



By Jay McAninch, ATA CEO/President

Growing Archery Requires Reinforcing Our Foundation

Anyone who has ever thought about remodeling an older house knows to inspect its foundation, floor joists, roof, plumbing and electrical system before tackling its doors, windows and wall decorations.

While marble countertops and fresh paint might grab spotlights and generate praise, we usually don't notice a house's vital infrastructures until something goes wrong. That's when naive homeowners realize their investment is at risk of collapse.

"First-things-first" is the same approach the ATA has taken since August 2000 to ensure archery sustains strong growth that stands the test of time. I can assure you, ATA is working tirelessly to build programs that will make archery one of North America's mainstream sports, not just a one-shot novelty.

Annual Summit Meetings

To ensure we achieve long-term clout, ATA has convened major summits in December of 2001, 2003 and 2004. We will hold the next one December 5-7, 2005. These gatherings are sponsored by ATA's nonprofit foundations, ArrowSport for archery, and the Bowhunting Preservation Alliance for bowhunting. Summit attendees develop programs, set priorities, analyze challenges and evaluate the groups' work in the past year. All efforts are tied to strategic goals, objectives and tasks established in 2001 and refined each year.

That strategic plan remains a critical aspect of the groups' efforts to grow archery and bowhunting because it maintains a long-term focus. Plus, by using that plan as a guide, we encourage cooperation and keep groups from duplicating efforts and spending time and money on activities that don't pay dividends.

These summit meetings grow each year, with the 2004 contingent representing more than 60 manufacturers and organizations. These gatherings aren't always loving and mutually supportive,

but everyone agrees on the need for accountability, including assurances ATA staff is keeping things on track.

The December 2004 summits established and ranked these priorities:

- Funding and expanding school archery programs.
- Inventory, develop, maintain and refurbish public and private archery ranges.
- Develop and implement community-based archery and bowhunting programs.
- Increase marketing and promotional activities for archery and bowhunting.
- Create a standard certification system for archery and bowhunting instruction.
- Further develop and broaden ATA's www.archerysearch.com and www.bowhuntingsearch.com web sites to allow users to easily locate nearby retailers, ranges, instructors, organizations, clubs and outfitters.

When we reconvene in December 2005, attendees will review and assess everyone's accomplishments and possible shortcomings since December 2004, and update their marching orders for 2006.

Mainstreaming Archery

In analyzing directives from the first three summits, a guiding philosophy emerged: If archery is to enjoy growth and long-term strength, it must grow from a niche recreation into a mainstream sport on the order of golf, tennis, soccer and basketball.

Much work lies ahead, but with today's innovative equipment, archery has never before been so accessible for so many audiences. But to avoid depend-

ing on volunteers and our industry as the sole supporters, archery programs must become embedded in federal, state, county, municipal and educational systems. That's why ATA is entering into Memorandums of Understanding with individual federal, state and local agencies. Our first round of MOUs in 2004 cemented partnerships with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and individual state agencies.

Each MOU outlines archery and bowhunting growth opportunities, and stresses the importance of capturing some of the \$20 million in federal excise taxes paid annually by our industry. So far, ATA has MOUs with wildlife agencies in Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan, Arizona, Tennessee, New Jersey, Utah and Iowa; and is developing MOUs for community archery programs in Tucson, Chicago, San Diego and Salt Lake City.

Once an MOU is in place, we create work plans for individual archery ranges, bowhunting education, urban bowhunts, archery education, marketing and promoting archery, and reducing barriers to recruitment and retention. The plans identify what partners will do, who will do it, what resources they'll need, and how the work will get done.

Much of our work focuses on urban and suburban areas where people have few places to shoot and still fewer opportunities to learn archery and bowhunting. To make archery a "cradle-to-grave" sport, the public must easily find instruction, equipment, places to shoot, and organized archery events, social groups and competitions. This means getting archery not only into physical education classes, but into after-school programs and clubs, and into community recreational programs, Scouts, 4-H clubs, retirement communities and anywhere archery can be played.



Jay McAninch, ATA's CEO and president, addresses the December 2004 archery and bowhunting summit in Minneapolis during a presentation with Pat Ruble, left, the ATA's director of government relations. The Summit meetings assess how well ATA and Summit attendees are addressing goals set at earlier meetings, and setting new goals for the year that follows.

Organizations and agencies participating included: Marilyn Bentz-NBEF, Lloyd Brown-NADA, Peggy Callahan-Wildlife Science Center, Brad Camp-NAA, Bruce Cull-NFAA, Kevin Dixon-OH Division of Wildlife, Michelle Doerr-Bowhunting Preservation Alliance, Doug Eng-NADA, Dee Falks-ASA, Roy Grimes-Kentucky Department of Wildlife, Daniel Hendricks-UFFDA, Glenn Hisey-P&Y Club, Kevin Hisey-P&Y Club, Ginger Hopwood-Family Fun Shoot, Denise Jordan-ArrowSport, Kelly Kelly-ATA, Mitch King-Div. of Federal Aid, US Fish & Wildlife Service, John Kvasnicka-4-H Shooting Sports Foundation, Alan Marble-Michigan DNR, Ken Mayer-California Fish & Game, Larry Nelson-Minnesota DNR, Darrell Pace-NAA, Denise Parker-ArrowSport, Allen Rasor-NAA, Tom Reed-National Wildlife Refuge Service, USF&WS, John Rinehart-Rinehart R-100, MJ Rogers-NFAA, Marihelen Rogers-NFAA, Pat Ruble-Bowhunting Preservation Alliance, Oattie Snyder-Bowhunting Preservation Alliance, Rick Story-US Sportsmen's Alliance, and Ken Watkins-IBO.

Industry representatives included: Marvin Carlston and Tom Donat of Gold Tip, Scott Dobry of Havel-Giarusso & Associates, Greg Easton and Erik Watts of Easton Technical Products, William Gartland of William J Gartland & Associates, Peter Gussie of Midwest Cimmarron Archery, Butch Herold of Butch's Sports World, Jeff Howard, Mike Luper and Randy Walk of Hoyt USA, Bruce Hudalla of Hudalla Associates, John Larsen of Bwana Archery, Joel Maxfield of Mathew's Inc., Bernie Pellerite of Robinhood Video Productions, Larry Pulkrabek of Field Logic, Jon Shepley of Precision Shooting Equipment, Malcolm Snyder of Pape's Inc., John Stang of Eagle's Wings Archery, Kevin Stay of Brennan Industries and Laverne Woock of Delta Industries. ATA Photo by Greg Nielsen

Grants, Pilot Programs

Two community archery programs are being developed, one in San Diego and one in DuPage County, i.e., Chicago. The San Diego pilot program itself involves 45 elementary schools, after-school programs in 25 schools, and the city of Chula Vista's Parks & Recreation program. We're also helping San Diego County develop ranges, and we're helping its Parks & Rec administrators coordinate events at the Olympic Training Center archery venue with the aid of USA Archery, the U.S. Olympic Committee, a local retailer and the Junior Olympic Archery Development club.

Obviously, no program runs far or long without reliable funding. In 2004-05 the ATA contributed more than \$225,000 to state agencies for school-archery pro-

grams, especially NASP, and capped the contributions at \$15,000 per state. Among the states launching school-archery programs in 2004 were Arizona, Iowa, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas and Tennessee. States joining the parade in 2005 are Indiana, Minnesota, South Carolina, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Florida, Pennsylvania and North Carolina. ATA has made a similar commitment for 2006-07.

NASP's national director, Roy Grimes of the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, said, "The ATA grant gave us a much-needed push. At the rate we're going, we'll be out of states next year."

Grants are also vital to ranges, another important bridge for archery participation. That's why ATA is conduct-

ing an inventory of public and private ranges to help develop strategies on where to build them and increase the use of existing ranges. In Ohio alone, five new ranges are planned for this year and next, as well as three new bowhunting education ranges and four mobile educational ranges. New ranges are also being built with ATA assistance in Michigan, Minnesota, Tennessee, Arizona, Utah and Idaho.

Not only that, but ATA recognizes the need for uniform instruction, instructor certification and instruction curriculums, because archery currently lacks a uniform, one-size-fits-all curriculum. In February 2005 we conducted an instructors' summit in hopes of consolidating the techniques taught by the NAA, NFAA, IBO, ASA, 4-H, NADA, NASP, Becoming an OutdoorsWoman, and independent coaches and instructors. A committee is addressing these efforts, working under the direction of ATA Vice President Denise Parker.

Spreading the Word

All these efforts recognize the need to increase public awareness of archery. That's why we launched the websites www.archerysearch.com, www.bowhuntingsearch.com, and our "Explore Archery" media campaign. We also continue to work with ABC, ESPN and ESPN2 to broadcast our Eliminator archery game into 2 million households each summer. This year we will have several 30-minute airings of our Eliminator Qualifier event in Pittsburgh, held in conjunction with NFAA, and the original broadcast and several rebroadcasts of the archery championships at the 2005 Great Outdoor Games in Orlando, Florida.

The more familiar and supportive people are of archery, the better our chances of incorporating it into many programs. We also want to see archery as a school sporting activity, with college scholarships to continue competing at a high level.

It's realistic to think that someday everyone who tries archery will be within convenient reach of expert advice and first-class facilities. When that day arrives, archery will have arrived as a mainstream American activity. Then ... onto the rest of the world. ←