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WMI Outdoor News Bulletin

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New Era for WMI

On Wednesday, April 11, the Wildlife Management Institute's Board of Directors voted to allow WMI to chart a new and independent course for the future. It is a course that will enable the Institute to continue its important role in wildlife conservation. The Board action further allows WMI to seek necessary additional sources of support and new Board members in addition to four original members who will remain. This action also allows WMI to retain its nonprofit, corporation status.

The Board's decision was based on actual and projected financial information indicating that WMI can sustain operations into the immediate future. WMI officers are developing a course of action to enable the organization to remain viable and dedicated to the improved professional management of wildlife resources.

This dramatic change for WMI is not its first. Originally incorporated in 1911 in New York as the American Game Protective and Propagation Association, its aims were to preserve and propagate game and fish, urge enactment and enforcement of "proper" laws for the preservation and propagation of game and fish, and to demonstrate and promote feasible means of preservation and propagation. Foremost among those who subscribed liberally to the formation of the organization were leaders in manufacture of U.S. sporting arms and ammunition. Other notables included Theodore Roosevelt, George Bird Grinnell, C. Hart Merriam, Henry Stimson, John Burroughs and Henry Graves.

From 1913 to 1930, the organization was the American Game Protective Association, before moving to Washington, DC, and becoming the American Game Association. In 1935, it was the American Wildlife Institute until redefining itself yet again and finally as WMI in 1946. With each name change and reincorporation, the Institute refined its infrastructure and operational approach. Its focus evolved with that of the wildlife profession, from game protection, to game management to wildlife management. However, its mission—to provide leadership to conserve, enhance and restore North American wildlife populations and their habitats and, through science, to promote conservation and profes-

sional management for hunting and other compatible recreational uses of wildlife resources—is essentially the same as it was 96 years ago.

"We at WMI," said Institute President, Steve Williams, "are grateful to all of the sporting arms and ammunition industry companies that founded and supported WMI for almost a century. Their foresight not only created the Institute but, in doing so, it provided a focus and energy for the emerging concept and discipline of wildlife conservation."

Williams added: "Over the years, a remarkable cadre of talented, conservation-minded persons has served the WMI mission. They built the tradition of putting science first and getting things done by taking initiative, not credit. It is our intention, as we develop a new operational strategy, to remain true to the mission and tradition."

WMI Board member and President of the National Shooting Sports Foundation Doug Painter stated: "The Institute's Board of Directors is proud of its long and productive association with WMI and its innumerable accomplishments on behalf of wildlife, wildlife management and recreational hunting. We believe the new WMI structure opens the door for this great organization to better serve the conservation community. We appreciate what WMI has been and what it surely will continue to be for wildlife conservation."

It is expected that the "new" WMI will unfold in the next month or two, and will be reported in the next issue of this newsletter. In the meantime, the WMI officers will be working with National Shooting Sports Foundation staff and others to ensure a smooth transition to future operations. The officers wish to express their sincere thanks to WMI's wide circle of friends for their concern about staff and WMI's unique niche in the conservation community.

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