

## **CONSERVATION**

*Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land. By land is meant all of the things on, over, or in the earth. Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend; you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left. That is to say, you cannot love game and hate predators; you cannot conserve the waters and waste the ranges; you cannot build the forest and mine the farm. The land is one organism. – Aldo Leopold*

Aldo Leopold, the father of modern wildlife management, realized that wildlife conservation and wetland conservation are tied closely together. One cannot be separated from the other. Because of that, hunters and anglers have stood at the forefront of wetland conservation in America for over 100 years. Sportsmen and sportswomen have paid billions of dollars to conserve millions of acres of habitat for resident wildlife through license fees and excise taxes on sporting equipment.

These revenues remain the primary funding source for State Conservation agencies, such as Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Critical national and state conservation legislation has also been driven primarily by sportsmen. Additionally, sportsmen are responsible for founding and generously contributing to nonprofit conservation organizations which may directly own, lease, and manage land for wildlife.

The land upon which the WaterLife Discovery Center is built was purchased and donated to Idaho Fish and Game by a group of Bonner County sportsmen. Much of the funding for construction of the WaterLife Center came from hunting and fishing organizations. One only needs to look at the donor list to realize that hunters and fishermen are not only interested in wetland habitat conservation, but also in providing a place for the public to learn about the importance of wetlands in our daily lives.

If you are enjoying your visit here at the WaterLife Center, please thank a sportsman or sportswoman; they made it possible.

### **Suggested Activity**

Have students come up with a local (Idaho) project they think would benefit wildlife conservation and how that project would be funded. This needs to include, how, where, who, and what species will likely benefit.