

NORTH AMERICAN BOWHUNTING COALITION

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Chatfield, MN - A meeting of the state and provincial-level bowhunting organizations was held at the Pope & Young Club's headquarters in Chatfield, Minnesota on August 6th & 7th to further address important bowhunting issues that were identified at the National Bowhunting Summit held in Springfield, Missouri last April.

Attended by 41 representatives of 33 organizations in 29 states and Canadian provinces, the Minnesota conferees completed a crossbow position statement, were taught by experienced bowhunting activists how to strengthen their political skills and how to build a more effective bowhunting organization. They addressed the increased anti-bowhunting threat, began work on a program to assist physically challenged archers to shoot modified conventional bows and developed plans to prepare a position paper on high fenced hunting. Dr. Dave Samuel served as moderator for the conference.

The attending organizational reps of the National Bowhunting Summit group established the North American Bowhunting Coalition (NABC). Denny Ballard, of Missouri, was elected chairman of the coalition's steering committee. A significant action taken was to assign boundaries to four NABC regions that encompass the entire North American continent. All state and provincial-level bowhunting organizations are automatically part of the NABC by virtue of their status as a state or provincial-level bowhunting group.

The overall purpose of the NABC is to provide a communications link and organizational structure whereby the state and provincial organizations can effectively work together to provide strong support for the welfare of bowhunting throughout the United States and Canada.

Denny Ballard, NABC's new chairman says, "It's hard to believe that, up to now, three million bowhunters in the U.S. and Canada have had no national level representation in matters that have directly affected their sport. That day has passed as the North American Bowhunting Coalition will provide a forum for bowhunters, through their state and provincial-level bowhunting organizations, to protect and support bowhunting as national issues are deliberated. It's only fair and right that the men and women that have been pulling the load for bowhunting over the years have a say in where their sport is heading."

As the result of the National Bowhunting Summit meetings it was abundantly clear that the organized bowhunting community is strongly opposed to the growing trend by game agencies of permitting crossbows to be used in bow seasons. A position statement on the crossbow issue was developed and was signed on to by 72 bowhunting organizations and bowhunting related businesses. The position taken is that, "crossbows are not bows and therefore should not be permitted in bow seasons or in archery-only hunting areas."

“Our coalition organizations are the bulwark of bowhunting,” Ballard said. “They have opened the entry gate for thousands of new archers to enter our sport throughout decades of service to their local communities and have been reliable partners of our state game agencies as well. We know bowhunting and have earned our place at the table. Crossbow hunting has not.”

“We see dangers, too, in promoting the commercial profiteering of crossbows at the expense of our natural resources,” Ballard said. “It’s a slippery slope. No user group exists for crossbow hunting and yet the public trustees of our natural resources are being pandered to by crossbow manufacturers and the commerce of hunting to allow crossbow hunting in bow seasons when no public interest exists.

For the protection and welfare of bowhunting’s future, the North American Bowhunting Coalition looks forward to working with the many entities that comprise the continent’s bowhunting community.

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