November 2020 Column

**Fishing, hunting, protecting, preserving**

By Frank Dietz

​With the advent of November, sounds and activities around our rural home take a shift. Deer season arrives with a burst of rifle shot. Suddenly our calm deer show a frantic frenzy and dash about sensing something is happening in the open spaces they frequent on remaining ranches and open areas.

It leads me to ponder the considerable and impressive conversations I’ve had through the years with avid fishing and hunting friends, colleagues and relatives. It led me to reach out to a select few for their reflections on what nourishes their interests and enthusiasms for fishing and hunting.

I have noted considerable investment, a body of information and a lot of preparation for those who take all this seriously. I came away more convinced than ever that among those enthusiasts for fishing and hunting are folks with a depth and breadth of knowledge and commitment to conserving, protecting and enhancing our natural spaces. My highest regard is reserved for a precious few folks who go far beyond most to perfect fly fishing and bow hunting.

Like all hunting and fishing endeavors those most certainly cannot be entered into casually or without a disciplined training and preparation.

I have had conversations with fishing and hunting devotees who approach the sacred respect found in numerous indigenous peoples and their practices and traditions. In the more general realm, my Yoda-like young counsel said, “Just remember that hunting and fishing is about a lot more than the harvest!” My brother actually waxed poetic in a surprising burst of appreciation for the fish and fauna that he observes season to season along his Gulf Coast home away from home. I knew that as a youth he had a keen sense and expanding knowledge of all that was wild as he explored wetlands, lakes, bays, woods and prairies.

Every area had rich adventures to describe in detail for those who would listen. What I didn’t recognize until much later and with maturation was that his differentiated investment of interest and time carried with it an accompanying appreciation for accessible wild space and healthy habitat on land, water and shoreline.

I have noted as well his willingness to invest resources and considerable monies to protect and provide for current and future naturalists, fishers, and hunters.

Accompanying photographers, sketchers, writers and journalists joined his pursuit with notable degrees of passion as well. His late life lunge into hospitality to provide a launching post for hunting and fishing and those observers has emboldened him to face and recover from nasty hurricanes and toxic polluting threats over time.
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We of Comal County and the Texas Hill Country are endowed with a plethora of resources and natural gifts. Our challenge is to so cherish and protect that which we conserve and preserve for our future generations the legacies of our good fortune. Toward that end, I hope you will visit the website [comalconservation.org](http://comalconservation.org/). Find, too, time to look to the incredible wealth of resources offered by Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas AgriLife, as well as the conservancies and other groups seeking to keep and nurture what out of control development could wipe away if not approached prudently. Watch, too, for policy discussions and proposals that impact all of this locally, statewide and nationally. Our voices make a difference!

Finally, do consider for holiday gift giving or occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries donations “in honor of” special folks to the CCCA Conservation Land Fund that will strengthen the means and will for those seeking a path toward protecting riversides, shorelines, habitats, and open space for dedicated public space and benefit.