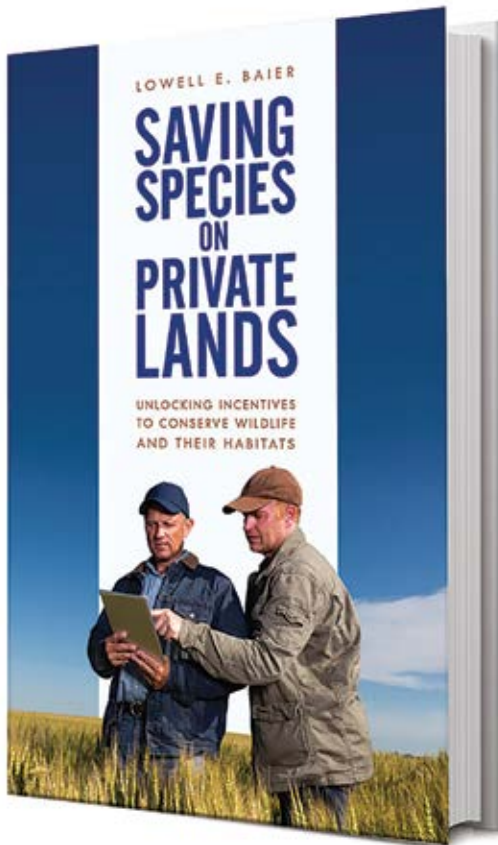


BOOK REVIEW

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Saving Species on Private Lands Unlocking Incentives to Conserve Wildlife and Their Habitats

BY LOWELL E. BAIER



One of my favorite quotes by Aldo Leopold is: “Conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest.” Over 75 percent of the candidate or listed species in our nation spend some part of their life on private lands. These private lands represent 60 percent of the land base in the lower 48 states. So it is easy to understand the significance of private lands to species conservation. Yet, to date, there has not been a comprehensive book as to how private landowners can utilize the many incentives to conserve species.

Lowell Baier, one of the most admired conservationists in North America, has done it again. His first book unlocked the misuse of the Equal Access to Justice Act; his latest one unlocks the many incentives available to private landowners to conserve species. I am not only the fifth generation to own our family’s farm in Mississippi, but I have spent the last 30 years working in the area of private lands conservation. As such, I have never seen such a well-written and informative book on private lands conservation. Conserving candidate and listed species on private land is difficult. However, Lowell’s book makes it seem easy as it discusses the ins and outs of the many programs and tools available to private landowners.

It is divided into several easy-to-read parts: proactive wildlife conservation on private land; conservation tools; the Farm Bill and its conservation provisions (my personal favorite); non-Farm Bill incentives for private land conservation; and achieving regulatory certainty under the Endangered Species Act for managing species.

Voluntary, incentive-based mechanisms work for conservation. Before 1990, for instance, wetland birds and waterfowl were on the decline, trending downward by 10 percent per year. Since Wetland Reserve Easements were added to the Farm Bill in 1991, those populations have soared 51 percent. This incentive-based program has even contributed to the de-listing of the Louisiana black bear as well, demonstrating the success of voluntary incentives to species recovery. Better understanding and utilizing the programs, tools, and practices that Lowell has so eloquently described will greatly aid in species conservation. Expanding incentives for voluntary species is also imperative if we are to achieve large-scale species conservation.

Again, Leopold proves to be correct. I have to think he would be very proud of Lowell and this great book. ■



Lowell E. Baier is a B&C Honorary Life Member and President Emeritus. He is an attorney, successful entrepreneur, and an environmental historian and author. He has dedicated his life to natural resources and wildlife conservation. Throughout his career he has been an advisor to many elected officials and educators, including every successive presidential administration since George H. W. Bush, and has been an active and instrumental member of several national conservation groups. Learn more at lowellebaier.com.

Available at www.bcstore.org. See page 43 for details.