

CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS FINALIZED

For the Next White House Administration
and Next Two Congresses

Fifty of the nation's leading hunting conservation organizations recently released their policy recommendations for the next White House administration and the next two Congresses. *Wildlife for the 21st Century: Volume VI* was developed by the groups that participate in the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) to provide specific actions that could be taken to improve wildlife conservation and management. But who are the American Wildlife Conservation Partners, and why do their recommendations matter? And how did the Boone and Crockett Club form this coalition of partners that are now charting the course for the future of hunting and wildlife conservation?

THE ROOTS OF PARTNERSHIP

Hunting and recreational shooting has been driving wildlife management since the beginning of the fish and wildlife conservation movement over a century ago. Since 1887, the Boone and Crockett Club has been a leader in encouraging the implementation of policies that support the conservation of wildlife and their habitat. The Club has worked closely with other hunting conservation organizations and with elected officials to develop the laws, policies, and values that are now known as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. However, in spite of great successes in restoration of wildlife over the past 100 years, the changing

structure of society makes it necessary for wildlife managers and hunter conservationists to work together more effectively to build on successes achieved in the past.

As the new millennium began, the Boone and Crockett Club recognized that these challenges were increasing and that if the various hunting and wildlife conservation organizations worked together, they could help promote conservation policies that built on this tradition. To kickstart that process, the Club hosted representatives of 35 wildlife organizations representing 4.5 million hunter-conservationists at a facilitated meeting at the Club's headquarters in Missoula, Montana, in August 2000. This was a gathering of wildlife leaders

intended to unify their collective strength and apply it to common challenges and opportunities to protect wildlife, habitat, hunting, and the way of life they represent. The goal from the meeting was to identify key wildlife issues, build unity and develop a vision for wildlife conservation in the 21st century and beyond.

As one of the participants, Rollin Sparrowe, a professional member of the Boone and Crockett Club and then president of the Wildlife Management Institute, wrote in *Fair Chase* shortly after the summit: "Formation of the Forest Reserves and their evolution into the National Forests, development of treaties to conserve migratory birds, passage of the Pittman-Robertson Act and

other movements came to fruition because people of like-minds, with specific objectives, worked together. This history shows that unified efforts do produce gains for conservation of wildlife and their habitats."

From this meeting came the start of what is now known as the American Wildlife Conservation Partners. Over the next two decades, the groups have continued to meet at least twice a year to discuss action items to improve conservation policy. Those policy recommendations have developed into five previous editions of *Wildlife for the 21st Century* as well as many letters to policymakers on key issues being debated at the national level. Today, AWCP is made up of 50

WILDLIFE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

VOLUME VI



HOW SPORTSMEN AND SPORTSWOMEN SUPPORT THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF CONSERVATION FUNDING

LAST YEAR ALONE... \$2.96 BILLION

organizations that represent the interests of America's millions of dedicated hunter-conservationists, professional wildlife and natural resource managers, outdoor recreation users, conservation educators and wildlife scientists.

\$673

generated by the Pittman-Robertson Fund, from hunting and recreational shooting-related excise taxes

\$896

MILLION

generated from hunting licenses



\$748

MILLION

generated from fishing licenses



\$649

MILLION

generated by the Dingell-Johnson/Wallop-Breaux Fund, from fishing and boating-related excise taxes

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Wildlife for the 21st Century: Volume VI is the culmination of more than a year of work by AWCP and represents a general agreement of the partners on conservation issues. It provides a roadmap for decision makers to lead policy changes that will make a meaningful difference for wildlife and habitat management. It also provides the partners a touchstone for the issues that they can collaborate on for the next four years.

“Since the Boone and Crockett Club convened the representatives of the top hunting conservation organizations two decades ago, the American Wildlife Conservation Partners has presented their recommendations for every presidential election since 2000,” notes Tim Brady, president of the Boone and Crockett Club. “The sixth edition of *Wildlife for the 21st Century* presents achievable actions on the top policy priorities identified by the AWCP consortium.”

The 10 recommendations made by the AWCP in the new report focus on conservation funding, access and management of federal lands, big game migration corridors, integrating wildlife

Since 1939 state fish and wildlife agencies have received over

\$65.1
BILLION

from sportsmen and sportswomen

AWCP AT 20

In August of 2000, the southern Bitterroot valley went up in smoke. The 35 men and women who attended the first meeting of what would become the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) couldn't even see across the river—not exactly perfect circumstances for finding vision or clarity. However, it was true vision that brought those first partners together, and it was the clarity they found there that set the stage for what has become the most successful sportsmen-based coalition in congressional history.

Several Boone and Crockett Club members were responsible for having that early vision. Dan Pedrotti, who was B&C President at the time, Bob Model, who became president a few years later, and Steve Mealey played an integral role in making the event happen, and Bob and Steve were the Club's AWCP representatives for almost 15 years. Their influence helped design and build the Club's policy program. Pedrotti, Model and Mealey are all honorary life members of the Club, and Model has also received the Sagamore Hill Award, the highest recognition the Club gives.

Also pivotal in the first meeting were Jack Ward and Kathleen Thomas. If it hadn't been for Kathy's superb facilitation skills it was likely the “Type A” personalities that came wouldn't have stuck around. The mode of operation for the meeting was, “Check your agenda and ego at the door because we have some real work to do if we are going to move the needle for conservation.” And they have done just that.

Now, 20 years later, what should have been the AWCP anniversary celebration has been sucker punched by a pandemic. AWCP was born during one disaster and its 20th Anniversary has fallen victim to a second. Yet the passion of those Club members, the founding organizations they assembled, and the foundation they built continues to weather the storm and be successful.

LEFT: Attendees of the 2000 planning summit at the B&C Headquarters in Missoula, Montana



goals into energy planning, private land and species conservation, wildlife disease management, and habitat conservation in a changing climate. All of the recommendations encourage collaboration and cooperation between federal agencies, state fish and wildlife agencies, and private landowners.

“State and federal agencies must work cooperatively to meet the needs of our wildlife and our communities – this is not a nicety, it’s a necessity,” wrote 2020 AWCP chair, Blake Henning, of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and 2019 AWCP chair, Jennifer Mock Schaeffer, of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, in their joint introduction to the report.

The specific recommendations made by the AWCP in *Wildlife for the 21st Century: Volume VI* are featured in 10 distinct sections of the report:

■ **RECOMMENDATION 1: FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION**

Secure permanent and dedicated conservation funding from public and private sources.

■ **RECOMMENDATION 2: FEDERAL LAND ACCESS**

Enhance access for hunters and outdoor recreationists.

■ **RECOMMENDATION 3: BIG GAME MIGRATIONS**

Require collaboration on big game migration corridors and habitats.

■ **RECOMMENDATION 4: ENERGY DEVELOPMENT**

Integrate industry, state, and federal wildlife goals early in energy planning.

■ **RECOMMENDATION 5: PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION**

Incentivize private landowners to conserve wildlife and habitat and provide access for hunting.

■ **RECOMMENDATION 6: ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF FEDERAL LANDS**

Increase active management of federal land habitats and reduce litigation through collaboration.

■ **RECOMMENDATION 7: SPECIES CONSERVATION**

Achieve greater results from an improved ESA program

■ **RECOMMENDATION 8: BIG GAME DISEASES**

Support and assist states in addressing Chronic Wasting Disease and wild sheep pneumonia.

■ **RECOMMENDATION 9: CLIMATE CHANGE**

Focus climate policy on habitat conservation and restoration.

■ **RECOMMENDATION 10: HUNTING HERITAGE AND THE FUTURE**

Require collaboration for wildlife conservation, hunting, and recreational shooting on federal lands.

Each recommendation also includes detailed descriptions of the issues, action items to address the issues, and whether the issue should be addressed by Congress or a specific agency within the administration. Adoption of the recommendations will improve federal agencies’ stewardship of our nation’s fish, wildlife, and habitats and enhance access to federal lands and waters for outdoor and wildlife-associated recreation, which contribute significantly to the quality of life and economic well-being of current and future generations. Together the Club and AWCP groups will carry these policy priorities to members of Congress and the next administration over the next four years to ensure the future of our wildlife and hunting heritage. ■

\$971.5
MILLION

to state fish and wildlife agencies in FY 2020 for Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Programs - **\$22.9 billion** in the history of the programs.

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

15.7
MILLION

Americans hunted and

49.4
MILLION

people fished in 2018

SOURCE: OUTDOOR RECREATION FOUNDATION

60%

of funding for state fish and wildlife agencies is paid for by sportsmen and sportswomen

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S FOUNDATION

\$44
BILLION

in direct spending to the economy by hunting and target shooters, supporting **854,000 jobs**

SOURCE: NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION

Read more about the history of the AWCP in the Summer 2019 issue of *Fair Chase*.