Letter from the Editor

Is community-based conservation the future of wildlife management?

In September 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) punctuated a decade-long deliberation whether to list the greater sage-grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus; sage-grouse) for protection under the U.S. Endangered Species Act with an unwarranted decision. In the decision, the USFWS lauded the success of unprecedented wide efforts that had mitigated the immediate species conservation threats.

Before the listing decision, the media referred the sage-grouse listing decision process as the new “War for the West.” I am somewhat familiar with the concept of war. In addition to being a Vietnam War era draftee, I was mobilized in 2003 as part the international coalition that invaded Iraq. The unit I commanded spend 454 days providing preventive medicine support to forward operating bases. We logged >140,000 convoy miles in theater.

A soldier’s mission in war is to defeat the enemy as quickly as possible. To quote General Patton, “No bastard ever won a war by dying for his country…He won it by making some other poor dumb bastard die for theirs…”

War is inherently violent. War affects the local population and the families of the soldiers who fight it. Ultimately, those yet to be born bear the real costs. As I thought more about the sage-grouse decision process as a war, I wondered if the same principles embraced by North Vietnamese leaders to win their war might also apply. North Vietnamese leaders followed the teachings of the thirteenth century general and Chinese philosopher Sun Tsu, whose basic tenet of winning war was to “know thy self and know thy enemy, a thousand ba... (Continued)