

2020: A YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENT IN CONSERVATION POLICY

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Timothy C. Brady
PRESIDENT

With all the divisiveness that permeates Washington, D.C., it's often difficult for people to recognize, or even believe, that important bipartisan work still gets done resulting in effective and impactful legislation. Of course, the mainstream media doesn't help much by seldom reporting successes that reach across the aisle, particularly on topics like conservation policy, which some consider mundane. Yet the 116th Congress has established itself as probably the most prolific and productive on enacting important bipartisan conservation legislation in decades.

The Boone and Crockett Club remains at the forefront of forming and shaping wildlife conservation and policy in the United States as the foremost means to achieve the mission of the Club. The successes of 2020 represents

the culmination of many years of diligent work put forth by our regular and professional members.

The Club, along with our conservation community partners, have and will remain actively engaged in the development and passing of numerous, significant bills that will positively impact every American that enjoys our spectacular lands. The sporting conservation community has had strong advocates within the current administration and that has been extremely helpful when working with the departments of the Interior and Agriculture. Even with the pandemic and the distractions associated with an election year, our issues have received their fair share of attention and unprecedented support in Congress and the White House. Some of our collaborative successes include:

GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT

With overwhelming support, the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate passed the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) and in August, President Trump signed it into law. Hunters, anglers, hikers, campers and everyone else who enjoys spending time in the great outdoors have something to look forward to as it is the largest conservation achievement of the 21st century. Unified support from the conservation community, including the Boone and Crockett Club, and persistent lobbying, resulted in \$6.5 billion to be allocated over five years towards repairing degraded infrastructure including roads, bridges, facilities, trails, and utility upgrades in our national forests, national parks, the Bureau of Land Management lands, and national wildlife refuges. In addition, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is fully funded at \$900 million annually in perpetuity. Much of this funding will go to improving recreational access to public lands. All those who enjoy America's many wild places and wild things will benefit from this dedicated funding, especially those who use them to hunt and fish.

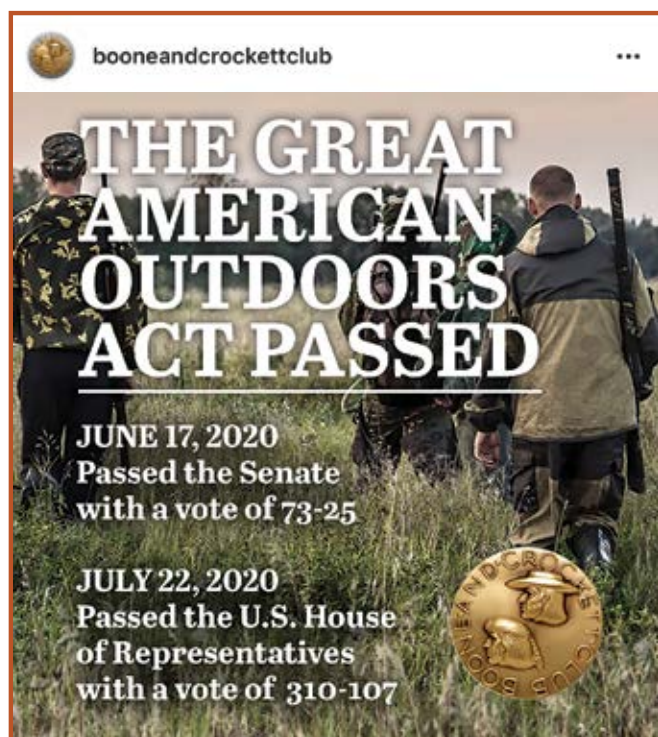
BIG GAME MIGRATORY CORRIDORS

The Club has been working steadily with states and the federal government to conserve big game migratory

corridors in the West. Sportsmen's groups scored a big win on corridors in April when the Department of the Interior announced \$24.7 million in support for habitat conservation in big game migration corridors and winter range in the West. The Department of the Interior set aside \$4.4 million in grant funding for habitat conservation projects in 11 western states that conserve migration and winter range for elk, mule deer, and pronghorn.

OPENING NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

The Club supported efforts by the George W. Bush Administration to expand federal refuge hunting and fishing seasons to align with those of the states. With the Trump Administration's unprecedented efforts to increase recreational access on public lands, this became a reality as Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt announced the historic opening and expansion of over 850 hunting and fishing opportunities across more than 2.3 million acres at 147 national wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries. This rule is the single largest expansion of hunting and fishing opportunities by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in history.



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...our good work continues in the political arena to assist our nation's leaders in the pragmatic management and improvement of the health of our wild lands and thus the health of our wild herds.

DESERT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The Club joined the Wild Sheep Foundation and other partners in stopping a short-sighted proposal from the Air Force to take over most of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge (DNWR) in southern Nevada. DNWR was established for desert bighorn sheep conservation and it is the largest refuge outside of Alaska. It is adjacent to the Air Force National Test and Training Range. Since the establishment of DNWR, the Air Force has had access to it for limited training under a "military land withdrawal." Since the term of that withdrawal is about to expire, the Air Force proposed an outright transfer of the lands previously withdrawn (50 percent of the DNWR) and in addition to another 25 percent of the DNWR. Responding to our advocacy as part of a large coalition, both the U.S. House and Senate Armed Services Committees have rejected the Air Force proposal. Final details on how the Air Force will be required to cooperate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service are being worked out now between the House and Senate Committees.

AMERICA'S CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACT

In October, Congress passed America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act. This legislation was actively supported by the Club and promotes conservation and creates opportunities for outdoor recreation by reauthorizing the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), which is a critical source of funding for bottomland hardwood conservation and restoration on lands important to the Louisiana black bear. The NAWCA has conserved over 30 million acres since it was authorized in 1989. The ACE Act also reauthorizes the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, an organization that has a tremendous impact on conservation

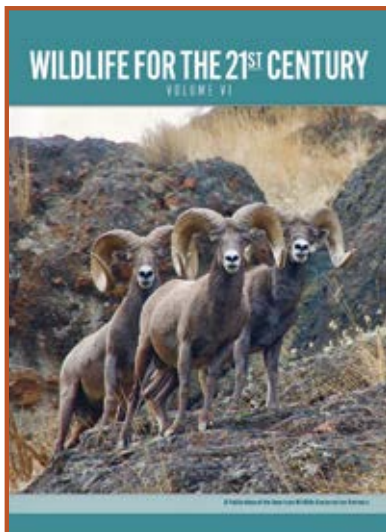
WILDLIFE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The Club's role as a leader in the conservation community was marked this year by publication of the latest volume of "W21", titled *Wildlife for the 21st Century*. W21 represents the agenda of the sporting conservation community for the next four years. This document is prepared by the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP): a coalition of the nation's leading wildlife

conservation and shooting sports organizations founded by the Boone and Crockett Club 20 years ago. The previous edition became the play-book for the U.S. Department of the Interior over the last four years, which explains why we have had such great success promoting better access to public lands. This edition of W21 is the most exceptional effort by AWCP in its history and presents 10 recommendations covering aspects of public and private lands, funding, recreational shooting, and hunting heritage. We are now using W21 to engage the presidential campaigns and the U.S. Congress in preparation for our next four years of work. W21 is available for review on our website.

RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT

In July of this year, Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) passed in the U.S. House of Representatives as an amendment to a much larger surface transportation bill. RAWA provides \$1.3 billion in dedicated funding annually for five years for the implementation of state fish and wildlife agencies' wildlife action plans. It will provide greater regulatory certainty for industry and private partners by conserving species and avoiding the need to list them under the Endangered Species Act. This will support future economic growth in the outdoor recreation industry through infrastructure



Read more about *Wildlife for the 21st Century Volume VI* in the Fall 2020 issue of *Fair Chase*.



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

improvements, increases in resiliency, and recovery of imperiled species and their habitats. Although RAWA did not pass the Senate this year, this legislation is a priority for the Club, and we look forward to continuing to advance it in the next Congress.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) remains a top priority. Surveillance, testing, managing, and response activities are imperative to better understand this disease. The Club has requested \$30 million for equine, cervid, and small ruminant health within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) for CWD activities. Specifically, the Club is asking that no less than \$24 million be allocated directly to state departments of wildlife, and \$6 million be provided to state departments of agriculture. Congress and APHIS have not responded

positively to our proposal thus far. The House Agriculture appropriations bill proposes only an additional \$500,000 for the low-priority effort to develop a live test, and \$7 million for management and response. APHIS has diverted \$1.5 million of the \$5 million appropriated last year and is offering the remaining \$3.5 million for a wide variety of low priority uses, including a number of research topics favored by deer/elk farmers.

HIGHWAY BILL-WILDLIFE CROSSINGS

In July, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a surface transportation bill titled Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation (INVEST) in America Act to reauthorize the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. This bill included nearly \$300 million for the construction of highway wildlife-crossings to reduce

wildlife/vehicle collisions. The U.S. Senate's infrastructure bill included \$250 million for wildlife crossings. The Club has been actively supporting both bills. The House and Senate were unable to reach an agreement on a multi-year surface transportation bill so the House extended the FAST Act for one year. The next Congress is expected to work on passing a long-term bill which will most likely include significant funding for wildlife crossings.

TRMR ACCESS PERMITS

The Boone and Crockett Club policy team helped our Director of Conservation Education Programs at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch secure flexibility from the U.S.D.A. Forest Service on the number of days allotted for excursions directed by the Club. These trips, which are important for inspiring the next generation of conservationists, operate from the

TRMR under special use permits from the Forest Service. Because these permits classify the Club's educational program as a profit-for-hire commercial operation, limits apply to the number of days and the size of groups entering Wilderness areas. The issue has been mostly resolved and we continue to work with the Forest Service on future improvements.

Our founder, Theodore Roosevelt, along with other key Club members, championed the passage of laws, the establishment of institutions, and the designation of wildlands, which today make up our nation's conservation system. In an endeavor that spans three centuries, our good work continues in the political arena to assist our nation's leaders in the pragmatic management and improvement of the health of our wild lands and thus the health of our wild herds. ■



Read the entire 2020 B&C Conservation Policy Committee report, as well as the last 4 year's reports, available online at Boone-Crockett.org.



The Boone and Crockett Club has a long and successful record addressing critical conservation policy concerns as it related to its mission. With the assistance of David Anderson and Greg Schildwacher in Washington, DC, the Club has remained very engaged and recognized among our peers. Along with the entire conservation community, we are achieving numerous successes once again. It is no secret that the sporting conservation community has had strong advocates in the Trump Administration. That has been extremely helpful when working with the departments of the Interior and Agriculture. However, bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress as we have witnessed on our issues is also essential and, while there have been many other issues to address, our issues have received their fair share of attention.