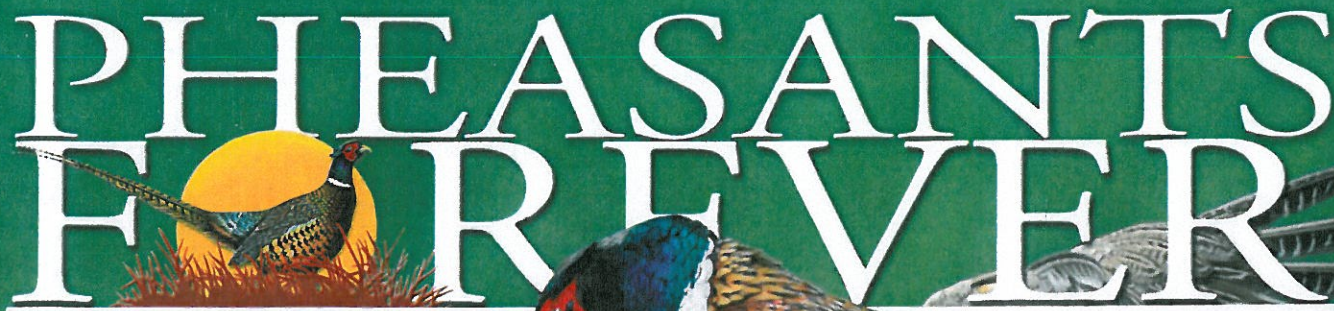


PHEASANTS FOR EVER



Journal Of Upland Conservation

Spring 2014

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SHANE P. MAHONEY *1/0/89*M

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HUNTERS

— and the —

DEMOCRACY of Conservation

PART I

Editor's Note: *This is part I of "Hunters and the Democracy of Conservation." Part II will appear in our Summer Issue, which mails early April. Mahoney is currently advising PF on conservation issue.*

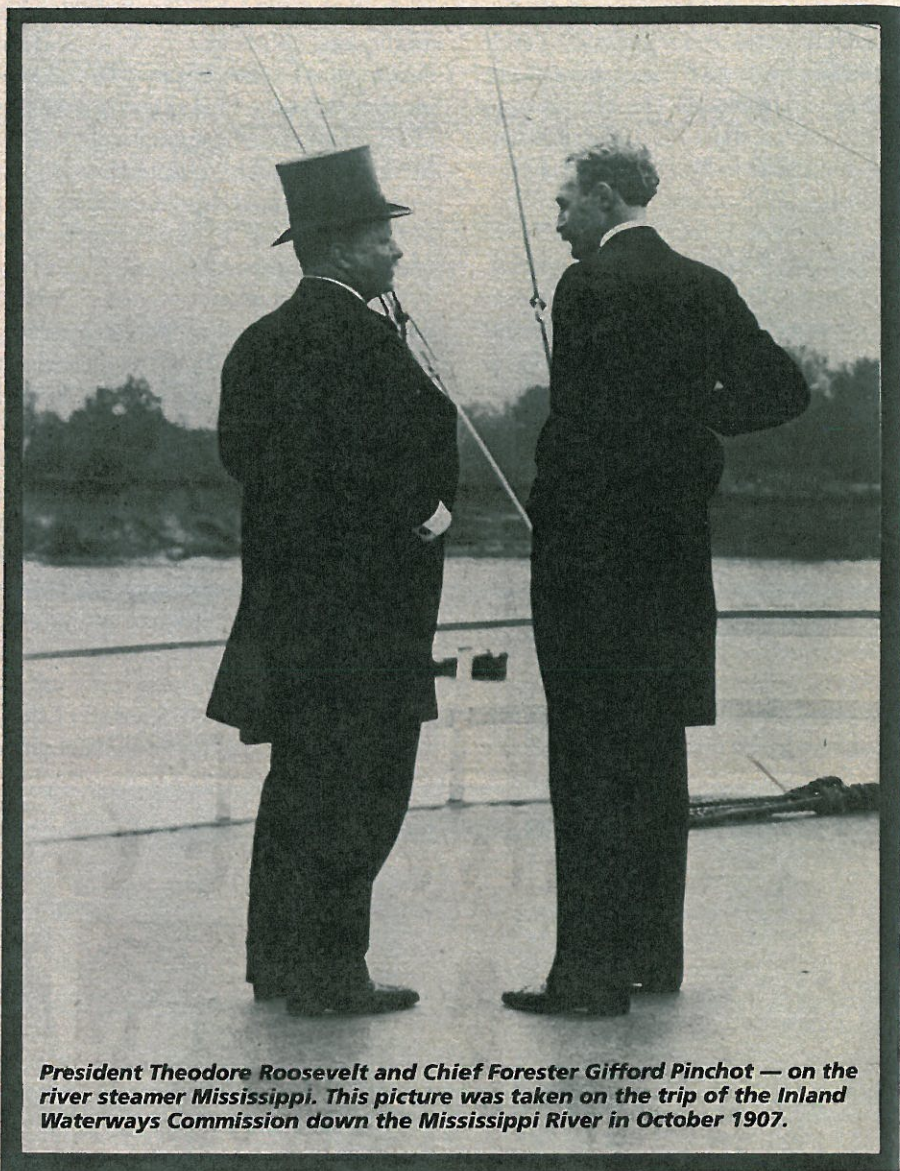
Wild nature staggers today before the onslaught of human population growth and the loss of habitat. Never in the geologic history of planet earth has the wondrous fabric of life been so torn and diminished. We live in the tidal swirl of disappearance, diminishment and extinction, racing beneath wild seas, across expansive savannahs and amidst deep forests — indeed, throughout all landforms and ecological systems. The patterns are evident in countries of wealth and of poverty; of nations powerful and weak; of cultures old and new; of societies learned and those yet striving for literacy — indeed, all of mankind — white, black, yellow and red. Nature's recession is a lesson in democratic decline. Nature's recovery will be realized by democratic resurgence, the commitment of the many, and the engagement of the citizen-leader.

On September 6, 1901, anarchist Leon Czolgosz shot President William McKinley who was attending the Pan-American Exhibition in Buffalo, New York. The President died of his wounds

a week later, and Vice President Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in as the nation's 26th president. Through these tragic events, the course of American history changed. For North American conservation, it was changed irrevocably. Beyond question in the area of natural history, Theodore Roosevelt was the most learned of American presidents (with the possible exception of Thomas Jefferson), and with respect to enacting policies for the protection of wildlife and their habitats, he remains

indisputably the greatest. His tenure marked a crucial turning point for wildlife in North America. It emerged from its era of wanton destruction into one of conservation and restoration — a philosophical and practical overture remarkable for its power and long-standing authority.

Hunter, naturalist and scholar, Theodore Roosevelt made concern for wild nature a respectable study for political elites and for political agendas. This, beyond any other, was his greatest



President Theodore Roosevelt and Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot — on the river steamer Mississippi. This picture was taken on the trip of the Inland Waterways Commission down the Mississippi River in October 1907.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs

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Theodore Roosevelt sitting on mountain top at Glacier Point in California.

achievement. While it is common for writers and historians to emphasize his policies and legislation for wildlife, it was the cultural change he made in the political mindset toward conservation that has the limitless power for improvement and progression. Because of this, the already emerging public concern for wildlife, spearheaded by hunters and anglers throughout both the United States and Canada, could now find acceptance in legislatures and at political meetings, forging a chain of action that linked local grassroots and everyday concerns for nature with corridors of power. Thus did the democratization of conservation occur. Hunters drove the debate at their community levels, and America's most prominent citizen-hunter, President Roosevelt, made it a national and international priority. Seldom had the potential of democracy to befit all citizens been so concretely defined.

Like all aspects of democracy, however, the common good is attained by the individual effort, and

in his individual striving for wildlife conservation, Roosevelt set an example for us all, hunter and non-hunter alike. During his presidency (1901-1909), the national forests were expanded by

“It was the cultural change (Roosevelt) made in the political mindset toward conservation that has the limitless power for improvement and progression.”

some 150 million acres — five national parks and 18 national monuments were established, 51 federal bird reserves were created, along with four game preserves. But even these incredible endowments — and inheritance of inestimable wealth proclaimed for the citizenry of the time and for generations

unborn — does not complete Theodore Roosevelt's achievements in conservation. In 1887, he was instrumental in founding the long influential Boone and Crockett Club, and in 1908, organized the first ever Conference on Conservation, bringing to Washington the governors of states and the leadership of organizations and societies concerned with wildlife's welfare. For the first time in the history of the New World, a national gathering was called to advance the idea of resource conservation, rather than exploitation. Determined from that meeting was a “Conservation Pledge,” a short hymn for the wild beauty and abundance of the American landscape and a call for citizen action to protect it. This doctrine was eventually disseminated to schools and agencies throughout the United States.

Among many other accomplishments, Mahoney, a Canadian, is the North American chair of the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group, a professional member of the Boone and Crockett Club, board member of Conservation Force and member to Safari Club International's Conservation Committee for Africa. He has served as advisor to numerous conservation organizations. Mahoney is also widely recognized as a leading authority on North American conservation history and policy and has been in the forefront of debates on issues of sustainable use within both the United States and Canada.



Shane Mahoney.

TODD SAUERS