

Advancing the interests of  
America's sportsmen and women  
for 27 years...



*Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
2016 Year in Review*





Twenty-eight years ago, a dedicated and passionate group of sportsmen in the U.S. Congress came together to form the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus (CSC) to protect and advance our outdoor traditions of hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. The Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF) was formed shortly thereafter in 1989 to serve as the link between the sportsmen’s community and the CSC.

Building upon the success of the CSC, the National Assembly of Sportsmen’s Caucuses (NASC), and the Governors Sportsmen’s Caucus (GSC) were established – in 2004 and 2009, respectively – to extend the policy network from Washington, DC, to states across the country. In 2016, the GSC includes 34 members, and NASC includes 48 state sportsmen’s caucuses. Because of this strong network, sportsmen and women have an organized, bipartisan and passionate group of policy-makers at the federal and state level that directly champion our interests in the political arena.

This report highlights the activities of CSF in 2016, including policy successes and events spearheaded by CSF and the Congressional, gubernatorial, and state legislative sportsmen’s caucuses we support. This report also provides a look into the future of the organization and at the ongoing work we engage in at all levels of government on behalf of America’s sportsmen and women. We look forward to addressing challenges and seizing opportunities for years to come as well as championing successful pro-sportsmen policies that will benefit future generations.

Jeff Crane  
President

Mark DeYoung  
Chairman, Board of Directors



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## FEDERAL POLICY

### FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT POLICY

With many sportsmen and women relying on federal lands for access to hunting and fishing opportunities, CSF is committed to ensuring that hunters, anglers, trappers and recreational shooters can pursue their cherished pastimes both now and in the future. With the support of CSC leaders, 2016 has featured progress on important access initiatives including:

- Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act
- Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage Opportunities Act
- Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act
- Preserving Public Access to Public Waters Act
- Making Public Lands Public
- The HUNT Act
- Legislation to allow bow hunters to carry archery equipment through National Park Service lands

CSF has also engaged on regulatory and administrative issues impacting sportsmen's access to federal lands throughout the year. Utilizing staff expertise on federal land planning issues and leveraging membership in partnerships, CSF has engaged on federal land access issues in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Oregon in 2016. CSF held membership positions in the following Federal Advisory Committees:

- The Federal Lands Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting Sports Roundtable
- The Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council
- The Sport Fish and Boating Partnership Council

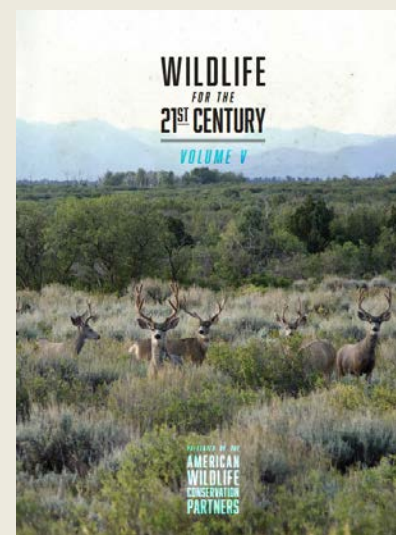
Throughout the year, CSF has also used the resources at its disposal to advocate for state fish and wildlife management authority on federal lands in Alaska, sought to increase the use of sporting community volunteers in efforts to address overpopulated ungulate species on National Park Service lands, and worked with partners to develop a list of recommendations for sportsmen-centric priorities regarding the establishment and management of National Monuments.

### SPORTSMEN'S PACKAGES IN THE 114<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS

During the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, sportsmen's packages were passed in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. In February, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 242-161 in favor of the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act (H.R. 2406), known as the SHARE Act. This comprehensive package of sportsmen's legislation was introduced by CSC House leadership and 37 bipartisan cosponsors. H.R. 2406 included provisions such as: the Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage Opportunities Act; the Hunting, Fishing, and Recreational Shooting Protection Act; Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act; the Farmer and Hunter Protection Act; the permanent creation of the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council Advisory Committee; and the Preserving Public Access to Public Water Act, among others.

After five years and multiple attempts to pass a sportsmen's package through the Senate, a bipartisan amendment containing many provisions of great importance to the hunting and fishing conservation community was adopted with a vote of 97-0 under the Natural Resources Title of the Energy Policy Modernization Act (S. 2012) in April. Many of the provisions within this amendment are also included in the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act (S. 405), which was also introduced by CSC leadership. These packages are supported by most of the nation's top conservation organizations.

In October, CSF and 33 other leading hunting, angling and conservation organizations, sent a letter to Senate and House Energy bill (S. 2012) conferees in strong support of including important provisions from S. 405 and H.R. 2406 in final conferenced energy legislation. The 47 bipartisan conferees from the Senate and House include 34 members of the CSC. While time ran out in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, we were on the cusp of passing this package. CSF and the CSC will use this momentum to springboard into the beginning of the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress.



**“Wildlife for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Volume V”** is the fifth series of recommendations from 47 member organizations under the **American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP)**. These recommendations are meant to inform the new administration about pressing issues facing wildlife conservation and our sporting heritage. Previous versions of this document were provided to Presidents Bush and Obama. Each recommendation is based on sound science and builds on historical achievements of hunter-conservationists. The organizations together envision: the abundance and enhancement of all wildlife and private and public habitats; public support for hunting, trapping, and America's conservation heritage; natural resources policies that encourage and reward stewardship; and citizens committed to scientific wildlife management. AWCP is dedicated to ensuring the vitality of wildlife resources under state and federal fish and wildlife agencies' management, with cooperation of local, state, and federal governments, which is known as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

## FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT POLICY

Recreational fishing is a cherished tradition for millions of Americans. Anglers were among the nation's first conservationists and continue that legacy today by proudly funding state fisheries management through excise taxes on fishing tackle, marine electronics and motorboat fuels in addition to their fishing license purchases. CSF is committed to protecting and advancing our angling traditions, and with the support of CSC leaders and members, several important angling and fishing industry initiatives were advanced in the second session of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. These included the Hunting, Fishing and Recreational Shooting Protection Act, the Preserving Public Access to Public Waters Act, the Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage Opportunities Act, the National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act, and the Gulf States Red Snapper Management Authority Act.

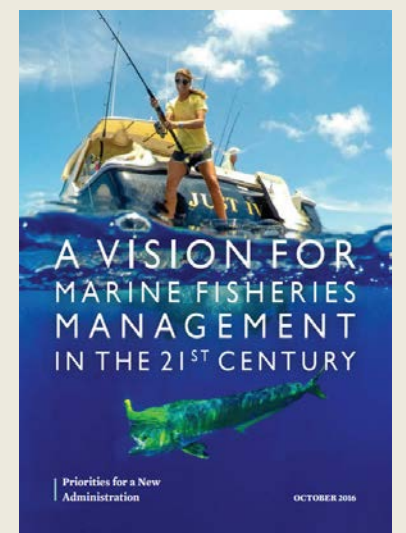
In 2016, CSF was actively involved on regulatory and administrative issues impacting anglers and angling access. Utilizing staff expertise on fisheries management issues and working with partners in the sportfishing community, CSF was instrumental in organizing the Gulf Angler Focus Group Initiative, an effort to bring together recreational anglers from across the Gulf of Mexico to find solutions for red snapper management under the existing Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council process. CSF also engaged the White House Center for Environmental Quality in advocating for the protection of angling access in newly designated marine monuments, worked to ensure lead fishing tackle was exempted from regulation under the Toxic Substance Control Act in FY 2017 appropriations language and advocated against a measure in the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council that would pave the way for sector separation and catch-shares in the recreational fishing sector.

### GULF OF MEXICO RED SNAPPER

Once considered "overfished" from the late 1970s through the early 2000s, the red snapper population has turned the corner and is rapidly rebuilding in the Gulf. However, what was once a 180-day recreational season in federal waters (2007) was reduced to just 11 days in 2016 - ironically as a result of the recovery in the fishery. As the red snapper population grows both in size and abundance, the recreational sector is allowed fewer and fewer days to fish each year because the increased size and availability of red snapper results in anglers reaching their predicted hard-poundage quota more quickly. Unfortunately, provisions in the Magnuson-Stevens Act prohibit any flexibility in the way the fishery is managed. H.R. 3094 seeks to transfer management authority to the states, who have proven they can collect more accurate data, both fishery dependent (estimates of angler harvest) and independent (actual population data). This state-based management would allow for a more efficient, robust management strategy and increased access by the American public, while still maintaining a healthy and growing red snapper population.



CSF, along with the nation's leading fishing conservation organizations and trade associations (American Sportfishing Association, Coastal Conservation Association, Center for Coastal Conservation, Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, International Game Fish Association, National Marine Manufacturers Association, Recreational Fishing Alliance, The Billfish Foundation, and Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership), released a landmark series of recommendations for the incoming Administration and the new Congress that strive to balance improving access to public waters, creating economic growth, and enhancing the conservation of marine fish stocks. The guidance for federal policy makers in "**A Vision for Marine Fisheries Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Priorities for a New Administration**" calls for an end to antiquated federal policies that have inhibited a vital source of economic growth and a proud American tradition.



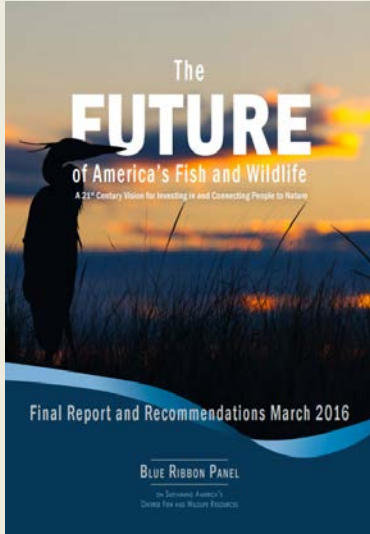
**BLUE RIBBON PANEL ON SUSTAINING AMERICA'S DIVERSE FISH & WILDLIFE RESOURCES**

In March, the Blue Ribbon Panel released recommendations which call for an additional funding approach that will help ensure all fish and wildlife are conserved in the future. Specifically this proposal requests that Congress dedicate \$1.3 billion annually in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program. These funds would provide states with resources needed to implement State Wildlife Action Plans designed to conserve 12,000 at-risk species.

Addressing the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendation, in July, Congressman Don Young (R-AK) and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (D-MI) introduced the bipartisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 5650).

Recognizing that hunters and anglers are the primary funders of wildlife conservation today, this bill simply uses funding for conservation from other sectors that also utilize the nation's natural resources.

The Blue Ribbon Panel is co-chaired by former Wyoming Governor David Freudenthal and founder of Bass Pro Shops Johnny Morris, and includes representatives from the outdoor recreation retail and manufacturing sector, energy and automotive industries, private landowners, educational institutions, conservation organizations, other sportsmen's groups, and fish and wildlife agencies. CSF President Jeff Crane joins 25 other leaders on this Panel.



*"This legislation takes a unique approach to allow states to make responsible management decisions at home"*

**- Rep. Don Young (AK)**

*"The Recovering America's Wildlife Act builds off the successes of previous efforts including Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund"*

**- Rep. Debbie Dingell (MI)**

**CSF BREAKFAST BRIEFINGS**

Throughout the year, CSF hosts several policy briefings on Capitol Hill to inform and educate Members of Congress and stakeholders on pertinent federal policies affecting the sportsmen's community and industry. In 2016, briefing topics included:

**Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund Today for Tomorrow's Needs:**

*Extending financial and technical assistance to the states for the promotion of hunting and recreational shooting*

**The Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources:**

*Recommendations on securing \$1.3 billion in additional funding for conserving 12,000 at-risk species*

**60-in-60: Charting a New Course for the Future of Angling and Fisheries Conservation:**

*A campaign aiming to increase the number of anglers from 46 million to 60 million in 60 months*



## STATE POLICY

### **SUNDAY HUNTING ADVANCEMENTS: PROVIDING ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY**

CSF is a member of the Sunday Hunting Coalition which works to remove state restrictions on Sunday hunting wherever possible. Sunday hunting restrictions originated as “blue laws” that were designed to regulate activities on Sundays for religious reasons. Sunday hunting restrictions have no basis in wildlife management, severely limit opportunities for hunters and negatively impact hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation. Blue Laws across the country have been rolled back over time, yet 11 states still restrict Sunday hunting in some manner (e.g. allowed on private lands only, various time/place restrictions, archery for deer only or allowed on a county-by-county basis). Three of the eleven states completely prohibit hunting on Sunday. While expanding hunting opportunities to seven days a week has been a challenge, incremental progress has been made in recent years with success in Virginia on private lands (2014), Connecticut with private lands archery hunting for deer (2015), and North Carolina on private lands with various minor restrictions (2015). In 2016, a caucus priority bill in Delaware passed, allowing deer hunting on five Sundays during the firearms season. Maryland also passed several bills that increase Sunday hunting opportunities on a county-by-county basis. Additionally, 2016 legislative efforts to repeal Sunday hunting bans in Pennsylvania and West Virginia were spearheaded by the respective sportsmen’s caucuses and heavily supported by CSF staff but both efforts ultimately stalled. On November 8, 11 counties in West Virginia voted to allow Sunday hunting on private lands. CSF will continue its work with the Sunday Hunting Coalition to expand seven-day hunting opportunities in the 11 states with Sunday hunting laws on the books.

### **ENCOURAGING FIREARM SUPPRESSORS OWNERSHIP & USE AFIELD**

Suppressors, also known as silencers, are the hearing protection of the 21<sup>st</sup> century sportsman. Despite common myths and misconceptions, suppressors do not silence host firearms. Engineered to reduce the sound signature of a gunshot, minimize felt recoil, and increase accuracy, suppressors are quickly becoming the favored accessory of shooters nationwide. They work by trapping the expanding gasses at the muzzle of a firearm, allowing them to slowly cool, in a similar fashion to car mufflers. By decreasing the overall sound signature, suppressors help to conserve the hearing of recreational shooters, hunters, and hunting dogs around the world. While there remains a large amount of misinformation concerning suppressors, they are a useful tool with multiple positive applications. Suppressors are currently legal to own in 42 states and are legal to use while hunting in 40 states. Iowa, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Vermont all expanded suppressor ownership and/or use afield in 2016. CSF through working with state legislative sportsmen’s caucuses, has continually been at the forefront of pro-suppressor legislation in recent years to ensure sportsmen and women are afforded the same hearing protection benefits across the nation.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO HUNT, FISH AND HARVEST WILDLIFE**

CSF recognizes that anti-hunting interests pose a threat to longstanding outdoor traditions throughout the country. Consequently, the organization has leveraged relationships with sportsman-legislators across the nation to promote and advance efforts intended to protect these traditions by enshrining citizens’ right to partake in hunting, angling and trapping in state constitutions. Twenty-one states currently have the Constitutional right to hunt and fish, with Kansas and Indiana voters adding this right to their constitutions in 2016. The Vermont Constitution included this right in 1777. Since 1996, 20 other states have added the right to hunt, fish and harvest wildlife to their constitutions in order to protect and advance their sporting heritage. Recently, anti-hunting organizations have questioned the inherent right to hunt and fish, making this Constitutional amendment more important than ever for ensuring America’s sporting heritage in the future.

### **FAMILIES AFIELD: IMPROVING EASE OF ENTRY TO HUNTING**

CSF is a member of the Families Afield Coalition, which works to advance apprentice hunting license policy in states throughout the nation. The apprentice hunting license is a valuable recruitment tool that provides novice hunters the opportunity to hunt under the supervision of a licensed hunter before they have completed their hunter education course. This “try before you buy” approach makes entry into hunting less challenging for new recruits and allows new participants to receive hands-on experience from an experienced mentor. As of 2016, 39 states had approved apprentice hunting license programs, and over 1.5 million apprentice licenses had been sold nationwide. CSF will remain committed to improving hunter recruitment and retention through the advancement of sound policies, such as Families Afield, that reduce barriers to participation in our time-honored traditions. In 2016, Hawaii, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin all worked on legislation to expand their apprentice program. CSF will continue to work with these states in the years ahead to advance these bills to their respective governors’ desks.

**PROTECTING THE USE OF TRADITIONAL LEAD AMMUNITION**

In recent years, anti-hunting interests have utilized unfounded allegations about the detrimental impact of lead ammunition on wildlife populations as a means to ban or place severe restrictions on the use of lead ammunition for hunting. Such efforts pose a significant threat to the ethics of scientific fish and wildlife management, and especially to revenues that flow to state fish and wildlife agencies via excise taxes on firearms and ammunition. Working with partners in the hunting and recreational shooting industries, as well as with state fish and wildlife agency personnel, CSF has sought to educate lawmakers about the negative impacts of lead ammunition bans on hunting, shooting, and conservation, and the continued need for science-based management of wildlife. California most famously passed legislation in 2013 (implemented in 2015 by the California Fish and Game Commission) to ban the use of lead ammo for hunting on lands throughout the state.

In 2016, CSF worked with partners to oppose a proposal from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to restrict the use of lead shot on wildlife management areas in the Farmland Zone (600,000 acres of public land), and these efforts ultimately proved centric to the MDNR’s decision to not pursue the matter in the immediate future. In Oregon, CSF has continued to work closely behind the scenes with state and national partners to monitor potential efforts and to develop strategies to address any attempted ban or restriction on lead ammunition, which is especially important in light of the fact that the Oregon Zoo has hired a lead outreach coordinator whose job is to encourage sportsmen in Oregon to abandon the use of lead ammo. In early January, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife notified CSF that legislators indicated they did not plan to pursue any bans on lead ammunition during the 2016 legislative session, which proved true.

**ANGLING ACCESS & OPPORTUNITIES**

With more than 40 million anglers spending around \$48 billion annually and supporting more than 800,000 jobs, recreational fishing is not only an important outdoor heritage and economic driver for the nation, but fishing and boating provide a significant source of conservation funding through license fees and excises taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel. Unfortunately, each year we see threats to our ability to go fishing on various fronts, whether it be outright closures of public waters to fishing, fishing access on navigable waters, emotionally driven efforts to ban lead sinkers or soft artificial lures without scientific justification, commercially biased federal mismanagement of recreationally important marine species, or invasive species regulations that impede angling and boating access, to name a few. In 2016, CSF worked with a number of state sportsmen’s caucuses and governors’ offices to address challenges to angling participation, such as efforts to establish marine protected areas along Florida’s east coast, a legislative attempt to close fishing access to a water supply lake in Vermont, supporting state-based management of marine fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. CSF will continue to work diligently to ensure threats to angling access are addressed, as well as seek opportunities to encourage angling participation, in the coming years.

**PROTECTING TRAPPING AS AN AMERICAN TRADITION**

Trapping is an extremely important wildlife management tool, and an integral component of America’s sporting heritage. However, it is also viewed as an easy target by anti-sportsmen organizations, and thus serves as the “canary in the coal mine” for anti-sportsmen activities. Each year, anti-trapping bills are introduced in states throughout the nation. To push back against anti-sportsmen organizations, sportsmen’s caucuses in several states have begun introducing pro-trapping bills which would expand trapping allowances for their sportsmen and women constituents. In 2016, CSF worked with sportsmen’s caucuses and their members in 16 states on a variety of trapping provisions, and will continue to remain vigilantly engaged on this issue in the years ahead.



**ESTABLISHING WILDLIFE COUNCILS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION**

CSF has been a leading voice in the discussion on state wildlife councils for public education, such as the Hug-a-Hunter model utilized by Colorado and the recently adopted Michigan Wildlife Council. These programs seek to educate the non-hunting and angling public on the numerous benefits that sportsmen and women provide for conservation. Such educational campaigns are among the best ways to ensure hunting, angling, and trapping opportunities for the future. During the off-session year of 2016, CSF continued to assist in-state sportsmen’s NGOs in Nevada on draft legislation to create a wildlife council in the state. In addition to reviewing and providing advice on legislation and coordinating contact between key sportsmen’s contacts, CSF also worked to encourage communication between in-state partners and the Nevada Department of Wildlife on the issue to ensure broad support for the policy. In addition to providing assistance with the wildlife council legislative concept, CSF is also working to convene a Caucus briefing on the subject with the Co-Chairs and members of the Nevada Sportsmen’s Caucus for late 2016/early 2017.

Additionally, CSF prepared and provided a briefing packet on the history/legislation/key considerations/state examples of state wildlife councils for public education to leadership in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) to use at their September retreat with state fish and wildlife directors. This was done in part to help directors better understand the issue and to create greater support among directors for the establishment of state wildlife councils in their respective states.

## 2016 CSF EVENTS



GSC Vice-Chair Gov. Peter Shumlin (VT) received the NASC Heritage Award. Photo with Joshua Waldron (SilencerCo, LLC) at the GSC Reception in Washington, DC



CSC Members at the Congressional Shoot-Out in Maryland



Greg Schildwachter (Watershed Results), Rep. Steve Scalise (LA) (House Majority Whip), Gordon Merritt (FNH USA), Jeff Crane (CSF), Mark Cherpes (FNH USA) at the Congressional Shoot-Out



Erin Cox (Winchester) won Top Gun Female at the Congressional Shoot-Out (with CSF Board Vice-Chair Paul Miller and CSF President Jeff Crane)



Sen. Tom Berryhill (California Sportsmen's Caucus Co-Chair), Richard Petty at Wine, Wings & Wildlife in California



Beginners learning about firearm safety and the shooting sports at the August Recess Shoot-Out

## FOLLOW CSF ON SOCIAL MEDIA @HUNTERANDANGLER



CSF President Jeff Crane, Rep. Rob Bishop (UT) (House Natural Resources Committee Chair), CSF Board Chair Mark DeYoung (Vista Outdoor Inc.), Rep. Rob Wittman (VA) (CSC Co-Chair), Rep. Bob Latta (OH), Rep. Glenn Thompson (PA) at the RNC Stars & Stripes Shoot-Out outside Cleveland, OH



**#SPORTSMENFOR2016**

Sen. Joe Manchin (WV) (CSC Co-Chair), Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (ND) (CSC Vice-Chair), Sen. Martin Heinrich (NM) at the DNC Democratic Luncheon in Philadelphia, PA



Sen. Lisa Murkowski (AK) and Sen. Martin Heinrich (NM) speak about the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Banquet & Auction



CSC leadership at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Banquet & Auction



CSF Board Chair Mark DeYoung (Vista Outdoor Inc.), Johnny Morris (Bass Pro Shops), Richard Childress (RCR Racing), CSF President Jeff Crane at Wine, Wheels & Wildlife



2016 NASC Executive Council

# LEGISLATORS ON THE WATER AND IN THE FIELD



CSC Vice-Chair Rep. Jeff Duncan (SC) turkey hunting with his son



CSC Co-Chair Sen. Joe Manchin (WV)



CSC Vice-Chair Sen. Deb Fischer (NE)



NASC Vice President Rep. Brandon Phelps (IL) deer hunting



NASC Executive Council member Rep. Jeff Goley (NH) enjoying the shooting sports



CSC Co-Chair Sen. Jim Risch (ID) hunting with his son and grandson



CSC Co-Chair Rep. Tim Walz (MN)



CSC Member Sen. Lisa Murkowski (AK) hunting with her family



NASC President Sen. Robin Webb (KY)



NASC Secretary Rep. Mark Neuman (AK)



NASC Executive Council member Sen. Mike Green (MI)



CSC Co-Chair Rep. Rob Wittman (VA) red snapper fishing



CSC Vice-Chair Rep. Gene Green (TX) deer hunting with his son



NASC Executive Council member Rep. Sal Esquivel (OR)



NASC EC member Rep. Bill Rehm (NM) fishing in New Mexico



## THE TRUE IDENTITY OF AMERICA'S CONSERVATIONISTS

The following letter was signed by 37 leading conservation organizations from the American Wildlife Conservation Partners, including the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation:

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gifford Pinchot, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service and one of the fathers of the American conservation movement, developed the now widely accepted definition of conservation as the "wise use of the Earth and its resources for the lasting good of men." According to Pinchot, the purpose of conservation is to produce "the greatest good for the greatest number for the longest time," with sound science as the recognized tool to accomplish this objective.

Conservationists are people who support and/or engage in this approach to natural resource management. Hunters and anglers are among the first Americans to endorse the idea. Their legacy is now over 100 years old. Through their leadership, state agencies were established to manage our nation's fish and wildlife, and to adopt laws and create programs to conserve these public trust resources.

Arguably, the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs (WSFR), a key component of the American System of Conservation Funding, were the most important of these programs to be created. Through this unique "user-pays, public-benefits" system, sportsmen and women are the primary funders of wildlife conservation, providing upwards of 80% of the funding for state fish and wildlife agencies. They also financially support conservation through the purchase of hunting and fishing licenses and permits, Duck Stamps, firearms, ammunition and archery equipment, philanthropy, and the creation of organizations whose sole mission is the restoration and enhancement of species of wildlife.

Unfortunately, the tremendous contribution made by sportsmen and women toward the restoration and conservation of our wildlife resources remains largely unknown to the general public. This situation is exacerbated by the media's broad-based use of the term "conservationist." They are unable to distinguish between individuals and organizations that financially support wildlife conservation and those that don't. The latter include animal rights and anti-hunting organizations, those whose funding is spent primarily on litigating resource management decisions and those that promote a preservationist "don't touch" philosophy in wildlife management.

It is not by accident that these groups and through their interaction with the media seized upon the term "conservationist" in order to cloak their preservationist, anti-consumptive use philosophy. In the 1990's, labels such as "environmentalist," "protectionist," and "animal rightist," became undesirable labels. These groups began the calculated adoption of the term "conservationist" in an effort to reverse the political and societal credibility that they were beginning to lose.

It is critical that we educate the American public about the fact that hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping are closely related to fish and wildlife conservation. In fact, it is almost universally impossible to speak of one without the other. The term "conservationist" must be rightfully applied.

Using phrases like "sportsmen and other conservationists," or "sportsmen-conservationists" when describing ourselves accurately characterizes the relationship between sportsmen and women and our nation's natural resources. "Conservationist" is a title sportsmen and women helped create, work hard to maintain, and are proud to rightfully claim. They truly earned and deserve this distinctive designation.

The community of hunters and anglers must take every available opportunity to educate the American people and the media on what the term "conservationist" means, who the conservationists are, and what conservationists have achieved in making this country's wildlife resources the envy of the world.

# CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICA'S TRUE CONSERVATIONISTS

## HOW SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN SUPPORT THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF CONSERVATION FUNDING



Since 1939 state fish and wildlife agencies have received over

**\$56.9 billion**  
from sportsmen and women

**80%** of the funding for state fish and wildlife agencies is paid for by sportsmen and women

**Much, much more:** Sportsmen and women also contribute to improved access to public lands, recreational shooting facilities, improved water quality, soil conservation, habitat restoration, and hunter and boater safety programs through conservation funding



This "user pays – public benefits" program known as the American System of Conservation Funding allows the public to access and enjoy our country's greatest natural resources.

Learn More: [www.sportsmenslink.org/policies/federal/ascf](http://www.sportsmenslink.org/policies/federal/ascf)

## THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF CONSERVATION FUNDING

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) program, in 2012, presented the hunting and angling conservation community with an ideal opportunity to refocus, redefine, and reclaim the notable story as America's original conservationists. The idea of conservation in America began with members of the sportsmen's community, who introduced game laws and programs to protect natural resources – leading to the creation of fish and wildlife agencies. Today, WSFR contributions are still aimed directly at conservation funding and largely affect resources used by Americans. Many are unaware of the multitude of benefits that affect all Americans – consumptive and non-consumptive users alike – that have resulted from the efforts of the sportsmen's community. In order to foster greater understanding of the positive impacts hunting, recreational angling, and shooting have for our society, **the WSFR program should be redefined as the American System of Conservation Funding – a “user pays-public benefits” program.**

Seventy-nine years ago, the hunting community initiated this system with the passage of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson Act) which directed excise taxes on firearms and ammunition to a dedicated fund to be used specifically for conservation purposes. Further, revenue from sportsmen's licenses was permanently linked to conservation through the establishment of this program, laying the foundation for what is now the American System of Conservation Funding. Through time, this System has expanded and now includes the fishing and boating communities -with the passage of the Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration Act (also known as the Dingell-Johnson Act, and the subsequent Wallop-Breaux Amendment) as well as the archery community. The funds collected through this program are the lifeblood of state fish and wildlife agencies – the primary managers of our nation's fish and wildlife resources. These critical conservation dollars fund a variety of efforts including: enhanced fish and wildlife habitat and populations, recreational access to public and private lands, shooting ranges and boat access facilities, wetlands protection and its associated water filtration and flood retention functions, and improved soil and water conservation – **all which benefit the American public.**

Conservation is critically important to hunters, anglers, boaters, and shooters alike. The term “conservation,” as understood by the sportsmen's community, can be traced back to Gifford Pinchot of the U.S. Forest Service. Pinchot defined conservation as the “wise use of the Earth and its resources for the lasting good of men.” Along with the use of a resource comes the responsibility of careful resource management. America's sportsmen and women are the original conservationists, who exemplify the laudable definition of conservation advanced by Pinchot, and remain dedicated to the stewardship of our natural resources.

Having just celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the WSFR program, we are now presented with the opportunity to more broadly portray sportsmen and women as providers of benefits to the greater public. Natural resource management agencies nation-wide should work alongside the hunting and angling conservation community to develop and implement strategies that promote understanding of the historic and current roles that this community holds in fish and wildlife conservation. A primary focus must be to enhance recognition that a subset of users – hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and boaters – largely foot the bill for programs that help deliver abundant fish and wildlife, clean water, healthy landscapes, and access to these resources that are enjoyed by the public at-large.

In a time of changing social, economic, and environmental dynamics, it is crucial that the public understands the commitment that America's sportsmen and women have to conservation. Revamping the commonly used, descriptive terminology associated with the System to “user pays-public benefits” is critical to furthering the public's understanding of the American System of Conservation Funding as being vital to the future of outdoor recreation and natural resource management.



*Proclamation signing with Governors Sportsmen's Caucus Co-Chair Phil Bryant in Mississippi*

## NATIONAL HUNTING AND FISHING DAY

In recognition of contributions that hunters and anglers make to fish and wildlife conservation, CSF staff worked with 36 governors across the country to sign proclamations declaring Saturday, September 24, 2016 as National Hunting and Fishing Day. Thank you to the following governors for signing proclamations in 2016:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
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| Governor Bill Walker (AK) *            | Governor Brian Sandoval (NV) *             |
| Governor Douglas Ducey (AZ)            | Governor Chris Christie (NJ)               |
| Governor Asa Hutchinson (AR) *         | Governor Pat McCrory (NC) *                |
| Governor Edmund (Jerry) Brown (CA)     | Governor Jack Dalrymple (ND) *             |
| Governor Rick Scott (FL) *             | Governor John Kasich (OH)                  |
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\* Governors Sportsmen's Caucus member



# CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS MEMBERS IN THE 114<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS

62

Senate Caucus Members

233

House Caucus Members

295

Total Caucus Members

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Sen. Joe Manchin (WV)



Rep. Rob Wittman (VA)



Rep. Tim Walz (MN)

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Sen. Mike Enzi  
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\*As of: 12/6/2016



## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUSES



CSF set out to create a network of state legislative sportsmen's caucuses, and in 2004 the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC) was launched. Currently, with 48 state legislative sportsmen's caucuses, and over 2,000 state legislators united under the NASC umbrella, NASC facilitates the interaction and exchange of ideas among state caucus leaders and the outdoor community. NASC is staffed through CSF, with a dedicated staff member in each region.

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VICE PRESIDENT



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SECRETARY

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Senator John Astle (MD)

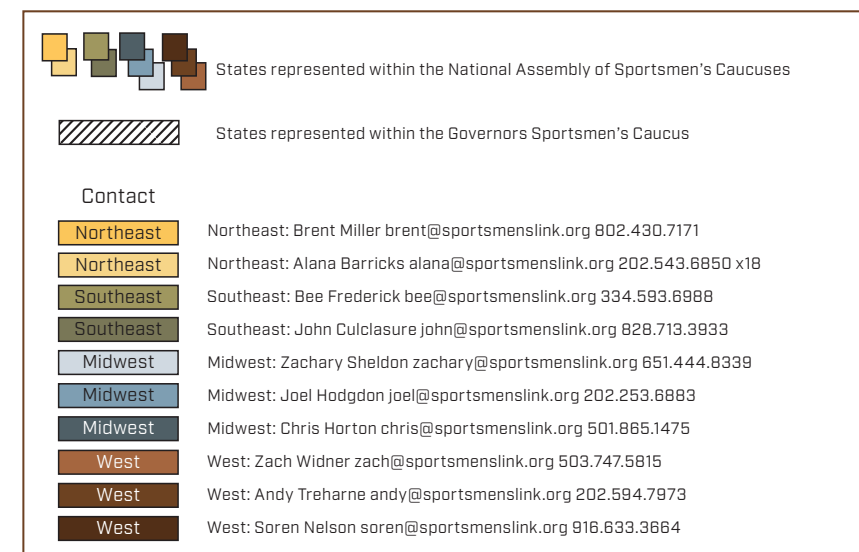
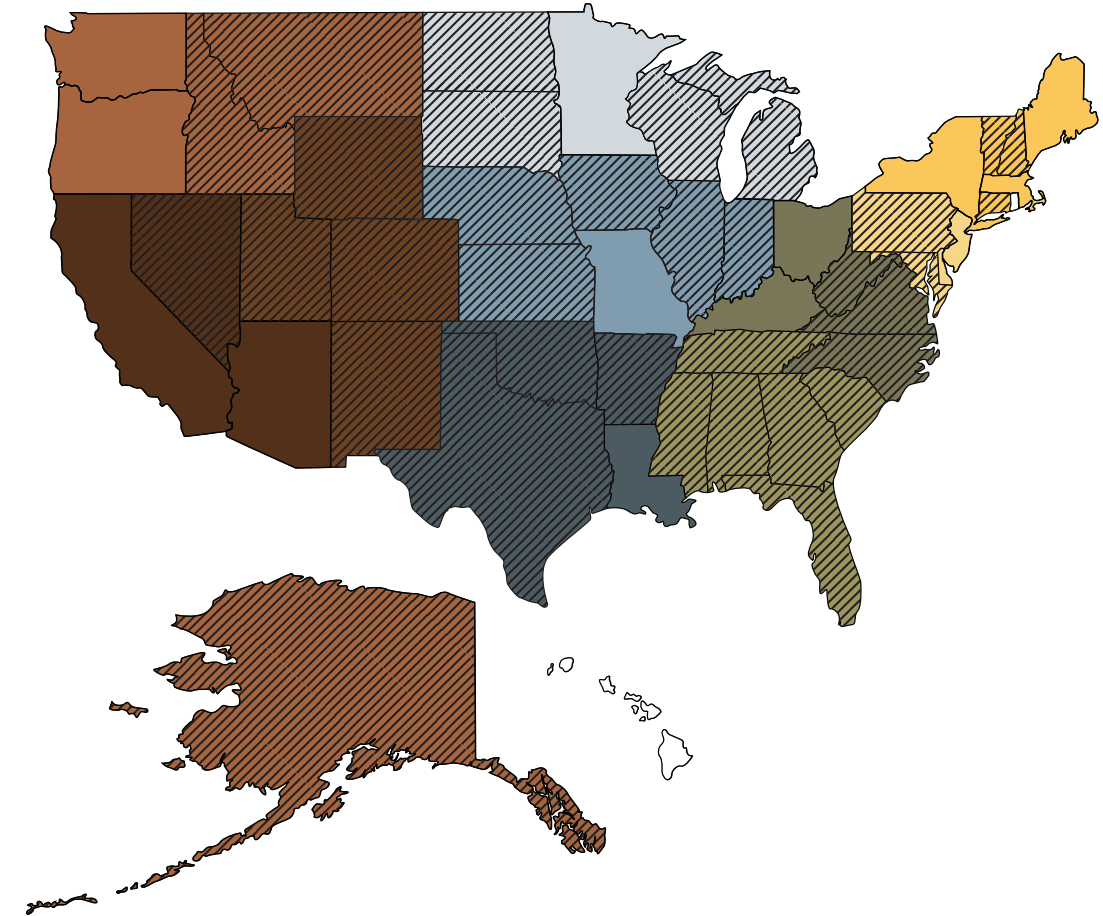
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Representative Patrick Brennan (VT)  
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Representative Jeff Goley (NH)  
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Representative Brian White (SC)

#### ALTERNATE MEMBER

Senator Pam Roach (WA)

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Sen. Philip Murphy  
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## GOVERNORS SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS



To compliment the CSC and NASC, the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC) was launched in 2009 as a bipartisan caucus of governors who work to protect and advance the interests of America's sportsmen and women. The 34 member GSC facilitates communication and information exchange between participating offices in support of hunting, angling, recreational shooting and trapping.



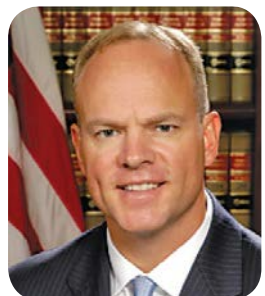
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Gov. Peter Shumlin (VT)  
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*"I am honored to serve as Chairman of this well-respected and critically important organization. Their accomplishments working with Congress, governors and state legislatures demonstrate the profound impact CSF has with the sportsmen's community."*

- Mark DeYoung

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