires after they are burning. The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act of 2017 will allow the Forest Service to buck this trend by getting back to fire prevention, and mitigating the ones that do start.”

“The health of our federal public lands should be a concern to everyone, especially those who rely on these lands for livelihoods and recreation,” explained Hollingsworth. “With so much of the Forest Service’s funds going toward extinguishing larger and hotter fires little is left for the business of ecosystem management. Yes, fire suppression is part of the agency’s job, but there is more to keeping public forests and range lands in healthy condition and usable, and this bill is a great start to allowing the agency to get back to the other side of its business.”



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