



Gray Nelson Thornton
President & CEO

Biography

Gray N. Thornton serves as President and Chief Executive of the Wild Sheep Foundation, the premier sheep and mountain game conservation organization in the world dedicated to *"Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountain™."* He will be the keynote speaker at the 2014 Oregon Chapter-Foundation for North American Wild Sheep banquet/ auction Saturday, May 3, 2014, at the Washington County Fairplex in Hillsboro, Oregon.

Prior to joining the Wild Sheep Foundation in 2008, Thornton served as Executive Director of the Dallas Safari Club. During his tenure with Dallas Safari Club, membership grew 600%; fundraising net revenues increased 700%, cash reserves 800% and grants to mission programs 1000%. Prior to Wild Sheep Foundation and Dallas Safari Club, Gray served Safari Club International as their Chapter & Membership Director from 1990-1997 and Acting Administrative Director during 1996-1997 where he directed the organization's 25th Anniversary Convention with record results. Thornton followed his passion to the hunting/conservation industry after a successful sales career with Unisys and Xerox corporations.

As a public speaker he has been invited to present keynote addresses on wildlife conservation, hunting, and angling ethics internationally to diverse audiences ranging from civic and sportsmen's groups, to international associations, the Serbian Parliament and former Presidents of the United States of America, France and South Africa.

Gray was awarded the "Wildlife Utilisation Award" by the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA), the Association's highest conservation honor. He also received PHASA's highest service honor, the Coenraad Vermaak Distinguished Service Award and is the only non South African to be so recognized. Thornton has received the President's Award from the Guide Outfitter Association of British Columbia for his years of dedicated service to the hunting and conservation community. As an Outdoor Writer, he received a Katie Award from the Press Club of Dallas representing the southern USA for the best Outdoor Story of the Year with *"Iron Horse Fly Fishing."*

Thornton serves on the Board of Directors of ***Bear Trust International*** where he serves as Vice-Chairman of Board, the ***Professional Hunters Association of South Africa Conservation and Empowerment Fund***, the ***Ballot Issues Coalition***, the ***Banovich Wildscape Fund***, and the ***Lone Star Outdoor News Foundation***.

He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Management and Marketing from California State University at Fresno and has earned advanced credits in Wildlife Management from Colorado State University at Fort Collins.