



Inspiring Unity - The WWC

by Jeff Christensen

I have said it before and I will say it again: I have been inspired beyond belief by the leadership provided by *Washingtonians for Wildlife Conservation*, the *Hunters Heritage Council* and *Citizens for Responsible Wildlife Management*.

The WWC is a coalition of individuals and groups and serves as the focal point of public involvement, grassroots activism and fundraising to the benefit of all Washington State conservationists, sportsmen and sportswomen. Our group members and supporters include Washington State Bowhunters, Traditional Bowhunters of Washington, the Washington State Hound Council, Washington Arms Collectors, Inland NW Wildlife Council, Washington State Trappers Association, four chapters of Safari Club International, Tacoma Sportsmen's Club, Pierce County Sportsmen's Council, Hunter's Heritage Council, Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association, Ted Nugent United Sportsmen, and the Falconers, just to name a few. The WWC - A place for every group and individual in the state to rally in support and in the defense of our outdoor future!

The WWC was formed in 1995 in an effort to fight the ban on hounds and bait (I655) promoted by state and national animal rights extremists. A few years later the WWC helped form the HHC and remains an active, voting member to this day. The HHC consists of nine, select, outdoor and natural resource organizations dedicated to political action on behalf of the hunting and related communities. The WWC works to help fund the HHC PAC, elect hunter friendly candidates to state government, and to coordinate phone trees and letter writing campaigns when political issues demand it.

CRWM was formed to lead the fight against I713, the trap ban initiative. Ed Owens who is also the political consultant to the HHC and related groups chairs CRWM. The WWC works with Ed on a daily basis as we wind our way down the complicated road of political action and legal activities. CRWM is home to the legal defense fund and state "war chest" to protect our fish and wildlife resources and outdoor heritage from the political agenda of the animal rights movement.

The WWC works closely with CRWM and is helping to fund a lawsuit based on the Public Trust Doctrine. The doctrine, simply stated, recognizes that sovereign (representative government) has the sole and exclusive administrative obligation and responsibility to protect, manage and conserve navigable waters, fish, and wildlife for the enjoyment

and use by the public for transportation, commerce and related activities and purposes. If successful, this lawsuit will overturn any initiatives regulating fish and wildlife previously passed in Washington as well as prohibits any future ones.

This "Three Legged Milk Stool" concept with the HHC as the political leg, CRWM the legal leg, and the WWC and its members as part of the grassroots leg that supports the effort gives every group and individual in the state a place to rally and work in support and in defense of our outdoor future as a cohesive force.

But a movement can only be as strong as the individuals willing to be actively involved. That is why we had our keisters handed to us in the I655 fight in 1996, and it's why we lost trapping in 2000. Our enemies were more committed to ending these activities than we were to saving them. It takes time and money to pass or successfully defeat citizen initiatives, mount legal challenges and lobby our legislature. And though we lost to these well-funded national animal rights groups, we made progress between the hound ban in 1996 and the trapping ban in 2000. Our increased organizational structure, membership, and effort are clearly evident when you compare the numbers: In 1996 we lost I655 by a margin of 2:1. Four years later we lost I713 needing less than 5% more of the vote. We came close but not close enough. And that is why we are asking that every individual and outdoor group in the state join and support this glorious unity effort by joining the WWC.

If you care about the future of our outdoor lifestyle and responsible wildlife management, please lend a hand and support the efforts of the WWC, HHC and CRWM. The effort inspires me everyday and I hope it inspires you as well. Together we can preserve and defend our honorable outdoor heritage. The WWC is a 501 (C) (4) non-profit corporation. We are all volunteers. No one gets paid. Virtually every penny donated and raised goes directly towards preserving our outdoor future and the promotion of responsible wildlife management.

**For more information about the WWC please
visit us online at www.w4wc.org
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