

FROM THE EDITOR

What word might appropriately precede “land,” “opinion,” and “policy?” If you’re a crossword puzzle fan, you might think of more than a few that would fit. Or, you might have guessed the word I’m thinking about: “public.”

The word “public” caught my attention because it’s featured in the cover headline of the September 2017 issue of *Petersen’s Hunting*—“The Top 10 Public Land Hunts”—as well as being part of the cover headline of the September 2017 issue of *Field & Stream*—“Public Land Deer Skills.” I applaud both these fine magazines in their efforts to reach out to their readers with information on public hunting opportunities, whether that might involve hunting whitetails in a South Dakota walk-in-area or hunting mallards in the flooded timber of Arkansas’ White River National Wildlife Refuge.

Many in our community would agree that hunting as a public resource is a cornerstone of our nation’s hunting tradition. Over the years, it has allowed a broad brush of Americans—not just the privileged few—to enjoy time afield with family and friends. Our ranks remain in the millions today in large measure because we have public access to places to hunt.

With this great opportunity comes, of course, the responsibility to continue to uphold and to promote the ethical standards that have long been at the heart of our hunting heritage. A proactive effort in this regard helps ensure a public opinion and, in turn, a public policy that supports hunting along with science-based wildlife management policies.

The Club’s Hunt Right; Hunt Fair Chase initiative is all about putting our

best foot forward. As CJ Buck, vice president of communications for the Boone and Crockett Club, emphasized, “Our ethics, how we conduct ourselves in the field, is a matter of great pride among sportsmen, but like anything that was introduced over 100 years ago a refresher course is a good idea. Hunting and even our own motivations and values as hunters are under attack. If this is about a lack of information or misinformation, we can fix that. If this is about the poor behavior of a few, we have a responsibility to fix that. When we’re talking about our own public image then there is no one else but sportsmen who can right this ship.”

Your Club’s effort is well underway with advertising and messaging leading folks to a website and the Club’s Facebook page. Overall the response to a conversation



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about hunting ethics and fair chase has been very positive. However, just like any effort to bring the ship around there are those with their heels dug in against what they don’t understand or feel threatens their personal brand. I encourage you to go online, read the materials and forums, and weigh in with your own thoughts. Steering a ship takes many captains.

We should not forget that the word public can as easily precede approval, or outcry.

Hope to see you down the trail. ■

Please turn to page 62 to read about the origins of fair chase.

Hunt Right
HUNT FAIR CHASE

