

OUR NEW WORLD

FROM THE
PRESIDENT



Timothy C. Brady
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Who would ever believe that a purveyor of live exotic animals in Wuhan, China could initiate an event that would impact billions of people and devastate the world economy? Who would ever believe that a quick trip to your local grocery store to pick up a loaf of bread could place your life at risk? As difficult as it is to comprehend, this is our new reality as our country and others around the globe attempt to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak.

We are learning new terms like “shelter in place” and “social-distancing” that were totally foreign to us only a few short weeks ago. Businesses, small and large, that were thriving just a month ago are now wondering if they will survive this crisis. Contracts are being cancelled, agreements postponed, and long-term employees are being laid off as our bustling economy comes to a halt.

As I write this on April 1, the news is bleak. The president said this morning that following the social-distancing guidelines is “a matter of life and death”. Health experts are saying that even if we follow the current restrictions, models are showing that more than 100,000 Americans could succumb to this deadly virus. More than 80% of our fellow citizens have been instructed to stay home. Yet many in our society are not heeding the directives initiated by local, state, and federal officials. This is difficult to fathom when you watch the news of overwhelmed hospitals in New York City.

Seventy-nine years ago, my father, two uncles, and sixteen million of their peers answered the call to serve in World War II. In this

fight, all we are being asked to do is stay at home and take care of our families and neighbors. We should be able to manage that.

NGOs are not immune to the economic carnage that is taking place. The leadership of the Boone and Crockett Club is in the midst of redefining budgets and eliminating costs wherever possible. We know that our annual earnings allocation from our endowment will be significantly diminished and that revenue-generating programs currently scheduled for this spring and summer at the Rasmuson Wildlife Conservation Center will most likely be cancelled. We also recognize that as our membership watches their personal portfolios shrink, contributions will decline.

Our colleagues at organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, Safari Club International, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation are reeling as this is the time of year when they usually schedule their local or regional fundraising events that generate much of their revenue.

With the \$2 trillion stimulus and aid package recently approved by Congress and the president, many of us believe funding for conservation initiatives will be severely impacted. Recently, while at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, several members of the Boone and Crockett Club were asked to join President Trump and Secretary Bernhardt at a round table discussion to help secure passage of the Great American Outdoors Act. The meeting was postponed due to the emerging pandemic. This bill combined the Restore Our

Parks Act (ROPA) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and had significant bipartisan support in both the House and Senate and was expected to become law. Specifically, ROPA would commit \$9 billion over the next five years to address the significant deferred maintenance backlogs that exist within our National Parks, the Forest Service, BLM, and US-FWS Refuges. The LWCF was created in 1964 and uses the revenues from the depletion of one natural resource such as oil and gas to support the conservation of other resources such as land and water. Over the years, LWCF has evolved to include grants to protect working forests, wildlife habitat, and increased use of easements. Funding has been subject to annual appropriations and generally been between \$200 and \$500 million annually. The Great American Outdoors Act would authorize mandatory and full funding of \$900 million for LWCF in perpetuity, an effort many in the conservation community have been trying to accomplish for over 20 years. At this point we have no idea what outcomes we will see with this and other conservation related legislation and funding.

COVID-19, like 9/11, will result in significant changes within our society. Most certainly, we will be much better prepared to deal with the next outbreak. After 9/11, our security and law enforcement agencies quickly recognized the futility of turf wars and lack of communication between organizations. My guess is hospitals around the country, while still being competitors, will understand the importance of sharing

information instantaneously regarding capacity, equipment, and staff available to deal with a crisis and better serve their communities.

America has an inspiring history of our citizens coming together to overcome whatever obstacles are laid before us. This crisis is no different and we will prevail. Every day we hear about individuals and companies figuring out how to contribute whether it be personal protective equipment, ventilators, food, lodging, vehicles, or anything else that will help. Perhaps the most stirring example is the more than 70,000 medical professionals who have come out of retirement to assist on the front lines of this fight. Many are in the most vulnerable age group but have decided the need outweighs the risk. Hero is a term bandied about too easily in our society. But in the midst of this pandemic, and in archetypal American fashion, all you have to do is look around and you will see plenty of them.

By the time this magazine reaches our constituency I hope and pray that we have returned to a significant degree of normalcy. In this pandemic, it really is up to us and how we choose to conduct ourselves, and we really are all in this together. ■

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Timothy C. Brady".