

B&C SPRING MEETING

FROM THE
PRESIDENT



James F. Arnold
PRESIDENT

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Boone and Crockett Club membership is still finding creative ways to get together. This March, we met virtually for the 86th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, during which we held our Club's annual spring meeting. Although our membership is tired of the virtual approach, we recognize this approach might be here to stay; thus, we are adjusting. I am proud to report that 124 Club members were in attendance at this meeting to hear about the Club's recent activities.

Matt Lee-Ashley, the White House Council for Environmental Quality's interim chief of staff and senior director for lands, opened the North American conference and reiterated that climate change will be one of the priority initiatives, or main goals, of the new administration. Another main goal will be to restore public lands, expand public access to these lands, and enhance habitat conditions for

wildlife. Our Club is in alignment with these goals, and we are proud to embrace, and support as we can, the new administration in helping us reach our ultimate conservation goals. There is a lot of work for us to do.

As part of our Club's spring meeting, our members gave a variety of updates. Due to COVID-19, our Club has experienced challenges in maintaining a balanced budget, which has led us to make certain cuts to ensure our continued support to partners. Fortunately, interest in our Club remains high, as site visits to our Club's homepage are increasing. We hope that this engagement with our online presence encourages more people to align with our vision, become Associate Members, or support our Club's mission in other ways.

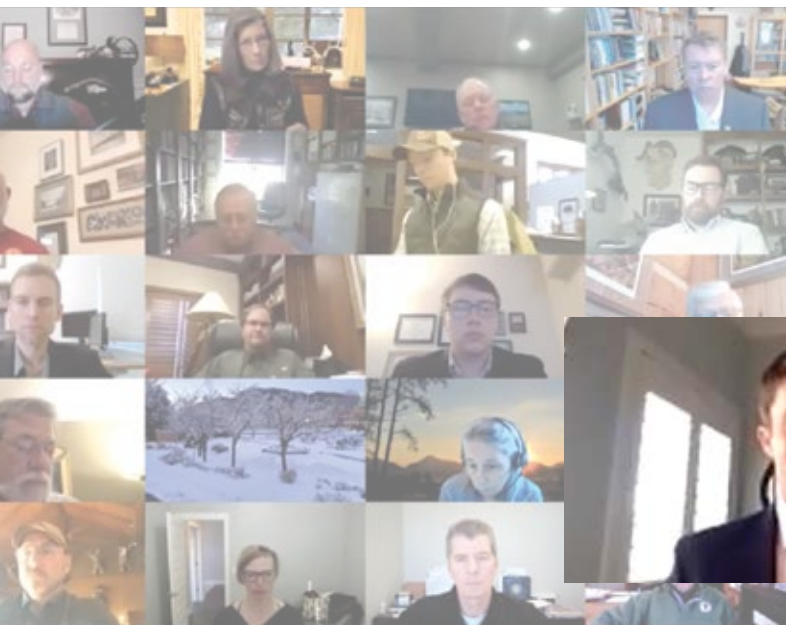
In the face of all that COVID-19 has thrown at us, the Club is hopeful; hopeful for change. We are preparing for changes in branding and our general committee structure, which includes a new

communications consultant, Jodi Stemler. The Club is also hopeful for new faces—the next generation of wildlife professionals—to join us in the conservation arena and aid us in achieving our conservation priorities and goals. At the Club's annual spring meeting, Josh Millspaugh, Boone and Crockett Club Professor of Wildlife Conservation at the University of Montana, shared that the University Programs are supporting 35 fellows, and that nine have recently graduated. He also reported that 60 publications are being published along with 40 other articles. We are encouraged by the high-quality research conducted by these students, and we feel confident they are offering significant contributions to better understanding and conserving our wildlife resources. We are also pleased to have found new ways to foster interactions among our Club members and our fellows, especially through the increased use of webinars and

virtual “happy hours.”

Through the North American conference, we continue to hear that chronic wasting disease (CWD) remains a primary threat to wildlife, and both our fellows and this Club are undertaking extensive research to help monitor the spread of disease. In doing so, we have raised over \$420,000 from all parts of our community to fund additional research on wildlife diseases. During our spring meeting, Professional Member Becky Humphries reported on changes she is seeing in overall wildlife health. She reiterated that CWD continues to concern us all, even though it has not yet been considered a threat to humans. Thus far, CWD has infected animals in 26 states

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Matt Lee-Ashley, White House Council for Environmental Quality's interim chief of staff and senior director for lands, gave the keynote during the Club's spring virtual meeting.

and four Canadian provinces. For more than 20 years, this Club has been and continues to be a participant in the CWD Alliance; we hope that the money we have raised, research we continue to support, and our engagement with the Alliance will help find some answers to solving the CWD crisis.

During the spring meeting, Regular Member James Cummins reported on the changes he and others are seeing in leadership on the Hill given the recent transition in administration. He noted that, while these kinds of transitions always create challenges, our Club is fortunate that many people working on the Hill are friends of the conservation community. As we work our way through these changes, we will work hard to present our conservation vision, mission, and agenda in front of the new leadership in Washington, D.C. We will rely on our friends, continue to build our network, and share our Club's wildlife management

goals and objectives in front of all the decisionmakers. Professional Member Greg Schildwachter also highlighted the importance of the Conservation Roundtable, which is chaired by one of our own, Simon Roosevelt. The roundtable is composed of a group of leaders from the conservation community who have gained momentum and are recognized on the Hill as a reliable source for information and research about conservation, hunting and wildlife management, and fair chase ethics. With these friends, our Club can still do big things.

Our Club's membership is energized to move forward on a number of Club initiatives this year. For example, we are proud to launch the Club's Poach and Pay Program. This program is intended to help us raise awareness of the harms associated with poaching—for animals, communities, and resource users—and help identify solutions to reduce poaching activities. We will share more

progress on this endeavor and others later this year.

Even virtually, the Club is getting a lot done and moving forward with progress in many ways. I want to thank all the folks that attended the North American conference and our Club's spring meeting, both members and guests. I hope all our guests saw the diversity of efforts that this Club has undertaken and our accomplishments from the past year. We invite all of you to please join us in our cause in some way. We are looking forward to gathering again in-person!

Our Club's Chief Executive Officer, Tony Schoonen, echoed what many of us have done, in thanking our great staff for all the long and hard work during these challenging times. Great job to all, as always. If anyone has any questions please feel free to reach out to us to get more details regarding these efforts. ■



THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB ASKS THAT YOU PLEASE THANK OUR TRAILBLAZERS WITH YOUR PATRONAGE.



Two B&C Fellows gave brief presentations about their research during the spring meeting: Tommy Young (University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point) and Chris Hansen (University of Montana). Tommy, a senior at UWSP, talked about the influence of hard mast production on bait site visitation of black bears and potential management implications for his work. Chris, a PhD candidate nearing completion of his degree, presented his work about the conservation benefits of sustainable land use on mammal communities, with a specific focus on rangelands and urbanization.

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