



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



HUNTING, FISHING AND CONSERVATION



Hunting and Fishing – A Conservation Heritage



Money raised through an excise tax on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment has helped conserve the federally threatened grizzly bear.

HUNTING AND FISHING ARE AN INSEPARABLE PART OF AMERICA'S OUTDOOR HERITAGE, AND HUNTERS AND ANGLERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AMONG AMERICA'S MOST VOCAL ADVOCATES FOR CONSERVING THE NATION'S CLEAN WATER, WILDLIFE AND WILDLANDS. JOHN JAMES AUDUBON, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, EARNEST THOMAS SETON, SIGURD OLSEN AND ALDO LEOPOLD, ALL SPORTSMEN, LED THE EARLIEST EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH PARKS AND WILDERNESS AREAS, AND TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION OF NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE. IT WAS THESE CONSERVATIONISTS WHO CHAMPIONED THE EXPANSION OF THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM, ESTABLISHED THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM, PROTECTED SPECIAL PLACES LIKE THE GRAND CANYON AND FIRST PROPOSED ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF WILDERNESS AREAS. BECAUSE OF THE VISION AND DEDICATION OF SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN, ALL AMERICANS ARE ABLE TO ENJOY A RICHER OUTDOOR HERITAGE.

GIVING BACK TO THE LAND

“OUR REMNANTS OF WILDERNESS WILL YIELD BIGGER VALUES TO THE NATION'S CHARACTER AND HEALTH THAN THEY WILL TO ITS POCKETBOOK, AND TO DESTROY THEM WILL BE TO ADMIT THAT THE LATTER ARE THE ONLY VALUES THAT INTEREST US.”

– **Aldo Leopold**, *A Plea For Wilderness Hunting Grounds*, *Outdoor Life*, November, 1925

The first European explorers to reach America were greeted by a land of wild abundance. However, as the nation's second century began, the effects of settlement, untempered by a concern for conservation, showed themselves. The bison that once numbered as many as 70 million and defined the Great Plains were reduced to fewer than 2,000. Once a major food source for settlers, wild turkeys became so scarce that many states prohibited their hunting. The Audubon bighorn sheep went extinct. These stories were repeated nation wide with white tailed deer, black bear, elk, pronghorn and the passenger pigeon.

Among the first to respond to the decline of America's natural heritage were sportsmen. In 1844, a group of prominent New York sportsmen banded together to form the New York



Money generated through an excise tax on fishing tackle has aided efforts to restore endangered wild salmon.

Sportsmen's Club for “the protection and preservation of game,” and campaigned to enact some of the nation's first laws for the conservation of fish and wildlife. In 1887, noted sportsmen and conservationists President Theodore Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot and George Bird Grinnell joined others in forming the Boone & Crockett Club. The Club's early efforts included campaigning to prevent Yellowstone National Park from being sold to private interests, and it continues to advocate for the conservation of wildlife and its habitat to this day.

In his two terms as President, Roosevelt's passion for the outdoors and his recognition that the nation's natural resources must be conserved led him to establish the National Wildlife Refuge System and expand the national forest system by 151 million acres. Inspired by such actions, a young biologist and hunter named Aldo Leopold – now known as the “father of wildlife management”- first proposed establishing a national wilderness preservation system. Leopold's vision eventually became reality with the passage of The Wilderness Act of 1964 and the creation of a national system of Wilderness Areas that today exceeds 100 million acres in size.

Since the 1930's, the federal Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration program has raised over \$6 billion for efforts to conserve and maintain healthy fish and wildlife populations through an excise tax on firearms, ammunition, archery and fishing tackle.



The sale of federal duck stamps, which must be purchased by waterfowl hunters, has generated an additional half-a-billion dollars for wetlands and wildlife conservation since 1934. Hunting and fishing license sales generate millions each year to support the work of the state fish and wildlife agencies entrusted with the stewardship of America's natural heritage.

Today, American sportsmen and women continue to promote the conservation of America's wildlife and its habitat. Private organizations representing hunters and anglers invest millions of dollars annually in scientific research and management projects to benefit fish and wildlife. Individuals volunteer their time to restore habitats, educate the public about the importance of a healthy environment and promote sound natural resource management policies. All Americans who enjoy the natural wonders with which the nation has been blessed can be grateful for this commitment.

CONTINUING THE CONSERVATION TRADITION

“DEFENDERS OF THE SHORT-SIGHTED MEN WHO IN THEIR GREED AND SELFISHNESS WILL, IF PERMITTED, ROB OUR COUNTRY OF HALF ITS CHARM BY THEIR RECKLESS EXTERMINATION OF ALL USEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL WILD THINGS SOMETIMES SEEK TO CHAMPION THEM BY SAYING THAT “THE GAME BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE.” SO IT DOES; AND NOT MERELY THE PEOPLE NOW ALIVE, BUT TO THE UNBORN PEOPLE. THE “GREATEST GOOD FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER” APPLIES TO THE NUMBER WITHIN THE WOMB OF TIME, COMPARED TO WHICH THOSE NOW ALIVE FORM BUT AN INSIGNIFICANT FRACTION. OUR DUTY TO THE WHOLE, INCLUDING THE UNBORN GENERATIONS, BIDS US RESTRAIN AN UNPRINCIPLED PRESENT-DAY MINORITY FROM WASTING THE HERITAGE OF THESE UNBORN GENERATIONS. THE MOVEMENT FOR THE CONSERVATION OF WILDLIFE AND THE LARGER MOVEMENT FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ALL OUR NATURAL RESOURCES ARE ESSENTIALLY DEMOCRATIC IN SPIRIT, PURPOSE, AND METHOD.”

– **President Theodore Roosevelt**, 1916

Americans have worked together to pass landmark conservation laws to protect our air, water, land and wildlife from waste and pollution. Unfortunately, pressure is mounting to reverse over a century of progress in conserving America's outdoor heritage. The lands and waters critical to perpetuating America's outdoor tradi-



Private contributions from sportsmen have supported the restoration of the Goulds turkey, a rare species, to the American Southwest.

tions are at a crossroads. Unrestrained oil and gas drilling imperils big game winter range and migratory corridors. Roadbuilding and other development threatens remote areas of the National Forest System that provide high quality recreation opportunities and essential habitat for fish and wildlife, such as wild salmon and bull trout. Each year over one million acres of fish and wildlife habitat are lost to urban and suburban sprawl. Pressure to develop wetlands important for waterfowl conservation is growing. These and other threats make it clear that the task of conservation begun by previous generations is far from complete.



Funds raised through the federal duck stamp program have purchased wetlands critical to the conservation of migratory birds, such as the once endangered Aleutian Canada goose.

THE SIERRA CLUB

“THE SIERRA CLUB HAS OVER A ONE HUNDRED YEAR HISTORY OF PROTECTING WILDLIFE HABITAT AND WILD PLACES. MILLIONS OF AMERICAN HUNTERS, ANGLERS AND WILDLIFE VIEWERS HAVE BENEFITED FROM THE SIERRA CLUB’S EFFORTS. I THANK THEM FOR HELPING KEEP WILDLIFE POPULATIONS HEALTHY AND THRIVING.”

– *Tory Taylor, Wyoming Guide and Outfitter and 2000 Budweiser Outdoorsman of the Year.*

The Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots conservation organization. Sierra Club members include people from all walks of life: Rural schoolteachers; urban executives; union members and retirees all working together to conserve America’s wild resources. Twenty percent of Sierra Club members identify themselves as hunters or anglers. These sportsmen and women are continuing the American conservation tradition as leaders in Sierra Club’s efforts to promote visionary solutions to natural resource management issues, hold decision makers accountable when they pursue policies that threaten America’s outdoor heritage, and support the work of pro-conservation public officials.



Elk are returning to their range in the Eastern U.S. thanks to the private contributions of American sportsmen.



FOR MORE INFORMATION: BART SEMCER • 408 C ST., NE • WASHINGTON, DC 20002 • bart.semcer@sierraclub.org
www.sierraclub.org/wildlands/hunting_fishing/index.asp