

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF VENERY

ARTICLE 1. The name of this organization shall be -
THE BROTHERHOOD OF VENERY.

ARTICLE 11. The object of the Brotherhood shall be to advance wild life knowledge and wild life protection, and the spread of the ideals of sportsmanship through friendship, education, and the reviving of the old art of venery.

ARTICLE 111. Membership shall be open to those who are deemed to have advanced the objects of the Brotherhood by contributing constructively to the cause of conservation with particular reference to the woods, waters, and wilderness, and the inhabitants thereof, and whose friendly co-operative attitude toward others similarly engaged is an assurance of their worthiness as members of the Brotherhood of Venery.

When any two members of the Brotherhood desire to suggest the election of an additional member, they shall present such name in writing to the Master of Game, with the complete record of conservation accomplishments of the individual proposed, at least thirty days before the session of the Brotherhood at which the proposal can be considered. Upon receipt of such proposals, the Master of Game shall appoint a Membership Board of five and shall send to each member a list of the proposed members and their sponsors, and these notices shall be mailed at least ten days prior to the date of the next meeting.

The Membership Board shall carefully consider the suitability of such persons for membership, and when favourably acted upon it shall so advise the Master of Game and present the names of such candidates for membership at the next annual meeting, and the members present shall cast a secret vote for or against each one.

Those candidates for whom the vote shall be unanimous shall be admissible to membership in accordance with the prescribed ritual, either at an annual meeting or at a meeting of a duly organized branch, but not more than five new members shall be elected at any one annual meeting.

Any member who fails to be worthy of this affiliation with the Brotherhood through serious non-compliance with its prescribed aims may be expelled in accordance with the constitutional procedure adopted for this purpose.

Article IV. The Officers of the Brotherhood shall be -

President - to be known as "The Master of Game."

First Vice-President	(Special
Second " "	(titles
Honorary Secretary	(to be
Honorary Treasurer	(chosen.)

Article V. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Brotherhood and not less than five other membe

Article VI. The Constitution may be amended by the Executive Committee.

B. of V.

Dear B. Swift:

Personal

At the 31st Annual Meeting of the "B", St. Louis, 1958, it was decided that a memorandum outlining our early history should be prepared and sent to the membership.

The preparation of this material was left with the undersigned, and the resulting historical sketch has been completed by us. We are outlining events that have transpired over a period of about 40 years and if we have made serious errors or omissions these are regretted. Any glaring ones can be reported for the record at our next meeting.

Sincerely,

Seth Gordon,

Hoyes Lloyd,

I. T. Quinn,
Historical Committee.
Pro tem

582 Mariposa Avenue,
Rockcliffe Park,
Ottawa, Canada.

October 31, 1958.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE B. OF V.

Introduction

Preparations were being made for the 1925 meeting of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners at Denver, Colorado. The late J. B. Harkin, then "Commissioner of Canadian National Parks", President of the Association, and Hoyes Lloyd, "Supervisor of Wild Life Protection", in Canada, were concerned about the reported rift in United States civilian conservation organization affairs which might seriously affect certain important international wildlife programs and which would almost certainly come into the open more forcibly than ever at the Denver meeting of the International Association.

What could be done to forestall a situation which could seriously damage the cause of wildlife conservation in the United States and Canada?

After much thought and discussion Hoyes Lloyd proposed a new approach, the banding together in a secret group of men who could be counted upon under all circumstances, and who could be depended upon absolutely.

The tentative proposal was discussed with J. B. Harkin, with E.F.G. White, hunter-naturalist, who had wide experience in Canada and the United States, and with the late P. A. Taverner, Ornithologist, National Museum of Canada. We agreed that this course of action could do no harm and might do much good.

With this concurrence, a draft Constitution was written by Lloyd and a conservation creed was compiled, the latter with the assistance of the late Norman Criddle, naturalist-entomologist, of Manitoba.

The expected rift did occur at Denver, the eleven founders of the B. met, signed the Constitution and initiated themselves with the reading of the Creed, and, for better or worse, the B. of V. was founded.

We have felt that when it was necessary to exert pressure upon legislatures or the public to attain conservation ends, such action should be taken by incorporated public organizations, not by us. Consequently any stand which any member of our Order may take on any conservation problem is his individual stand; for we have decided it to be improper for a group like ours to formally agree upon and press for action, no matter how worthy the cause. The broad cause is always before us; action to attain it is left to individual judgment and initiative. Thus, the B. has been present in spirit, but not in body, in all important north american conservation problems and advances of the last three decades.

Denver, 1925

In order to get a proper perspective of the events which preceded the founding of our Order and which led to its filling a vital need in the conservation movement in North America it is necessary to review the conflicting issues and ideologies of the time. This is considered important because the chief actors have gone before many others have taken their places and continued their work. The founders really built better than they knew when they set out to bring together certain warring factions since the plan of quiet and unobtrusive work which proved effective then has continued to have value ever since. The chief reason for this handful of public-spirited leaders in the conservation field banding together in the first instance was an effort to resolve bitter differences which were delaying the accomplishment of essential conservation objectives of which the most important was the protection and management of the continent's waterfowl resources.

What To Do About Waterfowl

Almost two years elapsed after the negotiation of the Migratory Bird Treaty between Canada (Great Britian) and the United States in December, 1916, before the Congress enacted the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918) to provide the legal machinery to make the treaty fully operative. Canada enacted the Migratory Birds Convention Act in 1917.

Biological Survey Urged Action

It was obvious to those acquainted with the problems involved that the mere administration of the treaty obligations, the setting of seasons and bag limits for waterfowl and other migratory game birds, and enforcing the new federal law would fall far short of the objectives sought.

Acting on behalf of the United States, Dr. E. W. Nelson, Chief of the U. S. Biological Survey, into whose hands the administration of the new Treaty Act was entrusted, in a 1919 communication to J. Quincy Ward of Kentucky, then President of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners, called attention to the desirability of organizing a special committee of the Association to investigate and report upon the swamp and marsh lands which should be acquired as permanent waterfowl feeding and resting grounds, and for public hunting.

Committee Appointed To Conduct Survey

President Ward appointed such a committee at the opening of the 11th Annual Convention of the International Association at Louisville, Ky., on October 6, 1919. It was an unusually large committee.

In the ensuing discussion the conservation officials were informed that there were approximately only 67,000,000 acres of typical swamp lands remaining, of which about 35,000,000 acres were overflowed during part of the year and the balance were tide lands; that these swamp and tide lands were being drained at a terrific pace; and that in addition to the acreage which the several states might set aside for waterfowl habitat and hunting purposes the Congress of the United States might be prevailed upon to provide funds for this vital program.

The 1919 convention discussed the proposals at length, but many of the state wildlife officials present feared encroachment of the Federal Government into their wildlife management affairs if a federal agency were to acquire and manage large acreages for waterfowl purposes.

1920 Convention Adopted License Plan

During the next annual convention of the International Association at Ottawa, Canada, Sept. 23-24, 1920, the entire subject was further discussed, including the desirability of having those who hunt waterfowl purchase a federal license to provide funds for a federal refuge program. At the concluding session a resolution was adopted recommending -

"that appropriate federal legislation be enacted requiring each person who hunts or collects migratory birds to obtain a federal hunting license to cost fifty cents, and that the fees thus collected be paid into the treasury of the United States and deposited in a separate fund to be known as 'The Federal Bird and Game Conservation Fund', and expended solely for the administration of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and other federal game laws, the acquisition of bird and game refuges, and public shooting grounds, and co-operation with state game authorities in connection with such matters."

Promptly thereafter a highly respected national organization (American Game Protective and Propagation Association, with offices in New York), founded in 1911, which had taken a most important part in negotiating the Migratory Bird Treaty with Canada, had an appropriate bill introduced in Congress to accomplish these objectives. It was commonly referred to as the "Federal Refuge Bill", and provided that half the marshes acquired should be open to public hunting.

Partial Victory in 1929

Many opposed such legislation on the ground that it would interfere with the several state wildlife administrative programs; that a federal license to hunt would give the U. S. Government too much dominance in the field of game administration. Others opposed it on the theory that while refuges for waterfowl were essential there was no need for public hunting grounds acquired by the federal government. Among those most strongly opposed were western game officials.

It should be recorded here that while the battle of conflicts continued, marshes were being drained at an appalling rate. No federal migratory bird refuge legislation was enacted until February 18, 1929, when Congress passed a watered-down version of the original proposal of the International Association. It was known as the "Norbeck-Andresen Migratory Bird Conservation Act", and authorized appropriations totalling \$8,000,000 over a period of ten years, with \$75,000 available the first year to get the program started. It authorized the expenditure of the funds for a system of inviolate migratory bird refuges, without any public hunting grounds.

This killed the federal hunting license idea for the time being.

A New National Group Organized

The new federal refuge program got off to a feeble start, and, as had been feared by many, with no special source of revenue to finance the plan the Congress forgot all about the "authorized" appropriations when the full force of the depression was felt during the early thirties. The entire refuge program came to a grinding halt before it actually got underway.

During the period when the federal waterfowl hunting license plan was being hotly debated in Congress, and when bill after bill was passed by either the House or the Senate, but not by both in the same session, a new national organization loomed over the horizon in the Midwest, organized early in 1922 (the Izaak Walton League of America, with offices in Chicago).

Some leaders of that organization were opposed to the federal hunting license. They argued that Congress could be persuaded to appropriate funds for specific worthy projects. To prove their point, they initiated legislation in Congress, spearheaded by Senator Harry B. Hawes of Missouri, to acquire the bottomlands along the Mississippi River from Rock Island, Illinois, to Wabasha, Minnesota, for the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The organization behind the proposal had grown like a whirlwind, and the campaign was well organized and effective.

Strategy Agreement For Special Bill

Early in 1924 it became obvious that the Federal Refuge Bill and the Upper Mississippi Bill would both fail of enactment in that session of Congress unless a working agreement could be reached between the two forces. Thereupon the sponsors of the Federal Refuge Bill, who had far more experience in legislative matters and knew the lay of the land intimately, offered to support the Upper Mississippi Bill on condition that in the next session of Congress its sponsors would get behind the more comprehensive Federal Refuge Bill, with the federal hunting license to finance the program.

Such an agreement was reached, in the presence of witnesses, but not reduced to writing. The Upper Mississippi Bill, providing an appropriation of \$1,500,000 for this single project, was passed in June, 1924. It was the first time Congress appropriated money to purchase a general wild-life reservation.

(Paranthenetically, it should be mentioned that a second direct appropriation for a single purpose project was passed in April, 1928, for the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in Utah, where botulism had regularly taken a terrific toll of ducks. The appropriation of \$350,000 was conditioned upon 60% of the acreage being an inviolate refuge, and 40% being available for public hunting grounds.)

Bitter Controversy Ensued

The successful campaign for the Upper Mississippi Refuge caused certain leaders of the sponsoring organization to become firmly convinced that a federal hunting license was not needed to finance such projects, and that Congress would appropriate the funds if enough organized pressure were exerted upon the Senators and Representatives. As a result, they began to crawlfish on their agreement to support the Federal Refuge Bill in the ensuing session of Congress. Bitter words were spoken, some printed, and hard feelings developed between conservationists of the opposing camps.

The undercover in-fighting that had been in progress for months between the heads of the two organizations in question came to the surface at the 19th Annual Convention of the International Association at Denver, Colorado, August 20-21, 1925. It was a situation charged with drama and suspense. The heads of both organizations (John B. Burnham, President, American Game Protective and Propagation Association, and Will H. Dilg, President, Izaak Walton League of America,) were invited to address the wildlife officials, most of whom were friendly to the Federal Refuge Bill with the public hunting grounds, and resented the failure of the leader of the opposing camp to keep his word.

Convention Saw Intense Drama

Imagine if you will a room packed with people eager to see the two goliaths in action, and to hear "their side of the case." And imagine, too, the terrific suspense as all were quietly seated for the opening of the second session, and then to have the leader of the group opposing the Federal Refuge Bill (Dilg) arrive late, boldly stride up the aisle, swinging his cane, and take a seat right up front--for all to see.

The verbal exchanges which ensued were tremendously tense, the one speaker fiery and cutting, like a tiger at bay; the other (Burnham) cool, calm, and confident. The 1925 Transactions of the International Association, pages 76 to 99, inclusive, tell the story. Members of the B. should read it, because never before or since have such emotion-packed exchanges taken place at an International Convention.

B. of V. Helped Rescue Program

As indicated, it was obvious that the vast majority of the state officials at that convention sided with the sponsors of the Federal Refuge Bill, and the debate did not alter the International Association's position in the least.

Also, it became equally clear that the members of the executive committee of the opposing organization were not supporting their president in his reversal of positions.

As a sequel, largely because he had not kept his promises in this matter, that gentleman was deposed at the ensuing annual convention of his organization. This brought about a split in the ranks of that group, with near fatal results. It took more than a decade of hard work to regain the momentum and strength of that organization's fine conservation program.

In an effort to help head off, or at least to alleviate such situations in the future, the B. of V. was born at Denver in August, 1925, at the Brown Palace Hotel, for the primary purpose of binding together the "dependable conservation family circle" in times of stress, and especially to save the waterfowl program. The original members were: Guy Amsler, John B. Burnham, J. B. Harkin, R. P. Holland, Benj. Lawton, E. Lee Le Compte, Hoyes Llovd, Lee Miles, T. Gilbert Pearson, I. T. Quinn and Jno. P. Woods.

As indicated at the beginning, the B. of V. has performed its services quietly and unobtrusively throughout the years, but very effectively.

National Committee Was Formed

Largely through the efforts of the B. of V., the International Association at its 22nd Annual Convention meeting in joint session with the Western Association of Game and Fish Commissioners, at Seattle, Washington, August 28-29, 1928, adopted a resolution to organize the National Committee on Wildlife Legislation, of eleven members, as a co-ordinating committee of the leading national wildlife organizations, and state conservation officials, to further conservation legislation in which they were mutually interested.

The Committee was formally organized in Washington, D. C., October 12, 1928, with membership as follows: T. Gilbert Pearson, New York, Chairman; Carlos Avery, New York, vice-chairman; Seth Gordon, Illinois, secretary; and Dr. John C. Phillips, Massachusetts; E. Lee LeCompte, Maryland; Roland G. Parvin, Colorado; George D. Pratt, New York; Keith McCause, Missouri; Gustavus D. Pope, Michigan; I. T. Quinn, Alabama; and I. Zellerbach, California, as the other members. As one will see, many of the persons listed above were trusted members of the B. of V.

Doctor Pearson gave a complete report of the committee's activities at the 23rd Annual Convention of the International Association at Minneapolis, Minn., Sept. 12-13, 1929, including an account of the passage by Congress of the Norbeck-Andresen Migratory Bird Conservation Act previously mentioned. This is the basic law under which the federal government has been establishing most of the migratory bird refuges throughout the United States ever since.

The committee membership changed somewhat from time to time but it continued to function actively for about ten years, during which period much important basic national legislation was enacted, including the Duck Stamp Act of 1934. It reported quite regularly to the International Association and other groups concerning its accomplishments which were noteworthy, indeed.

Our newer members should know that our Order had a great part in these events for always behind the scenes were the friendly and ever-helpful hands of the B. of V.

Down through the ages hunters have met in secret to instruct the young about hunting and to take such measures as they could to protect the game upon which all depended. Times have changed, but we still meet to protect hunting, to instruct the young, and to teach that hunting is a great privilege which may still be enjoyed. We wish it to be enjoyed by all who respect the privilege and show this respect by their regard for the utmost in hunting ethics.