

## TOWARD CENTURY 21 - A USER'S PERSPECTIVE

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**ABSTRACT:** It is important for hunters, as users, to communicate their point of view to wildlife managers who devise and implement the regulations which govern sport hunting. Such communication is particularly important at this time, as people with different experiences and opportunities, who may not be as concerned about sport hunting and who may feel differently about conservation and wildlife management, are becoming a more vocal majority. In order to do their work more effectively, wildlife managers require additional resources to hire staff who will conduct research and operate educational and extension programs. All Canadians should be prepared to support such programs financially, and the government should be willing to accept support from the private sector. Users must co-operate and adopt certain common fundamental principles of wildlife management in order to preserve the values inherent in wildlife.

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It is indeed a pleasure to be here with you and to have the opportunity to express my views regarding moose and moose management in the 21st century. When Vince Crichton called me two months ago and asked me to present a "user's view" of moose management in the 21st century, my first inclination was to refuse, for the following reasons: first, I am not a wildlife biologist; and second, I did not feel that I could present an objective perspective, since I am a single interest user.

After thinking about it for a while, however, I decided to try, simply because I am a single interest user - a sport hunter and I believe that communication of the hunter's point of view to those persons or agents making recommendations to governments regarding Moose Sport Hunting regulations is important. Having decided to go ahead, I asked several friends who are in the wildlife biology field to provide me with literature relevant to my topic.

After perusing this volume of literature, I thought seriously of changing the title of this presentation from "A User's View" to "The Education of Bob Cliplef". Much of the material reflected sound common sense; furthermore, it confirmed many of my own opinions which had evolved over the 20 years that I have been in Canada. It gives a person confidence to have his own opinions confirmed by

an expert. As a result of my research, I conducted a self examination. I asked myself, "Why am I a sport hunter"? "How did I get to be one"? and "What do I want for the future"? The answers to these three questions form the basis of the balance of this presentation.

So, why am I a sport hunter? Anti-hunters and some non-hunters would accuse me of being "macho". The inference is that, in order to feel like a "big man", I have to go out and kill something and then go to the pub and brag to anybody who will listen. To some extent they are right, and the braggadocio that takes place in pubs after a successful hunt or at a big game trophy night is an intrinsic part of the evolution of most hunters. Unfortunately, some hunters never evolve beyond that stage; this tends to perpetuate the image of the "macho killer" that many find offensive. I, myself, at the present time would tell people, if asked, that I hunt because I enjoy it. I enjoy being out and seeing new or different country. I enjoy the company of friends and the camaraderie we share while hunting. I enjoy the planning - discussing what we are going to do and how we are going to do it. I also enjoy the chase - carrying out and successfully completing the plan. I enjoy feasting on the meat and sharing it with others. One final source of enjoyment for me is reliving the hunt - looking at pictures and reflecting on the good times I had hunting

with friends.

I think most sport hunters would identify with my reasons for hunting. When these intrinsic values associated with hunting are threatened by restrictions, curtailments or the elimination of hunting opportunity proposed by governments, the immediate reaction is one of resentment and animosity toward the government and those people who are perceived to be responsible. This resentment is directed at the people who make and implement the policy. In my own experience, I have found that such people here in Manitoba have reacted commendably to the criticism. They have been available to speak to various sport hunting and wildlife groups, and to explain why certain decisions have had to be made. More recently (over the past several years), they have been more willing to predict what decisions may have to be made, and to give the reasons leading to the decisions. This ongoing communication and education between the sport hunters and the wildlife managers is valuable, and should be encouraged.

How, then, did I become a sport hunter? Basically, I was imprinted. My dad took me hunting at an early age, and I liked it. I remember bird dogging pheasants for him back in the 1930's. I flushed and retrieved the birds but, before I had the opportunity to become proficient as a shooter, World War Two came along, Dad was gone, and my hunting ceased. We started again after the war; pheasants and ducks were plentiful, and again we were successful. This progressed into deer hunting and, on my second deer hunting expedition, about 1949 or 1950, I was successful. I became hooked on deer hunting, and I am sure that my friends found my "macho" mannerisms quite boring. I had to put this developing infatuation with hunting on hold to spend some time in the Navy, but I picked it up again in 1954. I got married and entered college in 1956 and met a lot of new people who invited me to go hunting with them.

These people provided me with opportunities to go hunting in areas where I had not been before. In the early 1960's I was deer hunting in Northern Minnesota (Lake-of-the-Woods area) with a friend from that area and was watching a small clearing in the bush where deer tended to cross when somebody moved them. I still vividly remember hearing the bush crack, getting the gun ready, and feeling stunned as a big black bull moose stepped into the clearing about 10 yards distant, eyed me up and down and slowly walked in a semi-circle around me to the other side of the clearing. At that time, there was no moose season in Minnesota. There hadn't been one since the late 1920's and the word was that it was a \$1,000.00 fine if you shot one. I think all of these thoughts passed through my mind as the moose crossed the clearing and went on his way. What a thrill it was.

That experience kindled a desire to see more moose and to someday go on a moose hunting trip when my financial resources would permit it and the opportunity was available. I immigrated to Canada in 1967, and went moose hunting in 1971. I didn't get one then, but I went back in 1972 and did. Mission accomplished - a desire or ambition fulfilled. Since that time, I have seen a few more moose; I have seen them in zoos and in the wild during times when I was just hiking and looking - not hunting. It's always a thrill, but particularly so when you see them on the side of the road through an automobile window.

Upon reflection, I have to wonder whether I would feel the same way about things as I do now, if I hadn't had these specific experiences and the opportunities to participate in the sport of hunting. There are many people today, living in cities, small towns, or on farms, who have never had the experience or the opportunities to participate in the sport of hunting. There are many young people who never will have. I'm concerned about conversation; I'm concerned about sport hunting, wildlife management, and moose management. I want my children and grand children

to be concerned too, and to have the opportunities that I had.

But what about those people who haven't had the experience or the opportunities. Will they be concerned? Or will they have other priorities? If the people with other priorities become a vocal majority expressing anti-hunting sentiments, then what will the future of wildlife management be? Most of us know that government funding is drying up. So, what of the future?

I would now like to list for you some of the things which I feel are absolutely necessary to chart a course into the 21st century. Chart may be the wrong word; navigate may be better - much of the charting has already been done. The difficult part is to navigate the charted course; that job falls to the managers, and the managers need all the help they can get. More financial resources are needed to hire more staff to do scientific research, and to conduct education and extension work; and more money is also needed to purchase the materials and supplies necessary to carry out such research and educational programs as may be proposed. If governments are forthcoming with this much-needed money, then all will be well. But if they are not, the governments and government agencies should not isolate themselves from funding from private sources (individuals or groups). I know that there is a danger in becoming too dependent on or obligated to that source of money, but this can be worked out in advance. This type of funding is steadily increasing in Agriculture Research at the Federal level, even though everyone is well aware that the benefactors have a vested interest.

Brokaw, in the epilogue of *Wildlife in America* (1978), listed ten fundamental principles which I believe are applicable to moose and which, if followed, chart a proper course into the 21st century. These same principles, although they may differ slightly in interpretation, are reiterated in the ICUN World Conservation Strategy (1980). I list them as follows:

1. Practice sustainable use of land to assure its long-term health and productivity.
2. Avoid environmental change that is irrevocable - for example, loss of soil, extinction of species, introduction of exotics.
3. Maintain diversity of species, if necessary, at the expense of numbers of animals.
4. Manage for the ecosystem, not the single species viewpoint in research, in training, in planning and in execution.
5. Follow the multiple-use concept on public lands except on those special areas set aside for nature conservation.
6. Persuade the system of the Commons wherever it remains in control of wildlife or its habitat.
7. Build knowledge as the basis for management through research in ecological, social and economic aspects of wildlife.
8. Make wildlife policy decisions in a democratic way to reflect broad public interests - not just special interests.
9. Establish ecological education for all, particularly the urban-based majority.
10. Provide adequate financial support for living resources - on them the future ultimately depends.

I would add one more from the Guidelines for a Wildlife Policy in Canada:

11. The cost of management essential to preserving wildlife populations should be borne by all Canadians; special management measures required to permit intensive uses should be supported by the users.

Some may say that the above principles are too idealistic - too much like "mom and apple pie". They are principles that all users - scientists, managers, hunters, and viewers alike - must embrace if we are going to be able to preserve some of the inherent values of wildlife which I have discussed during the past few minutes. I also believe that users

must begin to work together. Hunters must accept other users - hikers, viewers, photographers, etc. as legitimate users. In my view, this is the easy part. It will be more difficult for these other users to accept sport hunting as a legitimate practice in wildlife management; nevertheless, such acceptance is critical. This is an area where wildlife managers can play a significant leadership role by supporting research, educational and extension activities.

### REFERENCES

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