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UNITED CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

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United Conservation Alliance, Washington, D.C.

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We gather here and reflect on successes in wildlife conservation, **restoration, and management**; and make plans for more beneficial actions. Significant achievements have been made in public education and wildlife management, as shown by increases in some wildlife populations. But a continuing pressing challenge involves responding to some wildlife population declines, as well as wildlife damage and nuisance situations, as the human population increases and dominates the landscape.

As you well know, management successes involve imagination and dedication of people, such as those gathered here. Your efforts play an important role in helping to manage wildlife, and provide associated outdoor recreational opportunities. Obviously, management includes striking a balance between the land's ecological carrying capacity and public acceptance in various geographic areas.

Hunters and other wildlife enthusiasts know that maintaining and enhancing habitat-working for wildlife-is the key to thriving wildlife populations. They also know that annual surpluses can be cropped in delineated management units to ensure that the populations are perpetuated, while holding them within limits of habitat, and tolerance of landowners and others.

Today those well-founded principles and actions are being challenged severely by a small, vocal, highly-organized and well-financed group of people-the animal rights extremists. They oppose allowing people to use animals for any purpose.

More organizations and individuals are learning of challenges to human uses of fish, wildlife, other animals, and plants for commercial, subsistence, recreational, and scientific purposes, regardless of how well-regulated those uses are. Governments mandated under the public trust doctrine of law to develop and implement sustained-use regulations also are being challenged more frequently.

Recent involvements with a number of wildlife regulatory proposals in California illustrate the point. The black bear (*Ursus americanus*) bowhunting season was closed for 1990 and mountain lion (*Felis concolor*) hunting will remain closed pending a public referendum on the matter. Challenges to California's 1990-91 migratory bird seasons were resolved at a late hour. Other challenges to hunting and fishing continue to erupt periodically.

Those administrative and legal confrontations, and even field or installation harassments, increasingly come from organizations and individuals associated with the animal rights movement. It is founded on the premise that utilization of animals and some plants (i.e., trees), is morally wrong.

Philosophies, positions, and actions of some of the more than 30 animal rights organizations are illustrated with the following six quotes:

1. "The ultimate objective of the (animal) rights view is the total dissolution of the animal industry as we know it." Tom Regan (in Pringle, *The Animal Rights Controversy*).

2. "The liberation of animal life can only be achieved through radical transformation of human consciousness and the overthrow of the existing power structures in which human and animal abuse are entrenched." Trans-Species Unlimited (*Readers Digest*, June 1990).

3. "It seems to me perfectly natural and a very moral thing for people to intervene directly to save animals from persecution. Of course, this would often mean breaking the law, but those laws have been made by a selfish and arrogant human species without taking the interests of animals into consideration." Animal Liberation Front (HALF) (*New Times*, March 1987).

4. "Arson, property destruction, burglary, and theft are 'acceptable crimes' when used for the animals' cause." Alex Pacheco, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), (*Charleston, West Virginia Gazette-Mail*, Jan. 15, 1989).

5. The legal purpose of the Committee to Abolish Sport Hunting (CASH) is to, "Abolish all forms of recreational hunting and trapping through a program of public education and lobbying for legislative changes." (CASH Articles of Incorporation). Luke A. Dommer, President of CASH based in White Plains, New York, stated in September 1990, "We have closed down the sport of hunting bear and mountain lion in the State of California, and are ever so close in Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and Washington. We have achieved this by using the legal system and forcing environmental studies."

6. The Fund for Animals (FFA) has launched a nationwide campaign to stop all hunting. Its national director has charged

that legal sport hunting is ethically wrong. "I personally don't believe that animals are a resource to be hunted." (Wayne

Pacelle, FFA, *The State*, Columbia, South Carolina, August 1990). The Fund's President (Cleveland Amory) stated, in

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reference to the challenge to California's 1990-91 migratory and animals must be used. The challenge is to d bird hunting seasons, that the national animal rights groups ment systems to ensure that ethical, responsible, would work to end that hunting. He said, "I don't want the of plants and animals be permitted to continue. killers (waterfowl hunters) to provide the habitat" (for the

birds).

Obviously, these positions and actions are considered extreme and serious by many people, and disrupt rational uses of plants and animals. But remember, a 1990 Gallup Poll showed the general public does not support the positions and actions of the so-called animal rightists, with 90% opposing hunter harassment in the field. A strong majority (77%) approved reasonable uses of wildlife.

Nevertheless, incidents from around the country indicate that both the frequency and aggressiveness of orchestrated campaigns are on the rise to limit human uses of wildlife, other animals and plants, and severely restrict resource management. Antihunting issues are becoming common. Adverse legislative proposals are becoming more numerous in the United States Congress and a number of state legislatures. If left unbalanced, these proposals and actions could have **s e v e r e i m p a c t s** on wildlife populations, their habitats, and the cultural, recreational, economic, and aesthetic benefits that people derive from them.

Activists do not limit their efforts to hunting or trapping. Some also oppose fishing, cutting trees, biomedical research with animals, and slaughtering farm animals for food. They have as their root a whole array of moral and antimanagement sentiments. Those views, if converted to inappropriate constraining provisions, could have severe consequences for using and sustaining living resources.

Groups of representatives from national organizations met periodically in 1990 to brainstorm and explore potential approaches that could be taken to advance sustainable uses of fish and wildlife, and counterbalance antimanagement proposals and actions. From those exploratory discussions, it was concluded to invite a large group of organizations to meet to examine further the merits of establishing this proposed national group. ~ More than 140 individual representatives of conservation, sportsmen, agriculture, biomedical, outdoor media, and industry groups met on 7 September in New Orleans to organize a campaign to counter animal rights extremism and support responsible natural resource management and use.

Congressman Richard T. Schulze (Pa.), Chairman of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, told the group that grassroots lobbying by animal rightists have many elected officials leaning toward the nonuse camp. He said that proponents of rational, humane use of animals and plants had best unite and counter the many false claims being circulated by activists.

The basic premise is simple. The United States human population now numbers about 250 million. Each person is seeking a reasonable standard of living. To achieve it, plants

A 15-member Transition Team was form(specific proposals and recommendations to plan a new organization to promote wise management Bible uses of plants and animals, including hunting trapping. Those proposals and recommendations on 9 January in Dallas, Texas. They were approve all cases unanimously. The United Conservation been established, and is registered formally and national charitable, scientific, educational, non-p zation (501(c)(3)) in the Washington, D.C. area.

The strong support expressed for this new Al onstrates the long-felt need to build collective, efforts among organizations to help ensure that uses of plants and animals are perpetuated to e quality of living for people, now and in the future.

The new United Conservation Alliance welcome bership from all interested organizations and individual support humane, legitimate uses of fish, wildlife, natural resources, and is being promoted vigorous wide. Anyone or any group wishing to join may framework of membership categories and annual due established by the Board (Table 1). Both voting and. members are welcome.

Table 1. Annual dues' schedule for the United Co Alliance, 1991-92.

Voting Members	Gold
Silver	
Affiliated Group (com-	\$10,000
\$5,000	
parries, organizations, etc.)	
Conservation Groups	10,000
5,000	
Media Groups	10,000
5,000	
Sporting Goods	10,000
5,000	
Industry Groups	
<i>Nonvoting Supporting Members</i>	
Retailers	500
250	
Other Organizations	500
250	
Individuals	500
250	

In all of these efforts to perpetuate responsible, r uses of plants and animals it must be recognized that of Americans oppose (morally) uses of animals and p: or more support reasonable uses, and 75-80% are net not taken a position). The challenge is to convince fluc mitred majority that responsible uses of plants an should continue in the best interests of society. Hol

information and education programs delivered through a variety of programs, such as the ones you and your cooperators provide. These important programs and efforts are absolutely essential, and must be supplemented with other constructive actions.

contacts with people. Those

inform citizens about the

You, your service clients, and friends can take some actions immediately to reach generations of Americans with information supporting responsible, reasonable management and uses of plants and animals:

1. Be prepared to receive challenges from the animal rightists. Remember, the challenges registered so far merely serve as an alert of more challenges to come.

2. Help build integrated resource management systems solidly based on facts and management units that ensure sustained uses of natural resources. Effective teamwork among members of various resource-use interests and disciplines is paramount to maintain a productive and healthy resource base.

3. Help develop and maintain adequate data bases on fish and wildlife and their habitats. Their extent and quality must withstand rigorous administrative and judicial reviews. As professionals dealing with problem wildlife situations, your efforts are essential in documenting each situation carefully.

4. Encourage outdoor recreationists to conduct themselves responsibly and ethically. Help ensure that codes of ethics are available and used. More codes are being developed and are pending release.

5. Encourage people to use and enjoy the outdoors. With the Supreme Court ruling of 1 person-1 vote, and up to 75% of United States citizens living in urban-suburban areas, it is essential to have citizens keep in touch with the resource base. Those contacts are required to improve understanding and ensure knowledgeable participation in preventing and resolving resource management problems, including animal nuisance and damage situations.

6. In your role as a citizen, contact your House and Senate representatives and encourage them to join the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus. Stimulate your friends to do the same.

7. Verify what is being taught in your local school systems about plants, animals, and their uses and management. Recognize

that animal rightists have targeted schools to use educational materials

Individuals engaged in animal damage control and extension services make unique

exchanges provide opportunities to

positive, beneficial features of wildlife management, hunting, angling, trapping, and other outdoor recreational activities. Responding to those opportunities is much more than a responsibility. It is a citizen's

Common denominators for all of our important efforts include 3 elements essential for success:

1. Insist that all outdoor practitioners are trained to ensure they are skillful. This includes developing proficiency in safe, efficient, and sensitive uses of equipment. Hands-on personal practice is essential.

2. Instill all outdoor recreationists and recipients of your services with understanding that leads to respect for the land, wildlife, landowners, and other fellow citizens. Actions inconsistent with ethical behavior should be reported to appropriate authorities by responsible citizens.

3. Enlighten participants on the needs and approaches for conducting regulated hunting, angling and trapping on a sustainable basis.

Your programs and efforts will be truly successful when there is universal understanding and acceptance of the needs for comprehensive plant and animal management activities. To achieve such results, all opportunities to strengthen educational programs and develop new technologies for program recipients should receive prompt, effective responses from you individually and collectively through your offices. Your responses are needed immediately to continue responsible, reasonable uses of plants and animals. Our combined efforts are essential.

In closing, I invite you to help make people aware of the United Conservation Alliance and enlist their support. In mid-October, a new brochure will be available on the Alliance. Contact us for a copy. We would be pleased to forward one

to you. As support for the Alliance grows, Alliance efforts will be enlarged to counter the animal rights extremists and to continue responsible uses of plants and animals