

For immediate release: Park Cities Quail Unlimited honors T. Boone Pickens with Lifetime Sportsman Award. Banquet raises a Quail Unlimited record \$654,679 for conservation and research.



Mr. T. Boone Pickens (left) receives the Lifetime Sportsman Award from Mr. Bubba Wood, Honorary Chairman PCQU. Mr. Pickens suffered a broken wrist two days before the banquet but graciously postponed his surgery in order to attend the ceremonies.

Dallas Texas- Park Cities Quail Unlimited honored legendary oil entrepreneur, conservationist, and avid sportsman T. Boone Pickens on March 6 as its 2008 Lifetime Sportsman Award winner before 900 guests in the Frontiers of Flight Museum near Dallas Love Field Airport.

The local chapter, founded in 2005 to develop, preserve, restore and maintain upland game habitat throughout this region and to improve hunting opportunities for area sportsmen, lauds Mr. Pickens' lifelong love of the outdoors, respect for natural resources, and his extraordinary contributions to restoring quail habitat in Roberts Country.

“I can't think of anyone more deserving of this honor than T. Boone Pickens,” says Joe Crafton, chairman of the Park Cities Quail Unlimited. “He has an enduring passion for the outdoors, and has made considerable contributions to the restoration of quail habitat in West Texas.”

Pickens is an excellent environmental steward, Crafton said, noting that his 68,000-acre Mesa Vista Ranch is a model for wildlife resource management. His business ventures include an alternative energy provider, the largest supplier of vehicular natural gas in North America, and plans for the world's largest wind farm. Pickens also has stepped to the forefront of national water resource development issues with a proposal to market surplus and stranded groundwater in the Texas Panhandle to urban areas in the state facing severe water supply shortages.

Prior to Pickens' first Roberts County land purchase in 1971, the county's rolling hills, bluffs and creek beds suffered from consistent overgrazing. The legendary entrepreneur immediately began a multi-step program to help the land recover, over time investing about \$25 million in overall wildlife management strategies and facilities, installing substantial water sources, food plots and native grass replanting, and power infrastructure. Those initiatives, along with efforts to market stranded and surplus water in the region elsewhere in the state, have led to a tremendous increase in local land values.

In the process, Pickens has increased the size and breadth of Mesa Vista. Today, *Dallas Morning News* outdoors writer Ray Sasser calls Mesa Vista "the Wild West equivalent of a southern gentleman's hunting plantation, arguably the finest quail-hunting spot in the known universe."

Mesa Vista is the manifestation of one of Pickens' first, and longest-held, loves.

"Quail hunting is a life-long passion tracking back to my father, who always kept two bird dogs in a pen out back of our home in Holdenville, Oklahoma," the 2006 Horatio Alger award winner explains. "That was big, open, country — pretty good quail territory. I shot my first quail when I was about 13 years old.

"Today, I am driven by a desire to conserve and reclaim over-grazed land for quail habitat, and to develop long-term wildlife management plans that can be used to improve land values through an expansion of recreational opportunities."

That passion, fueled by more than three decades of extraordinary business success, has helped transform Mesa Vista into a model of conservation and habitat management for the bobwhite quail, a species under serious threat from changing agricultural practices and urban encroachment.

Exclusive hunts and trips such as one to the Mesa Vista helped the PCQU set a new record for Quail Unlimited banquets. In one night the chapter raised \$654,679. This amount shatters the previous record by over \$400,000. The primary beneficiary of this fundraising will be the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch, which is operating a 4,700-acre West

Texas ranch as a research and demonstration facility to foster the understanding and management of bobwhite and scaled quail in West Texas. The ranch's vision is to sustain Texas' wild quail hunting heritage for this and future generations.

The Lifetime Sportsman Award is a specially commissioned one-of-a-kind bronze sculpture of three flushing bobwhite quail by noted sculptor Walter Matia, a Fellow of the National Sculpture Society, whose works have been selected for several national exhibitions and have toured to dozens of museums both in the United States and abroad. The group's first Lifetime Sportsman Award recipient was Walter Kellogg.

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