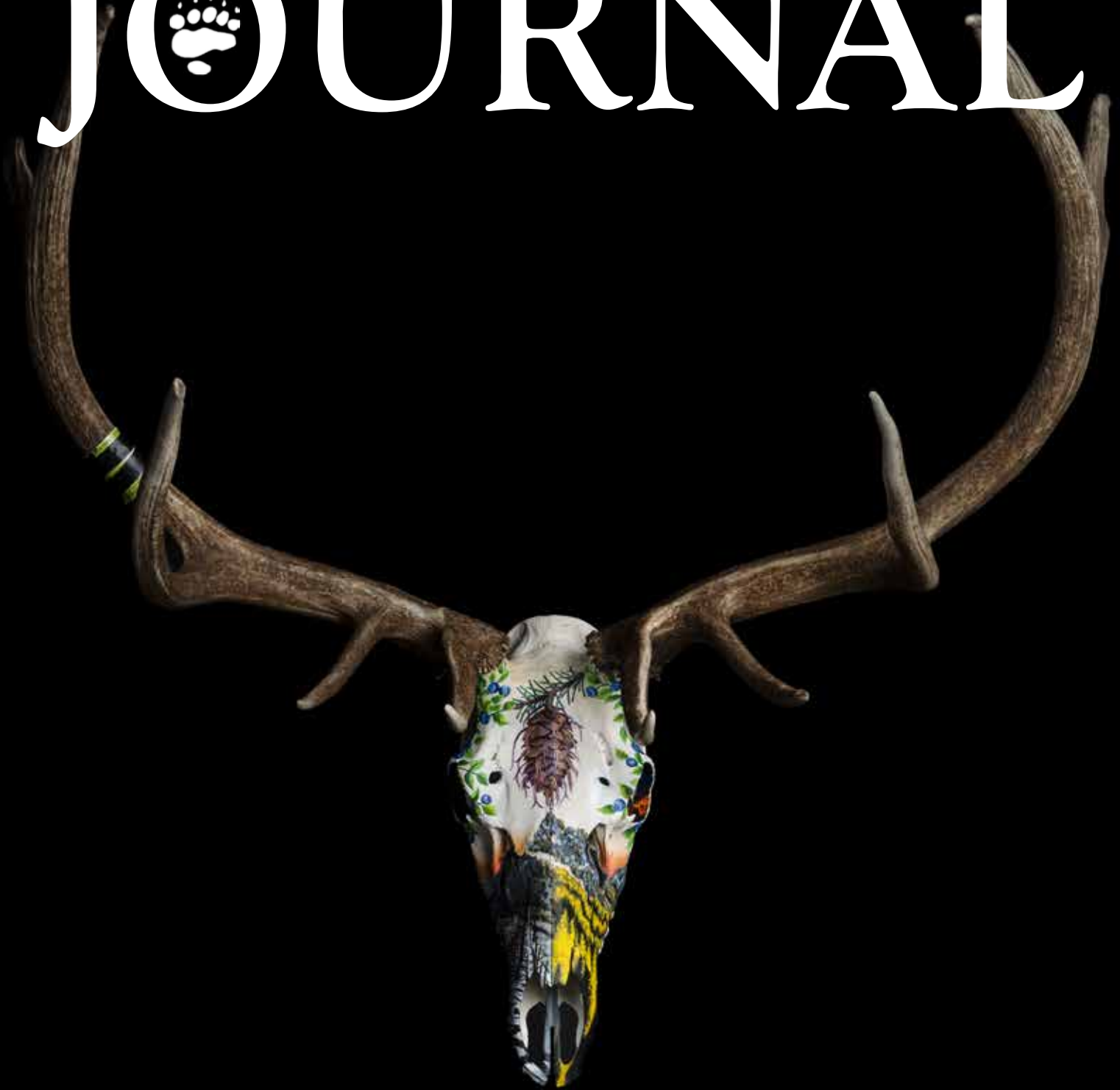


# BACKCOUNTRY JOURNAL



The Magazine of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers Winter 2023



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# WINDS OF OPPORTUNITY

**The first night my cousin and I set camp** on the only semi-flat spot we could find. We wanted to go a bit farther, but the fading vestiges of light told us otherwise. The rocky finger ridge covered in snow would have to do.

We quickly worked to set up the teepee, an act made difficult by the terrain. After breaking a few stakes, we used paracord and rocks to secure our shelter. While I unpacked the stove, my cousin gathered wood, which was easy because we were in the middle of a burn. Luckily, we had somehow found the spot with no widow makers but plenty of dry timber. The first crackle of the fire warmed our bodies and our souls.

As we went to bed that night we were greeted by the wind. You could hear it come over the top of the ridge, whistle through the trees, and then hit the teepee with force. The powerful gale was both impressive and unnerving. Little sleep was had.

The next day we left camp and ventured into a spot new to us that held much promise. As we explored the nooks and crannies of one of the only areas with standing dark timber, however, we found nary a trace of elk track. Plenty of old sign was visible, but the wapiti had cleared out. What we thought would have been a refuge for wary bulls was a quiet landscape. We saw one bird that I failed to identify. A second cousin joined us that night, and once again we stoked the fire and settled in for the night.

The wind picked up again. But instead of coming in waves, it was constant. Snow had melted around the shelter, and gaps to the outside world were apparent.

The first time I heard the roar of gust as it came over the ridge, I thought it was an airplane buzzing the tower. The sustained winds whistled through the trees; the gusts roared. The teepee shook violently, walls collapsing and then springing back to form. With headlamps on we ventured outside and found more rocks to bolster our shelter ... in one spot building a bit of a wall to cover the gap. Feeling satisfied with our extra security, we returned to the warm refuge.

All night the wind persisted, as well as the gusts. We extinguished the fire; the stovepipe kept being lifted off the stove as the wind brutalized our teepee. Even less sleep was had, but we made it through the night. With no sign of our quarry, we broke camp after breakfast and hiked out the four miles to the trailhead. In some ways we felt defeated; in others we were invigorated by facing the elements.

Many plans were laid on the walk out for future endeavors. Next year we will return earlier in the season and change our luck, hope being the eternal driver.

Similar to those nights I spent with my cousins on the edge of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, we all are emerging from the past two-plus years and the constant winds of covid. We've learned a lot and have many hopes and dreams for 2023.



Nothing like a Seek Outside teepee to weather the storm.

First and foremost, we're looking forward to getting back together in person. At BHA, our energy is fueled by each and every one of you. Like my first night in the wilderness, I feel and hear the gusts we have met over the past few months. It's high time to channel that force in support of the values we all share. Our 12th annual North American Rendezvous will take place in Missoula, Montana, March 16-18, 2023. Join us. What an occasion it will be!

Together we'll generate energy to power our work – from our efforts on the ground on up to the halls of Congress. Restoring bison on our public lands and replacing the missing capstone of our conservation pyramid. Passing the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and generating funding for at-risk species of wildlife. Pioneering a solution to the problem of feral horses and burros on public lands in the West. Resolving the conflict over corner crossing and opening up equal-opportunity access to all our lands and waters. Perpetuating and enhancing the North American Wildlife Model of Wildlife Conservation and securing the future of our cherished fish and wildlife populations. Continuing our battle to protect the special places in North America that are central to our identities as hunters, anglers and public lands advocates. These are just a few of the fights I'm excited to join you in the arena to tackle head on – and to win.

The time, talent and treasure you all give to this great organization are the rocks that secure our conservation legacy. None of it can be accomplished alone. As 2022 ends, I offer you a hearty thank you for your continued efforts – and look forward to continuing our work in the new year. Together we will carry the day. 🐾

Onward and upward,

Land Tawney  
President and CEO





"A TRUE CONSERVATIONIST IS A MAN WHO KNOWS  
THAT THE WORLD IS NOT GIVEN BY HIS FATHERS,  
BUT BORROWED FROM HIS CHILDREN."

-JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

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**On the Cover:** Artwork by Kobe Jackson, photo by Jamil Fatti. Read "All the Right Words" on page 45 for the backstory.

**Above Image:** Will Woodruff, 2021 Public Lands and Waters Photo Contest

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*Backcountry Journal* is the quarterly membership publication of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, a North American conservation nonprofit 501(c)(3) with chapters in 48 states and the District of Columbia, two Canadian provinces and one Canadian territory. Become part of the voice for our wild public lands, waters and wildlife. Join us at backcountryhunters.org

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# Birds of the Southern Piedmont

BY ANDREW BARTOE

**Cattails rustled as my setter lowered stiffly into a crouch.** Frozen in place, only his nostrils flared with the scent of wild pheasant. Flapping wings and color erupted from the vegetation. I shouldered my side-by-side and watched the rooster fold.

Wherever that scene took place, it's far from here.

Wrestling a plastic bottle from the jaws of my young gun dog, ending his triumphant lap around the red dirt parking lot, was a vibrant reminder of that moment.

I was in the Piedmont of the Carolinas, far from pheasant. Here, quail are more of an old rumor than huntable game-bird. While whispers of optimism surround Gentleman Bob, they've mostly disappeared along with the old farms and pine savannas that supported them.

As with most places, though, there are riches to be had for those able to donate time and tread.

Autoloader in hand, I listened for the "meep" of my red compact SUV, signaling it was locked. We began our hike. Dawn flooded the forest floor, and clouds of breath emanated from from my mouth and the mouth of my dog on this frigid morning commute.

Cold is a seasonal companion here, providing reprieve from snakes and biting insects. It made this trip feasible.

History taught me to put at least a mile or two between us and the car, or the dog and I wouldn't be alone. The path is an old logging road that winds through the famed rolling red hills of oak, hickory and pine.

Steep timbered terrain transitioned into the flat, spongy topography of our destination. Shrill cries of a wood duck welcomed us with the first glimpse of the river.

I commanded the dog to heel.

He sprinted off.

We both knew where he was going

No electric collar or whistle, not even the biting cold, keeps him dry for long. Nothing dissuades him from completing his performance – regularly leaping into the first stagnant puddle, oxbow or stream we come across. I've reluctantly learned to let him get it out of his system and dodge the dramatic wet shakes.

As with many areas in the eastern United States, the pivot from clearcutting forests in the mid-1900s to implementing policies of a limited timber harvest led to an overabundance of single-aged mature forests. The dams built to reduce flooding and efforts to snuff out forest fires have also contributed to



Photo: Andrew Bartoe



Photos: Andrew Bartoe

Few wall paintings or magazine covers depict the hunt for an obscure, often overlooked gamebird in a region ripe with humidity and reptiles.

this. With no natural or artificial perforations in the canopy and limited sunlight released to the forest floor, vital young forests and cane break habitats have vanished from many areas.

Help, however, is on the way.

A revival of prescribed fires and increased timber harvests – aimed at reestablishing the long leaf pine savanna that is home to the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker – has led to a speckling of improved habitat across the Piedmont and coastal plain.

Cane breaks are a personal favorite, comprised of American river cane. It's a native species of bamboo that grows in long riparian groves and was once used by Native Americans for various tools and blowguns here in the Southeast.

The Great Pee Dee, Saluda and Yadkin rivers drain great swaths of the region, where rain and mechanical releases push water in and out of cane and privet river bottoms like an erratic tide, leaving puddles and damp forests. These combine with late season acorns to provide a winter oasis for migratory species, which come in great numbers when snow blankets the upper reaches of the continent.

Despite my shortcomings in training, my dog's merry nature evolved into focused work as we reached our first cane break. Head down, he plunged in and out of the dense foliage. A trail of elevated leaves and swaying cane marked his passage, as his short legs kept him well below my line of sight. As he maneuvered through mid-story branches and ankle-deep water, I tried to keep an eye out for woodcock. They seemed to be nowhere, until suddenly fire-works of brown and auburn launched from underfoot into the air.

I learned to trust that if there are birds to be had, the dog will put them in the air and retrieve them – not to hand, but close enough.

An armadillo was our initial discovery. Deeper into the woodland we went. I noticed the dog stop, turn 90 degrees and zigzag toward an ambiguous location. The telltale sign of impending action was followed by gunshots, feathers and a few birds on a game clip.

After I cleaned the birds, I allowed them to cool during the remainder of our walk. We continued, dissecting every patch of suitable habitat found along our route. Hours and miles passed with no more flushes. Eventually, the trail rounded a corner and signified the nearing conclusion of our hunt.

Finally willing to heel alongside me, we examined our last prospect. Slipping along the perimeter of a flooded acre of privet and oak, our eyes scanned for the drakes and hens we've seen here before.

Not today. Our trophies were two-thirds the limit of timberdoodle, sore legs and the liberation brought upon by a hard hunt in a southeastern wilderness expanse.

Few wall paintings or magazine covers depict the hunt for an obscure, often overlooked gamebird in a region ripe with humidity and reptiles. Nevertheless, the endless miles of forested creeks and streams, which run through the national forests and state lands, offer rich opportunities and purpose to gun dog owners looking for wild quarry and a place to get lost.

Back at the car, I tossed the newly acquired soda bottle in the car for later disposal. An hour or two of pavement separated us from college football, hot showers and drinks. 🐾

*BHA member Andrew Bartoe is a Great Lakes native living in the Carolinas. He's a proud husband, gun dog owner, craftsman, angler and an engineer by trade.*



A man in a dark jacket and waders is fishing in a body of water. He is holding a fishing rod that is bent, indicating a catch. The background features a large, smooth snowdrift and several evergreen trees under a pale sky.

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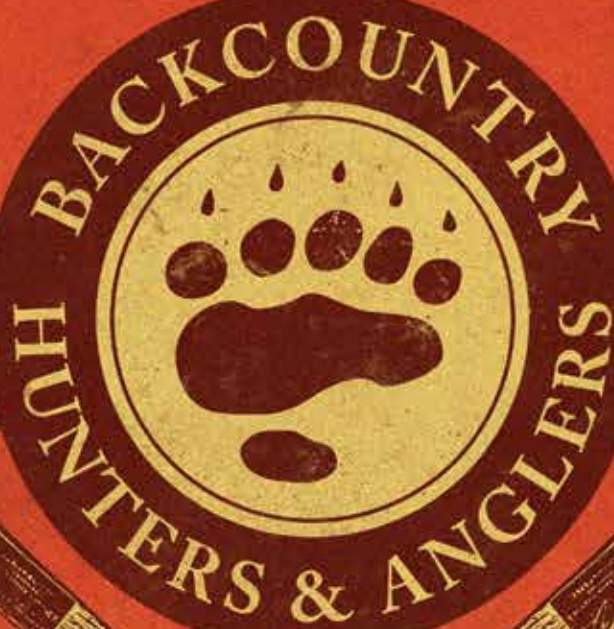
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# *Get **READY** for RENDEZVOUS*

## *Your Guide to All the Fun*

**It's going to be another fantastic gathering of our BHA family from across North America!**

This year's Rendezvous will take place at a new venue, the Missoula County Fairgrounds, in Missoula, Montana, March 16-18, 2023. The fairgrounds' historic buildings will hold vendors, seminars, panels, live Podcast & Blast recordings with Hal Herring and more. With a move to an indoor-outdoor venue, Rendezvous will be a have an amazing array of opportunities for learning and gathering with old and new friends alike.

### **SEMINARS**

Three focused seminar areas, Food, Field Skills and Policy, will feature presentations from chefs, experts in hunting, angling and foraging skills, as well as engaging policy discussions with thought leaders from around the continent.

### **WILD GAME COOKOFF**

The Minnesota chapter will seek to defend their repeat title in this year's Wild Game Cookoff. You won't want to miss this event; learn, watch and cheer on this year's competitors as they seek to wrestle the Golden Bull Trophy from the defending champs.

### **FIELD TO TABLE DINNER**

Chefs, members and locavores will convene again for this year's Field to Table dinner, widely referred to as the best wild game meal anywhere. Attendees will witness chefs from around the country showing their amazing skills with wild game and then feast on their sumptuous creations. This year James Beard Award winner, writer and chef Hank Shaw will be among the chefs preparing this not-to-be-missed repast.

### **CAMPFIRE STORIES**

On the final night of Rendezvous 2023 we will wrap with our signature event, Campfire Stories, featuring tales from the inimitable Randy Newberg, veteran and BHA Armed Forces Initiative member DJ Zor, Ray Penny of G&H Decoys and more! Listen, laugh and maybe even cry as these amazing storytellers tell captivating tails of their outdoor adventures.

**This is the largest gathering of public land owners in North America. Come and partake in the revelry with new and old friends, and enjoy all that Rendezvous has to offer.**

***Tickets are on sale now at [backcountryhunters.org](https://backcountryhunters.org)***

# BACKCOUNTRY JOURNAL

Winter 2023 | VOLUME XVIII, ISSUE I

## FEATURES

- 45 ALL THE RIGHT WORDS  
*by Jake Lunsford*
- 51 THE STOIC HUNTER  
*by Christopher Ross*
- 55 NINE MONTHS OF HUNTING  
*by Melissa Hendrickson*
- 59 HUNTING DOWN A FEELING  
*by Hudson Gardner*
- 63 MUSKOX IN THE TIME OF COVID  
*by Kai Whitehill*
- 69 A HUNTASTIC HOLIDAY  
*by Cayla Bendel*
- 73 CYPRESS BOARS  
*by Kyle Shaney*



# DEPARTMENTS

## 03 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## 07 YOUR BACKCOUNTRY

Birds of the Southern Piedmont  
*by Andrew Bartoe*

## 11 GET READY FOR RENDEZVOUS

## 14 BHA HEADQUARTERS NEWS

## 16 FACES OF BHA

Brandon Dale, New York, New York

## 21 BACKCOUNTRY BOUNTY

## 23 KIDS' CORNER

Coloring Contest!

## 25 CHAPTER NEWS

Who Owns the Water?  
*by Drew Kazenski*

Curse of the Book Cliffs Highway  
*by Trisha Hedin*

## 32 COLLEGE CLUBS

BHA's 2022 Collegiate Club Recap

## 36 INSTRUCTIONAL

Late Season Grouse  
*by Marc Fryt*

## 40 PUBLIC LAND OWNER

Does Pittman-Robertson Need Some Better PR?  
*by Charlie Booher*

## 79 SHORTS

Memories I Know Exist  
*by A.R. Thompson*

This Isn't North Dakota  
*by Perrin Pring*

Tigers at Bear Pond  
*by Max Dickinson*

## 89 BEYOND FAIR CHASE

Who Nose?  
*by Patt Dorsey*

## 88 FIELD TO TABLE

Torkat Kött – Swedish Jerky  
*by Kjell Hedström*

## 92 OPINION

Where You At?  
*by Col. Mike Abell*

## 95 END OF THE LINE

# HEADQUARTERS NEWS

Photo: Jessica Cochran, 2021 Public  
Lands and Waters Photo Contest



## MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS



BHA's 2022 Membership Survey results again depict a membership that trends young, is politically diverse, and is motivated by a set of core values: conservation ethics, tradition and health.

BHA's survey offers up a profile of today's public lands hunter and angler: characterized by an affinity for wild foods, a desire to spend as much time as possible on public lands and waters and a commitment to public service.

Highlights from the 2022 BHA Membership Survey follow:

63% of BHA's membership is 45 or younger; more than a quarter (28%) is between the ages of 25 and 34.

30% of BHA's members identifies as Independent; 20% Republican, 20% Democrat, 6% Libertarian and 1% Green (21% identifies as none of these or prefers not to respond).

20% of BHA members are active duty military or veterans (the U.S. average is 7%).

54% of BHA's members forages along with hunting and fishing.

88% of BHA's members spends at least half of their time recreating on public lands and waters.

More at [backcountryhunters.org/bha\\_s\\_member\\_survey\\_2022\\_results](https://backcountryhunters.org/bha_s_member_survey_2022_results)

## BHA REMEMBERS FRIEND DOUG PINEO

A life member of BHA, Doug Pineo was the embodiment of conservation. From his time at Washington State Game Department and Department of Ecology, Doug fought for the preservation of biodiversity, land conservation and public access to natural resources.

An avid angler and upland bird hunter, Doug also made his mark in the falconry world as a falconer himself as well as a product designer and craftsman. Additionally, Doug served on numerous nonprofit boards, including but not limited to North American Grouse Partnership, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy and as a founding member of the Peregrine Fund.

But what I will remember most about Doug was his infectious energy. His smile abounded every time I saw him, including trolling for walleye, calling for turkeys or when sharing stories and a beer at the BHA Rendezvous. He reveled sharing stories from the pheasant fields or describing the way his falcons worked, and he lit up about his family, their successes and his grandchildren.

Doug was the type of person who would instantly make you feel like a friend and buoyed your desire to fight for what we all hold dear.

Douglas Anderson Pineo passed away September 7, 2022, and is survived by his wife Trisha, his children Helen and Chris and many siblings, grandchildren and other close relatives.

*-Josh Mills, BHA development coordinator*







## BHA APPLAUDS NEW CAMP HALE- CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Valuable wildlife habitat in central Colorado will be permanently conserved following recent designation of Camp Hale-Continental Divide National Monument by President Joe Biden. Encompassing more than 10,000 acres of critical winter range for elk as well as mule deer habitat, migration corridors and headwaters fisheries, the area also is home to a historic military site, Camp Hale, a World War II-era training ground.

A broad coalition of hunting and fishing groups, including Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, has long advocated for the area's long-term conservation. BHA staff were present today in Colorado where the president announced the designation and commended the administration's decision.

"Hunters and anglers in Colorado have been working with local communities for more than a decade to permanently conserve these public lands and waters and important fish and wildlife habitat," said BHA Conservation Director John Gale, who was on hand for the president's announcement. "We're pleased with the administration's decision to heed the call of millions of citizens and undertake foresighted action in support of these irreplaceable landscapes."

"The Antiquities Act is a crucial tool to conserve large landscapes, secure important fish and wildlife habitat and uphold hunting and angling opportunities," Gale continued. "Since it was signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, it's been used by 17 presidents, both Republicans and Democrats, to ensure the long-term conservation of places important to hunters and anglers."

BHA has consistently advocated for America's national monuments system and the judicious use of the Antiquities Act as a way to permanently conserve important large landscapes. Key to achieving this outcome is a process that adheres to specific tenets and is locally driven, transparent, incorporates the science-based management of habitat, and upholds existing hunting and fishing opportunities.

In 2016, BHA and a consortium of outdoor groups and businesses released a report on how national monument designations can sustain important fish and wildlife habitat while maintaining traditional hunting and fishing access, which can be read at [backcountryhunters.org/national\\_monuments\\_report](https://backcountryhunters.org/national_monuments_report)

## FALL ISSUE CORRECTION

An editorial error resulted in the printing of an earlier draft of the story "Mother Wilderness," in the Fall 2022 print issue. The correct, final version of this story appears in the digital version, which is readable at [backcountryhunters.org/fall\\_2022\\_issue\\_of\\_backcountry\\_journal](https://backcountryhunters.org/fall_2022_issue_of_backcountry_journal)

## LATEST ON THE PODCAST & BLAST



Ashley Peters grew up in rural Iowa, in a landscape of cornfields and monoculture agriculture. Looking for a wilder and wider life, she found her way to U.S. Forest Service trail jobs in the Minnesota Boundary Waters and in Alaska, to a degree in communications, and to conservation work ranging from the gator-bellowing swamps of Louisiana to the woodcock and grouse popple of the upper Midwest. Hal and Ashley talk the deep engagement and beginners' mindset of adult-onset hunters and anglers, the challenges of finding one's way to one's passions, the swiftly-changing world of conservation, climate and wildlife diversity, and the business of somehow communicating it all clearly to a sometimes skeptical and indifferent public. That and more from the BHA Podcast & Blast wherever you get your podcasts.

## 2023 BHA AWARD NOMINATIONS!

Do you know an individual who deserves to be recognized for their outstanding contributions to conservation or our organization? This is your chance to help us honor their work with one of our 2023 awards! Award recipients are announced annually at the North American Rendezvous, set for March 16-18, 2023, in Missoula, Montana! The deadline for nominations is Feb. 3, 2023.

More information can be found and nominations can be made at [backcountryhunters.org/2023\\_bha\\_awards\\_nomination\\_portal](https://backcountryhunters.org/2023_bha_awards_nomination_portal)

## APPLY FOR BHA'S OUTDOORS FOR ALL SCHOLARSHIP

BHA's Outdoors for All scholarship assists young people with disabilities access to outdoors experiences by providing adaptive equipment or outdoor education. The scholarship, open to anyone ages 10-20, mitigates the expense of outdoor recreation and conservation education and expands experiences and opportunities for people with disabilities.

Applications for 2023 scholarships will be accepted from Oct. 1, 2022-Jan. 30, 2023.

Email submissions to [admin@backcountryhunters.org](mailto:admin@backcountryhunters.org), subject: Aidan Long/Outdoors For All Scholarship applicant.

Applications, written or video, should include the following: name, age, location, activity or gear you would like the scholarship to be applied to, articulation of financial burden, if any (not required), what is motivating the young person to participate in the outdoors, what being outdoors means to them, and how it makes them feel.

BHA's North American Board of Directors will choose the recipients, and scholarship winners will be notified February 2023. 🐾