

THE NEW AGRARIANS

ORIGINS OF MODERN CONSERVATION ETHOS INTERSECT AT NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY EXHIBIT

Without hunter-naturalists, gamekeepers, artists and naturalists, modern conservation would not have evolved to be a hallmark of social norms today.

The fascination with and respect for the American landscape and the wildlife it shelters began in conversation about preservation that is the basis of much of 21st century thinking about the natural environment.

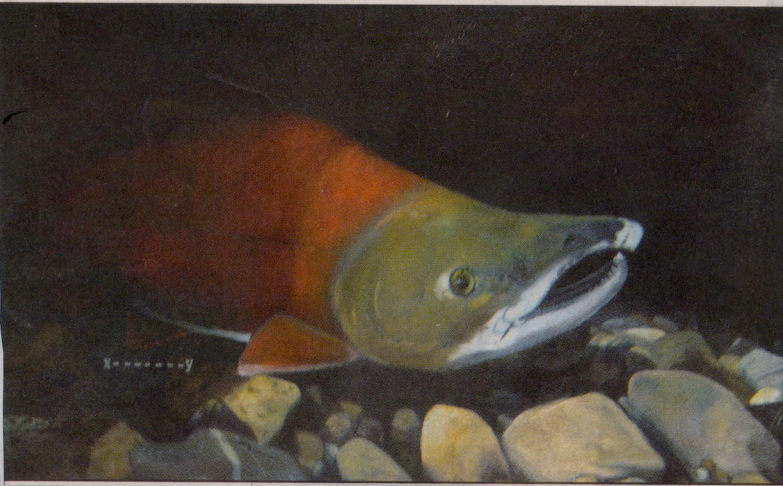
Thomas Lovejoy, an innovative and influential conservation biologist who has led contemporary thinking on biodiversity and served as director of many noteworthy organizations, will speak to members of the Ivy Circle and Chairman's Council January 29th as part of the NSL's celebration of the Intersection exhibit.

In a brilliant combination of books and art, the National Sporting Library has mounted an important and enlightening exhibit entitled "Intersection: Field Sports and the Evolution of Conservation" in its Forrest E. Mars, Sr. Exhibit Hall. Visitors will thoroughly enjoy this small but succinct exhibit that includes the octavo first editions of John James Audubon's *Birds of America* and *The Quadrapeds of North America*; several editions, including the first, of Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* and a rich collection of sketches, books and paintings by contemporary artists who continue in the Walton/Audubon tradition.

Relying on the permanent library collection, now totaling 24,000 volumes, Curator Maureen Gustafson has created an exhibit that educates and fascinates.

Early gamekeeping practices and poaching laws recognize the need to protect resources and illustrate how deeply connected the protection of game was to social structure.

Often, these rules express a code of moral behavior that is obvious when one closely regards *The Statutes at Large, Made for*



the Preservation of Game, of 1762 and the angling books by Thomas Barker and others that preceded and influenced Walton.

Clearly, sportsmen of the time were exceedingly aware of the need for game and fishing laws to protect wild stock and its habitat.

Edith O.E. Sommerville's painting of *An Irish Trout Stream* lovingly captures the beauty of the fisherman's haven at the turn of the 20th century, and under-

scores why protection of these areas was becoming such an important issue of the day.

American Presidents

John Quincy Adams, Grover Cleveland and Teddy Roosevelt were sportsmen who addressed the fundamental issues of over-hunting, codes of conduct, and, in Roosevelt's case, the need to protect exceptional landscapes.

A record of an Eisenhower

1955 fishing trip is included in the exhibit, as is Hoover's 1931 fishing camp on the Rapidan and Grover Cleveland's 1902 volume entitled *A Defense of Fishermen*.

Theodore Roosevelt's original handwritten manuscript for an article in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* is fascinating. Written in July of 1886, his careful notations and his editor's edits speak volumes about his appreciation of the hunt and field sports.

Artist's & Author's Role

A first edition of Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler, or The Contemplative Man's Recreation, Being a Discourse of Fish and Fishing, Not Unworthy the Perusal of Most Anglers*, printed in 1653, rests beside a collection of successive editions. Among the most published books in the English language, *The Compleat Angler* is second only to the Bible.

One edition, printed in 1844, includes illustrations based on beautiful watercolors by John Absolon. A large folio of those original watercolors is also included in the exhibit.

Delightful paintings that illustrate the appreciation artists of all eras have for the natural world and its inhabitants create a lovely context for the progression of literary thinking about conservation.

Especially charming are the

paintings of Robert McCauley a Mt. Vernon, Washington, native whose highly respected work which he calls *Visual Literacy* presents a moment in time that conjure "a moment when nature is in limbo, with a future to be determined," rather than presenting a doomed future for the natural world.

His painting of a salmon, titled *Hide Your Good Work*, perfectly conveys his immense ability to render animals exquisitely in an eccentric world of historical references and symbolic gestures.

Robin Hill's *Buff-Breasted Pitta*, is an original sketch with notations and color studies. Hill is a from the prominent naturalist, writer and artist whose work for the book, *The Waterfowl of North America* that was published on the 25th anniversary of the World Wildlife Fund.

Conservation and its origins so permeate this distinctive exhibit that one's appreciation for field sport and the wild woods escalates axiomatically.

Suddenly, centuries of thought and concern intersect to create a taut network of respect for and dedication to preservation of the natural world.

This is an exhibit everyone who loves the land should see.

Intersection: Field Sports and the Evolution of Conservation at the National Sporting Library's Forrest E. Mars Gallery runs through January 30th, 2013.