



BC CONSERVATION NEWS ALERT 2016

SPORTSMEN'S ACT: Progress towards Passage

On February 26th the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act (SHARE Act) passed the House of Representatives on a bipartisan vote of 242-161. On the Senate side, those versions of the Sportsmen's Act has cleared both committees of jurisdiction and is awaiting a floor vote. Both chambers have made some changes and the two chambers will need to reconcile their respective final versions. The most important similarities remain, including the Club's priority issue of Equal Access to Justice Act reform. Other notable items include the Land and Water Conservation Fund (which was also addressed in the FY16 spending bill explained below), and the re-delisting of the gray wolf in Wyoming and the Lake States. The Club is now negotiating for passage of the overall bill. The Club, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, NRA, Safari Club, and other partners are leading the effort to keep the community pressing on this priority.

FOREST MANAGEMENT: Support for Reform Building

The rising costs and dangers of wild fire brought new momentum to our efforts and created an opportunity to include new forest management policy in the FY16 spending bill. After vigorous negotiations, this ultimately fell out of the final deal, but left us with wider recognition that the cost of fighting wild fire is outstripping the budget of the Forest Service intended for forest management and other conservation. The Club successfully recruited the support of the National Wildlife Federation on this effort, thanks largely to the personal intervention and involvement of Club members. In the early weeks of 2016, the Club has already re-engaged to convert the broader interest to enactment of new law.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND:

Congress Extends LWCF Three Years

Congress enacted a 3-year reauthorization as part of the FY16 spending bill. While debate will continue on how to improve the LWCF, Congress did remove from the authority of eminent domain from the program and split the \$450 million appropriation 50:50 between federal and state agencies. The Senate twice in 2015 passed a permanent reauthorization of LWCF and those measures are still in play and could supersede the 3-year deal enacted in the spending bill.

FEDERAL LANDS: Oregon Standoff and FLAG

Prior to the standoff at the wildlife refuge in Oregon, the Club began talking with a task force of House members called the Federal Land Action Group (FLAG) about positive directions for anger over Federal land management. Such task forces are a common way to call attention to issues for which no actual policy has been proposed. As we



were already working with FLAG, we lost no time in engaging them on the topic of the Oregon situation. We supported its proper handling as a case for law-enforcement and sought to ensure that it would not worsen the politics of the larger issue. We have been encouraged to find that its political effect is favoring rational positions over radical ones. Our strategy on the Federal land issue is to remain in direct talks with the policymakers and allies with whom we can form positive outcomes.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT: Renewed Focus on ESA Reform

As the delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly bear and gray wolf remain priorities of the Club for 2015-2016, we are now also broadening our focus to improvement of the ESA overall. The issue has been gridlocked for at least 10 years and without new policy since 1988. The main obstacle therefore is the utter lack of any political viability to even discussing this issue much less passing anything. Our first step will be to build on our new working relationship with the National Wildlife Federation to promote a fix to the listing and delisting decision-making process under ESA.

PRIVATE LANDS: Tax Deductions for Conservation Easements

As part of a larger end of the year tax package, Congress passed legislation that permanently extends enhanced and expanded tax deductions for donations of conservation easements. A long term legislative priority for the Club, permanent authorization will result in a substantial increase in donations of conservation easements— allowing for the conservation of critical watersheds, wildlife habitat and working lands, including farms and timberlands. On December 18, 2015 the package became law.

TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL ACT: TSCA Reform Becomes Law

In November, Congress passed legislation that precludes the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from asserting Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA) authority over ammunition and its component parts. A major priority for the Club, this important provision was included in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015. With its enactment, this provision clarifies that the EPA does not have the jurisdiction to regulate traditional ammunition and protects our hunting and recreational shooting heritage. TSCA jurisdiction over traditional ammunition would have resulted in considerable reductions to the excise taxes ammunition manufacturers pay on the sale of their products that is a critical source of wildlife and habitat conservation funding throughout the country.

NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE CONFERENCE:

A Venue for Conservation Leaders

The Club's Spring meeting is held at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference for the simple reason that most of the hunting and other conservation leaders in the U.S. convene there. Many of the Club's policy agenda items will be worked on there and discussed with our partners, especially at the meeting of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners on Tuesday, March 15th.

