



Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow

Hunting Awareness & Conservation Education

Introduction

Edward Abbey once said, “Hunting is one of the more difficult things to think about.” Although this quotation is incredibly simple, it stands as fact to countless philosophers, biologists, teachers, and hunters. To consider harvesting wild game is as abstract to some people as it is second nature to others. That is the nature of a heterogeneous population where pluralistic views of life and morality allow for neighbors to see issues from opposite sides or middle ground. Few will contest the role that hunting has played in the evolution of the human race, the foundation of successful societies or the failure of others. However, the changing dimensions of society often lead to debates over the value of such activities in modern times. To the non-hunter, hunting is primarily viewed as just another outdoor recreation. Researchers, natural resource professionals, conservationists, and policy makers clearly suggest that it is something much larger. It is the intent of the Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow program to further your understanding of the scope, impact, and current state of regulated hunting as it relates to society, the natural resource profession, and most importantly, wildlife management and conservation initiatives on a national and global scale.

CLFT developed this Professional Primer to assist participants in their efforts to understand the role that hunting has played and continues to play in wildlife conservation. The Primer is designed to serve CLFT participants as a guide during the workshop and as a lasting reference concerning the science and materials they encountered while participating in CLFT. The sources in the Primer are examples of foundational pieces of research, literature, and natural resource practice as it applies to society, history, hunting heritage, and the conservation process under the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

The need

Understanding hunting, its culture and complex underpinnings, is important for today’s natural resource professionals. Failure to understand, or recognize, the potential impact (both good and bad) hunting and hunters have on natural resources and conservation will put future State, Federal, private programs, and their administrations at a distinct disadvantage.

Hunters, trappers, and anglers, by virtue of their interest and investment in wildlife and natural resource conservation, are and will continue to be important stakeholders in any conservation endeavor. Hunters and their associated economic impact play an important role in many

conservation programs, whether that program is focused on habitat protection and management, game, nongame or endangered species. Most state wildlife agencies derive the majority of funds for their cumulative wildlife programs from hunting license fees, tags, and associated excise taxes. While other sources of needed funding are being found to support the multiple aspects of wildlife conservation programs, the fact remains that hunters still contribute a significant amount to this effort. Discounting the role of hunters is potentially devastating to all forms of wildlife and the very foundation of conservation and natural resource management. Hunters, trappers and anglers are, important customers and allies of governmental and non-governmental conservation programs; maintaining these benefits is a responsibility that falls on both hunters and wildlife professionals.

The focus

CLfT is NOT intended in any way to recruit or train its participants to become hunters, trappers, or anglers. The objective of CLfT is to provide participants with insights into why hunting is important from biological, social, cultural, economic and recreational standpoints and to explore central themes and common practices associated with the consumptive use of wildlife. These principles are expanded through open discussion and hands-on learning for participants to gain an awareness and understanding of the important role hunting, trapping and angling plays in conservation and society.

The CLfT education model

The CLfT education model contains components of many different programs; including 4-H Shooting Sports and state hunter education courses. By combining components from these programs, open discussion, hands-on activities and the assistance of a wide spectrum of natural resources professional instructors, the CLfT education model has evolved into a powerful tool for teaching wildlife professionals about the role and impact hunting has on wildlife conservation in North America.