

# A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE AND A PROMISING FUTURE

## CONSERVATION POLICY COLUMN

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**When we think of the Boone and Crockett Club's historic leaders, our minds often wander to the origins of this storied organization. Theodore Roosevelt, George Bird Grinnell, and William T. Hornaday are individuals who saw the downward spiral of wildlife across the country at the turn of the twentieth century. They took the issue to the halls of Congress and to titans of industry. Today and every day, members of this Club are continuing their legacy.**

In September, the Boone and Crockett Club's largest contingent in several decades traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet individually with nearly two dozen elected officials about pressing issues in wildlife conservation. On the Hill and in the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, our members worked on policy problems ranging from funding for chronic wasting disease research and management to the status of wolves and grizzly bears under the Endangered Species Act to

promoting active forest management on our federal public lands. These are complicated issues that require an intimate understanding of policy, law, and politics, but that is just the kind of wisdom that the Club communicates to decision-makers. Several of these members of Congress were excited to hear from these active conservationists and were keen to help us move toward our objectives.

It means a great deal to our elected officials and shows the strength of our Club and community, that several individuals from across the country traveled to Washington, D.C., to speak with them about sportsmen-conservation. The breadth of our meetings also shows the ability of conservationists to bridge political gaps in an increasingly polarized federal government.

During that same week, Robert "Bob" Model, an Honorary Life Member of the Boone and Crockett Club, was honored at the 33rd Annual Congressional Sportsmen's

Foundation (CSF) Banquet and Auction with the inaugural Dingell-Young Sportsmen's Legacy Award—the highest honor awarded by CSF.

As the owner and operator of Mooncrest Ranch, Model stands among our most important wildlife conservation advocates. Working through the Boone and Crockett Club and the CSF, Model is central to the wildlife policy community that we have today. Under his leadership in the early 2000s, the Club hired its first contract lobbyists in decades and convened the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) as a small coalition of hunting, trapping, and shooting sports organizations. Today, the Boone and Crockett Club employs policy and communications professionals to further our goals and plays an active role in coordinating the AWCP, building on the strong foundation that Model and other visionary leaders of the Club set for us.

Beyond his work with Boone and Crockett and CSF,

Model has also provided policy counsel to multiple presidential administrations and has served on numerous committees and boards, including the Sporting Conservation Council, the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council, the Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation Council, and the National Conservation Leadership Institute.

The Dingell-Young Sportsmen's Legacy Award comes with its own honorable legacy. Named for conservation policy icons, Reps. John Dingell Sr. and Jr., Rep. Debbie Dingell, and Rep. Don Young, the Dingell-Young Award is conferred to individuals who best exemplify the extraordinary individual and collaborative leadership of the Dingell family and Representative Young. To be eligible for the Dingell-Young Award, an individual must demonstrate leadership and long-standing dedication to advancing two or more of the following areas: national conservation policy, the role of sportsmen and women in conservation, public access to hunting, fishing and/or recreational shooting, engagement of youth and underrepresented communities in sporting pursuits, and our outdoor heritage in the policy arena.

**Boone and Crockett Members attended the banquet honoring Bob Model with the Dingell-Young Sportsmen's Legacy Award. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:**

**Seated - Mary Webster and Jim Arnold. Standing - John Schreiner, Greg Schildwachter, Jayar Daily, Simon Roosevelt, Bob Model, Richard Childress, Jeff Crane, Steve Leath, Jeff Watkins, Rick Capozza, and Tony Schoonen.**



**Today, because of active Club members like Bob Model, we can celebrate where we have been while looking boldly to the future. Conservation is evolving like all other parts of our society, economy, and political world today.**

“This award is given in recognition of, and with our gratitude for, the lifetime of work that Bob has dedicated to the sporting-conservation community,” said CSF President and CEO, and B&C professional member, Jeff Crane. “His legacy is one that befits the conservation legends for whom the award is named, and I cannot think of a more deserving individual to receive this honor.”

Approximately 60 members of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus attended the award ceremony, in addition to nearly two dozen Boone and Crockett Club members who all benefit from Model’s leadership. This

dinner was the highlight of a long week of policy efforts and gave Boone and Crockett Club members an opportunity to connect with even more federal decision-makers.

Today, because of active Club members like Bob Model, we can celebrate where we have been while looking boldly to the future. Conservation is evolving like all other parts of our society, economy, and political world today. Innovation in technology and policy presents new challenges for wildlife, but the leaders of this organization have never shied away from these obstacles. They embraced and addressed them, just as we are called to

do today. Beyond addressing these challenges, we ought to also set ambitious goals for ourselves to achieve.

We must reacquaint Americans with the essence of conservation—the wise use of our natural resources for current and future generations. We must set and execute ambitious goals for land and water conservation. And we must ensure that hunting remains a robust tool for wildlife management and conservation long into the future.

Our regular, effective participation in Washington, D.C., and state capitals across the nation is desperately needed to achieve these goals.

The first part of that equation is easy—we must simply continue to show up, informed, where conservation policy decisions are made. But we must also use all the tools at our disposal, including our policy contractors, knowledge generated by our world-class university programs, and the personal connections of Boone and Crockett Club members, to provide wise counsel to our elected and appointed officials. We should be proud of what has been accomplished, but we can’t allow ourselves to rest while work is still needed to promote the conservation and management of wildlife and wild places. ■



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