

# HUNTERS

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF SCI CHAPTERS IN WISCONSIN AND ILLINOIS  
MARCH/APRIL 2023

## MEET ADAM PAYNE, WDNR SECRETARY

*New DNR Secretary Adam Payne enjoys hunting with family. His daughter Rachel shot this Wisconsin whitetail.*

- Legislative Updates
- Conservation
- Chapter Reports & Events
- Humanitarian & Education Updates

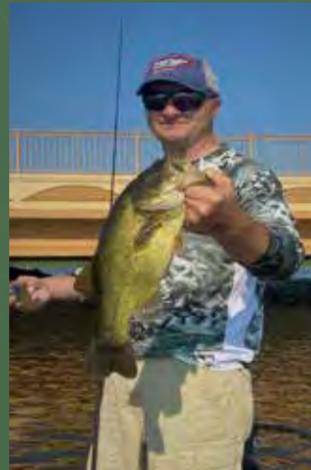
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- EXPERIENCE AN AFRICAN HUNT WITH DAVE & MELISSA GILBERTSON
- LEARN HOW TO CAMP AND SURVIVE IN THE WILDERNESS WITH CHUCK REETZ
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HUNTERS is a bimonthly publication for members of SCI chapters in Wisconsin, plus bonus electronic circulation, which includes some of the world's most avid and affluent conservationists who enjoy hunting here and around the world. They have earned a reputation of leadership on natural resources issues and giving to protect and support the future of hunting and conservation here and abroad. To share your message with them, send ads and editorial submissions to Mark LaBarbera at [wiscimag@peoplepc.com](mailto:wiscimag@peoplepc.com).

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Issue	Deadline
January/February	November 20
March/April	January 20
May/June	March 20
July/August	May 20
September/October	July 20
November/December	September 20

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# HUNTERS

Official Magazine of SCI Chapters in Wisconsin and Illinois  
 March/April 2023

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# Join today!

SCI Chapters welcome you!

New members and your families are always welcome at SCI. Visit these websites and join a chapter to start your adventure. Members enjoy great fun, meet new friends, make a difference in their community and help the future of hunting, plus you will discover new deals and opportunities that improve your hunting skill and enjoyment. We invite you to join online today.

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**President Dale Rimkus**  
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**President Sean Coykendall**  
www.sciwi.org

**SCI Region 16 Representative**  
**Charmaine Wargolet**  
charmaine@ameritech.net

# SCI Region 16 Report

by Charmaine Wargolet, Regional Representative

**O**n January 14th, our annual Region 16 meeting was held at Weldall Mfg., past president Dave Bahl's beautiful "trophy room." It was very well attended by dedicated leaders who believe and support SCI in every way. Five chapters were represented as follows:

- Illinois/Chicago Chapter – Marla & Dale Rimkus, Steve Corcoran, and Kevin Kuchel
  - Badgerland Chapter – John Martinson
  - SE WI Bowhunters - Monte Whitaker
  - NE WI Chapter – Marty Witzczak and Marty LaCourt
  - Wisconsin Chapter – Sean Coykendall and Tim Novak
- Also present were:
- Jason St Michael, Managing Director of Chapter Services
  - Jordan Wisecup, Chapter Service Specialist for Region 16
  - Dan Trawicki, Our Wisconsin state Lobbyist
  - Joel Kleefisch, our other state lobbyist working in tandem with Dan

And of course, I am Charmaine, Region 16 Regional Representative.

It was a great meeting as usual! Everyone was enthusiastic to be there and having both Jason AND Jordan from our national organization helped everyone to be brought up to speed on what was happening on the national



level. Lots of questions and information was shared like fundraiser ideas, special programs, etc.

I want to tell all of the members of the chapters in our region, with the enthusiastic support of all of the chapter presidents and directors in attendance and the programs that we work on together, Region 16 is actually a model for other regions. Jordan has written an article for the Safari Times showing what we do and the spirit and camaraderie that we share. National is so impressed by this region, so watch for this in the next few Safari Times as I am not sure which one it will make it into.

Speaking of coming together, I brought a couple of opportunities to this group, and everyone overwhelmingly supported them. Each chapter contributed to a small donation to the Wisconsin Hunter Education Instructors Assoc. and to put an ad in their annual convention program congratulating them on their 2023 convention and gratefully acknowledging their volunteers for their good work throughout the year. They do so

much to contribute to our hunting heritage.

The chapters also contributed to finishing the setup of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation air gun trailer that will be used all over the state for hunter ed programs and youth programs. All of the chapter logos will appear on the trailer for these young shooters to see.

Lastly, all of the chapters including the Illinois/Chicago chapter have contributed in some way to the Black Bear Research Endowment that has been set up at the UW--Stevens Point College of Natural Resources. This endowment will ensure black bear research to be done in perpetuity and because of the level of support, a portion will bear the name of SCI First For Hunters. It is a proud moment for everyone, and I am especially proud of all these folks in my region!

Until next time, as always, shoot straight and be well!



Illinois/Chicago Chapter President Dale Rimkus and Marla Rimkus had to leave before this Region 16 photo was taken of (from back left) Jordan Wisecup, new SCI Chapter Service Specialist; Marty Witzczak, NE WI Chapter President; Treasurer Tim Novak of the WI Chapter; Marty LaCourt, NE WI Chapter Director; Lobbyist Dan Trawicki; Treasurer Steve Corcoran of the IL/Chicago Chapter; President Sean Coykendall of the WI Chapter; and Jason St. Michael, Manager of SCI Chapter Services. Front: Region 16 Director Charmaine Wargolet; Monte Whitaker, SE WI Bowhunters Chapter President; John Martinson, Badgerland Chapter President; and Kevin Kuchel, IL/Chicago Chapter Director.

# Northeast Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Marty Witzczak, President

**C**harmaine Wargolet called to order our annual meeting for SCI First For Hunters Region 16, held Saturday January 14, 2023, at Weldall Manufacturing in Waukesha. Chapters sent representatives from Illinois, Madison area, Northeast WI, and the Milwaukee area. Dan Trawicki, our Wisconsin SCI Lobbyist was also in attendance for the annual meeting. He is a staunch advocate for fighting for our hunting rights. Unable to attend was Mark LaBarbera, the SCI HUNTERS magazine editor and Executive Director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. He asked SCI to consider donating for a WWF mobile air gun shooting range. This enclosed concession-like trailer consists of lifting a side to expose the targets. Ballistic curtain sidewalls are supported by tubular pipe stands and can go anywhere. We would be donating to help the mobile range travel to where the people are so volunteers could teach youth and adults about the fun of shooting sports. This opportunity to

involve youth and adults in shooting experiences with the traveling trailer was asked to be considered. We can also host it in our area when we have a class, fair, sport show, or event that wants it. WWF has reached out to Wisconsin Hunter Education Instructors Assoc. for additional volunteers and to offer use of the mobile range for their classes and local events. I imagine I will have updates at a later date regarding this traveling trailer. If you wish to donate to help get this great initiative on the road please contact me via email, martywitzczak55@gmail.com.

The 24th Annual Northeast WI Chapter SCI Hunter's Banquet and live, plus on-line auction, was held the weekend of February 24th through February 26th at the Green Bay Distillery. Our guests enjoyed the "Wisconsin State Hunting and Fishing Expo" at the Resch Expo Center in



Green Bay and then were treated to a fabulous meal with the auction following at the Distillery. Our chapter welcomed new members as well as existing members and everyone enjoyed the variety of donated hunts and bidding wars. It was an entertaining evening as well as enjoying meeting the outfitters and perusing the rest of the booths at the hunting and fishing show. There was something for everyone to see, taste or purchase any age, male or female!

Until the next HUNTERS magazine edition, enjoy the emergence of spring, spend time with your family and friends, make memories and stay safe!

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# Badgerland Chapter Report

by John Martinson, President

A chance of winning a nice gun isn't the only reason to attend one of SCI Badgerland's membership meetings.

Normally we have one of our members give a presentation of their hunting/fishing experience at the meeting. It's a great way to hear first-hand about different destinations, outfitters, and adventures. Plus, it's nice to be able to ask questions and hear from reliable and trusted sources. It's a bonus that the information is fresh from recent experiences, including photos of accommodations too.

Joseph Koback and his wife Kathe didn't disappoint fellow Badgerland SCI members and guests at our membership dinner meeting with their recent trip to South Africa.

Joseph took a magnificent cape buffalo and he and Kathe each took several other great trophies, like Kathe's sable shown here.

National Geographic would have been proud of the natural live photos

that Kathe captured, especially ones of the big bull elephants at close range. Evidently Kathe must be a fast runner or at least faster than everyone else!

At the meeting, as always, there was great comradery and conversations as people shared their own experiences with each other over a delicious dinner. You don't have to be an SCI Badgerland member to attend one of our events, but once you see what we are all about, I hope you will join our chapter and we much appreciate our loyal members.

Looking ahead, please go to our newly designed website to check out the calendar for future membership meeting dates and locations along with our Shoot for Adventure event at the Rio Conservation Club on August 5th, 2023. Lastly, if you

have a trip you would like to share, please contact myself about presenting at a future meeting.



Joseph Koback and his Cape buffalo.



Kathe Koback and her sable.



*Kathe took great close-up photos of elephants as mentioned in John's Badgerland Chapter update.*





Payne and his son Forrest with a Wisconsin buck taken by bow and arrow.

# SCI Members Welcome Adam Payne, WDNR Secretary

by Mark LaBarbera

As an SCI Life Member and journalist, I visited with avid outdoorsman Adam Payne and discovered a kindred spirit who Governor Tony Evers appointed in late December to be the new Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources effective January 3, 2023.

Sharing family hunting and fishing photos, Payne said, "I've been fortunate to have good luck over the years, but my most memorable hunts are when I sat next to my son and daughters."

Like many of us SCI members, that's something he learned from his father, a long-time educator at UW-Stevens Point, who stressed the values of healthy habitat, clean water, and quality time outdoors with family and friends.

"My brother and I used to trap a lot when we were kids and in our early twenties, primarily muskrats, mink, and raccoons, along the Wisconsin River in Plover," Payne said, "but I haven't done so for a number of years now."

Governor Evers said, "Adam has deep Wisconsin roots and understands that our vast and valuable resources—from our waterways to our farmlands—are core to who we are as a people and a state. He is an outdoorsman, a conservationist, and has been a strong, successful leader for Sheboygan County. I know he will bring that same dedication and spirit of service to this role as secretary."

As Payne shared photos, he noted, "We also have always enjoyed camping, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking. More recently, paddle boarding. Any time in the woods or on the water is always time well spent."

Looking at one particular photo he spoke with a pride and admiration familiar to many SCI members, and not just about his son Forrest or daughters Abby and Rachel.

"The photo from our rifle hunt this year is with my 82-year-old uncle Glenn, who got the biggest buck of his life this year, plus me, my son

Forrest and his girlfriend Courtney," Payne said. "My daughter Abby and my wife Kris prefer to fish, although they have both deer hunted with me as well."

Despite the many Great Lakes fishing success photos and pictures with turkey, deer, bear, and other game, Payne, a bowhunting enthusiast, says humbly, "I haven't shot a buck with a rifle in a number of years because I'm generally sitting with my daughter Rachel or getting my uncle in position. My primary passion is bowhunting."

The new DNR Secretary's passion for all natural resources and conservation is evident in both his public and private comments, and in his actions.

One Sheboygan County Highway Department source said that Payne is an outdoorsman and very concerned about the environment and public safety, noting involvement with several conservation projects in the area. He also said that Payne takes time to listen and to foster teamwork. Not that everyone agreed all the time, but he said they could speak frankly with Payne and know they were being heard.



Demands of the new job may make it more difficult for Secretary Payne to spend as much time as he would like on the water.

As retired West Bend Public Works Director Rick Heisler, a volunteer fire-arms safety and hunter education instructor, said when he shared that source's input, "Seemed to be positive and encouraging comments from a



Last deer season, Payne's 82-year-old Uncle Glenn shot the biggest buck of his life and was joined by Payne's son and by Forrest's friend Courtney.



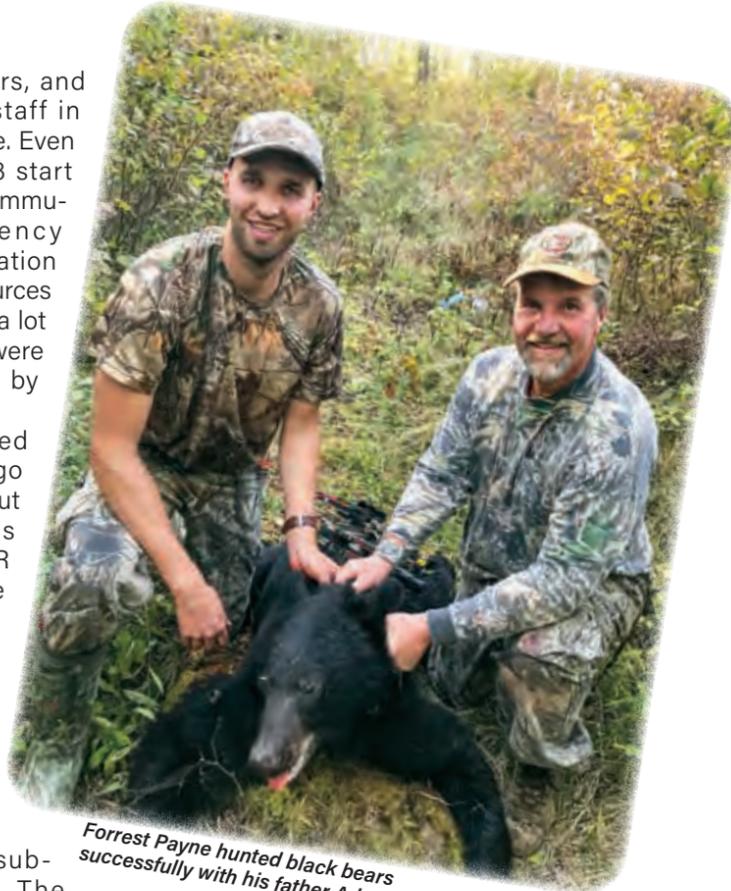
Secretary Payne's bird hunting success also includes wild turkey for the dinner table.

citizens, local leaders, and DNR professional staff in every part of the state. Even before his January 3 start date, Payne began communicating with agency employees, conservation leaders, Natural Resources Board members, any a lot of well-wishers who were pleasantly surprised by the appointment.

Payne had applied about four years ago and was a finalist, but Preston Cole was selected as the DNR Secretary. As Payne was preparing to retire from his Sheboygan County Administrator's job after more than 20 years of service, he saw news of Cole's retirement and re-submitted his resumé. The Governor interviewed him on a Tuesday and offered the DNR top job during that last week of December when it was announced that Payne accepted.

People speculated about whether the administration had asked Cole to resign, but other insiders told me that Cole's announcement came as a surprise, and he simply wanted to retire after many years of service. He spent decades serving the public and natural resources here, beginning with his early career as an urban forester, then Milwaukee public works administrator, and beloved member of the Natural Resources Board of Wisconsin, eventually serving as its Chair. When he was introduced before speaking to the Wisconsin Conservation Congress at its first annual meeting since he became DNR Secretary, Cole was greeted with an unprecedented level of applause before he even made it to the podium.

The natural resources community that knows Payne has already expressed a similar optimistic anticipation for the new Secretary.



Forrest Payne hunted black bears successfully with his father Adam Payne.

His official public statement said, "It is an honor to accept Gov. Evers' appointment to serve as Secretary of the DNR. I have always had a passion for protecting and enhancing our natural resources and am an avid outdoorsman. I look forward to working with a strong and diverse team of DNR staff, the Board and its many partners and stakeholders to problem-solve, protect, and enhance our natural resources for people today and for generations to come."

As with Cole, there is cautious optimism. Retired DNR Law Enforcement administrator Tom Thoresen, an ongoing advocate for hands-on hunter education training, said, "Whoever is the DNR Secretary they need to be open, transparent, and strong at building partnerships."

Former DNR Secretary George Meyer said Payne is "an excellent choice." He said his past interactions with Payne have been very positive.

Adding to public optimism is Payne's understanding of fish and wildlife issues as well as agriculture, and where conservation practices can bring producers and outdoor enthusiasts together.

His Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning is from UW-Madison, where he received his Bachelor's Degree in Communications, but his personal and professional experiences include serving as Executive Director of the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association and Director of the Farmland Preservation Program at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

He worked on his grandmother's farm in Sheboygan Falls. Originally from Stevens Point, he moved to Plymouth and raised his family. The Governor's announcement said, "As Sheboygan County Administrator, Payne led the



Payne's appreciation for all outdoor activities comes from time spent on the Great Lakes and great inland lakes, streams, and rivers.



Secretary Payne encourages people to get outdoors, engage their five senses, and enjoy Wisconsin's natural resources throughout the year. He enjoyed the sights, smells, and sounds of autumn on a prior year's bowhunt, as well as the touch of antlers in his hands, and the taste of venison in the frying pan.

county through two major conservation projects, including cleaning up the Sheboygan River and Harbor and purchasing and preserving the Amsterdam Dunes, which encompasses 328 acres of undeveloped shoreline along Lake Michigan."

It said, "As county administrator, Payne has served as the chief administrative officer, coordinating and directing county-wide administrative and management functions, initiating program and policy changes, working with state government for the betterment of the county, and leading Sheboygan County's annual budget development process."

Payne's leadership style includes giving credit to others. Referring to the list of Sheboygan County environmental achievements like a successful stewardship program and water quality buffer program, he said, "Though there's always room for improvement, I'm proud of our county's track record and, of course, it took a lot of good people and collaboration to see them through."

Resumé aside, a person's photo album can also be revealing to SCI members and others. In Payne's case, it's also reassuring for those of us who want to pass along our outdoor heritage and healthy Wisconsin natural resources to future generations.



# WORLD HUNTING AWARD RING... with a BOW!

*Wisconsin winner endured broken ribs, dislocated thumb, Tick Fever, Puff Adder encounter and being charged by elephants & lions during a quest lasting 24+ years.*



by Mike Christianson

**B**ulgaria? Who goes to Bulgaria? If you're trying to accomplish the World Hunting Award Ring, that's one of the places you go to hunt.

This all started with wife Joyce and I hunting where we wanted to, Africa, New Zealand, Argentina, and a lot of the states in the Union. Friend Dave

Ekkebus once said, you should enter your animals in the World Hunting Program, and I'll bet you have a Grand Slam or two. So, we sat down with our World Hunting Awards field manual and started checking off animals.

From there the disease progressed.

To get the ring you must have achieved 11 SCI Milestone Awards





whenever you start in the program, you're grandfathered in. The program is always changing. For example, how many animals are required for a milestone or what animals. You are allowed to use the easiest path to accomplish that award. For me, I couldn't accomplish a lot of these if I had to take the animals that are required today. Sometimes you have to dig to find out the past requirements to see what they were. So, for reference, I kept each SCI Awards issue from when I started.

Joyce traveled with me on every hunt except two elephant hunts.

Someone had to work to pay for all of this!



(Grand Slams), including the North America 29 and the Africa 29, 17 SCI Inner Circles at the Diamond Level, the Fourth Pinnacle of Achievement, and the Crowning Achievement.

It's the challenge of completing each grand slam or moving up on an inner circle. Tom Miranda told me, get one animal at a time. Then you pick which animals give you the most check marks. For instance, a Gredos Ibex gave me a check in Animals of Europe, Goats of the World, Mountain Game of the World and the Global Hunting Award.

You have to make a real plan on how to accomplish it. And with a bow, you have to make the hunts count when you're at these places. For me, if it was a representative animal and I had a good shot, I took it. I never held out for getting top 10 animals, although we have taken a number of them, which all goes toward the Top Ten Award.

Another part of the World Hunting Awards is that



I couldn't have done it without her being there. It took me three 21-day safaris for leopard and three 21-day safaris for elephant. It just isn't easy trying to take some of these animals with a bow.

During some of these safaris, I've been charged by elephants, lions (which I shot with my bow at 17 yards charging us) stepped on a Puff Adder snake, got Tick Fever three times, fell and broke three ribs, dislocated a thumb.

And those were the good times!

We hunted Africa 17 times.

I mentioned Bulgaria earlier.

When we arrived, my bows were still in Chicago.

So, our outfitter, Velik, took us to a bow shop, on Sunday, and I got a new Bear bow. I had my sights and arrows in our suitcase, so I just needed to get a rest and set it up. I took a red stag and a Fallow deer with the Bear bow until

my bows came in. Bulgaria is a place I would hunt again. And it never would have occurred to me to hunt there unless I needed those animals to complete a certain award.

Argentina and Chile were also some of our favorite places. Hunting red stag during the roar with Gonzalo of Cerro Indio are probably some of my favorite hunts.

I was only the 8th bowhunter to achieve the World Hunting Award Ring. Our friend Ken Sardenga from Virginia was the 7th and helped us with some of the different places to go.

During the last few years of our quest, we were hunting like politicians trying to get votes. We probably went on big hunts four or five times a year. We got finished just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit and we couldn't go anywhere during it and it kind of got us out of the rhythm of hunting overseas.

Believe it or not, the last animal I needed and took to finish my Ring was a Pronghorn Antelope from South Dakota. SCI member Steve Cripps of Wisconsin was along with us.

Achieving the Ring is not the end. Our future plans include moose, caribou, deer, elk, and various species in Florida.

Going after the Ring has been a lifestyle since 1998 when we first picked up a field manual and started checking off animals.

Along with our World Hunting Award quest, we have been very involved with SCI. From chapter president to regional representative to SCI Vice President and chairing the Ethics Committee and the Guides and Outfitters Committee with recently lost staff member John Boretsky. SCI has been our life for many years, and I wouldn't have changed a thing. Hunting has allowed us to see the world.

# WCC Changes Will Affect All

**W**isconsin Conservation Congress' District Leadership Council in mid-January agreed to change its Spring Hearings and Resolutions process in a 2023 pilot program that will have SCI chapters and members watching closely.

Spring Hearings will now be DNR/WCC "Open Houses" April 3-6, likely from 6pm-9pm, in each county where DNR staff and WCC delegates will interact on important issues with the public. At those in-person meetings, the public will vote to fill available WCC county delegate positions.

"It will have a different feel in a more relaxed, conversational interaction

rather than a formal hearing," according to Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Secretary Terri Roehrig who is Vice Chair of the Congress.

DNR Fisheries, Wildlife, Law Enforcement, and other staff will be required to attend these open houses, along with all WCC county delegates, to provide updates about issues/topics pertinent to that county as well as statewide matters of interest and will afford the public the ability to ask questions about spring hearing matters or any other DNR related issues.

This is an opportunity for WCC delegates to engage with the public and

promote the organization, share with the public what the WCC is all about, how the public could get involved and why, while building relationships with their constituents. It is also an opportunity to talk about County Deer Advisory Councils and answer questions about 2023 quotas and process, as that timeline coincides with the open houses and Online Input Surveys.

No citizen resolutions will be taken at these open houses and no public comments will be taken on resolutions that will be in the online input survey.

The effectiveness and success of this pilot program will be evaluated this year by the DNR and WCC.

## **Online Resolution Process:**

**February 15:** WI Citizen authors begin submitting resolutions online.

**March 1:** Deadline to submit online resolutions.

**March 19:** WCC Reviewers to complete review of resolutions and approve or reach out to authors for changes to resolutions to meet writing criteria.

**March 25:** WCC Reviewers and citizen author deadline to submit updated resolutions.

**March 30:** WCC Reviewer Escalation meeting to discuss escalated resolutions.

**April 1:** Final deadline for all reviewed final resolutions

**April 10:** Statewide online input goes live

**April 13:** Statewide online input concludes



# Winoga Bear

by Ron McClintic

**A**rrive Tuesday afternoon May 31. First day of the hunt June 1. How come the best way to entice a bear, or any animal into shooting range, is to be totally oblivious, paying zero attention? This story is part of a series where I basically describe my hunting incompetence. Hopefully you can learn from my mistakes.

It was May 31, 2022, I was headed to Winoga Lodge in Sioux Lookout Ontario with my son Jake for an archery bear hunt. Jake had flown into Madison from Norfolk, VA where he is stationed, and we drove up to my cabin near Walker, MN. The next morning with a stop in Bemidji for breakfast and groceries, we cleared Canadian customs at Fort Francis.

The area had 9' of snow this past winter, then a lot of rain. Water levels in Rainey Lake were very high. Had Highway 502 between International Falls, MN and Dryden been closed the detour would have been huge. As it was, water had crossed the white line in a couple places, but we made it. There was a small detour in the last mile for a flooded road, but no big deal.

The final day of the drive was raw, rain, grey and wind. As we drove, evidence of high water was everywhere. In Sioux Lookout, we passed covered boat docks where the only thing visible was the roof. Restaurants and hotels had two feet of water, or more, in them. The dock at Winoga Lodge was still onshore in winter storage. The small permanent doc was two feet underwater.

Arriving at Winoga Lodge I renewed a friendship with the owner Dick Mansfield and introduced him to Jake. Dick's son Troy runs the bear hunting service. We met his wife Carey and their son, along with our guide Baily. After unpacking we cooked dinner and went to bed.

The plan for the first day (June 1, 2022) was to sleep in a little (6:30am), check in with work, then make bacon and pancakes. Next was an archery practice session, followed by a short tourist swing through Sioux Lookout then leave for the stands at 1:30. By 8 am the clouds were mostly gone but the wind was brisk.

The stand locations are along a river, so we got in a 16' open boat with our guide Baily and first crossed over to the island main base of Winoga Lodge. We dropped some bear bait off for Troy as he was taking a third hunter out at the same time. The lake was very high, and very turbulent, and we were crossing against the waves. An interesting ride. But after leaving the island, we were going with the wind but against the current. Often Bailey was trying to time the waves and surf our way along. After the first mile, the lake narrowed down to a river, the ride evened out somewhat, and we made it to stand 3 to drop off Jake.

This stand was up a small hill, so we could step out of the boat and walk up about 100 yards to the stand. Jake's line of sight range to the bait was about 14 yards. Bailey refreshed the bait, downloaded the game camera's memory chip, and we headed to stand 4.

This stand was on lower ground and due to the high-water Bailey literally drove the boat in a zig zag through the trees to within 100 feet or so my stand. My range was 21 yards. After rebaiting and downloading the game camera, Baily left me at about 3 pm.

The bait drum is a blue plastic barrel with a log chain keeping it in place. It is laying on its side, with a hole about 12" in diameter in the side. Big enough to entice a bear but small enough he must work at it. Then, an 8 or 10" log is jammed in, with a couple others leaned against it. The idea being something to divert the bears attention while it figures out how to get dinner,

thus giving the hunter more time. It also causes the bear to move around, changing angles as it works, again increasing the opportunities for good shot placement.

I got myself organized, my Tacacam set up, an arrow in the bow and my Stan release hooked on. I draped my camo raincoat over the rail of the stand. I like to think it makes a visual shield so I can move around a bit, get in and out of my bag for snacks or water etc. and remain hidden. If a bear shows up, I can shift my weight to get ready to draw without it seeing much of the motion. It also minimizes metal to metal contact, and thus noise, when I lay the bow across the stand rail.

But it turns out, if you are not careful, you can brush the hair trigger on the Stan release, and it falls 15 feet to the ground. I had a backup wrist release for just this occasion, which was an excellent idea, but I had never actually set it up or tried it out, which was a bad idea. Very bad.

I started adjusting its length and learned that is impossible if you cannot draw and shoot the bow. While I was heads down messing with it, totally oblivious to my surroundings, I happened to glance up and saw a big new log leaning against the bait barrel. The log then raised its head.



Not ready to shoot, I kept adjusting the release. I did turn on the Tacacam. When I thought it was okay, I looked up and now there were two bears. They were about the same size, not huge but not small. I thought the first one looked nicer and would make a great mount. But he never presented me a shot. He was always head onto me and somewhat blocked by the second bear.

The second was always rear end



toward me. Two bears, no shot. I know I watched them for over 20 minutes because that is how much video I recorded before the Tacacam battery died. Finally, the stalemate was broken by the second bear, who in trying to get deeper in the barrel knocked one of the logs into the first bear. It startled him and he stepped away. Apparently insulted, based on his expression, he left. I never got a shot at him.

The second bear then proceeded to exercise its sole ownership and started more actively moving around the bait, repeatedly giving me good shots. I wanted the first bear to come back. But the second bear just keep egging me on, almost daring me to shoot. So, I did. The third time he posed in perfect profile and remained motionless, I raised the bow and started to draw.

I could not draw the bow. The difference between a Stan style release and a wrist release was bigger than I thought. I made enough noise to startle the bear, but not enough to scare it off. I froze and waited. Soon he went back to feeding. I convinced myself I was being silly, the bow was not really

harder to draw, and I could do it. I tried again and managed to draw.

Then I found out the release was still not quite set up right and my finger could not reach the trigger. It was a delicate balancing act, trying to keep the string pulled back while stretching a finger forward while keeping the sights on the bear. Somehow, I did it, the arrow fired, I heard it hit something and the bear startled.

It jumped a couple steps, shook, jumped a couple steps, shook, then moved out of sight into the brush. I heard it moving, and sort of could follow it by seeing the vegetation moving. Then it fell and I heard four moans. An eerie sound, but it meant the bear was dead. We later learned that I placed the arrow as perfectly as could be. Just behind the shoulder and we could not find an intact heart when gutting it.

I got out of the stand and walked to the bait. My arrow was easy to find and covered in blood. But I could not find a blood trail. Bailey said if we shoot, to place our orange vests in a tree at the boat landing spot, and if he was passing by while servicing other stands he would stop, otherwise he would pick us up at the end of the legal shooting time, which was about 9:30. I got back in the stand, ate my snack, made some notes on the experience, settled in with my Kindle and waited for 4 hours.

When he picked me up, we searched just long enough to find the blood trail, mark it, then went to see how Jake did.

He had seen a bear, but it was just before end of day and never got a shot. We returned to my bear, found it in about 15 minutes, carried it to the boat and returned home. As we motored down the river in complete darkness, we met another boat heading our way. It was Troy coming to see why we were late and offer some help. His hunter also got a bear, and they already had it back at the lodge, gutted and in the cooler. He had left a truck at the nearby public boat launch a short distance from Winonga, as their dock was underwater. We met there, lifted the bear out of the boat into the truck, and while we motored around to Winoga, Troy drove the bear to the lodge.

Troy gutted the bear, placed a bag of ice in the carcass, and we put it into the walk-in cooler. The final skinning and butchering to take place the next day. This all finished about 1:00 am. Jake was now the only hunter in camp. But that was just day one, and the bears were active everywhere.

The second day, Jake and Bailey left at about 3 pm. It was an overcast, off and on rain kind of day. When Bailey and I went to get him at 9:30 it was a bit nippy on the 15-minute boat ride. Jake had seen nothing. At least we got to bed before midnight. I had spent the afternoon deboning my bear. I have zero skill as a butcher. But I could trim away useful meat. We intended to have it all processed into hamburger, sausage, and brats, which matched my butchering skill level.

The third day was cloudier with occasional short mild showers, although the rain chances were to decrease as the day wore on, with the sun to come out the last couple hours of the day. We thought this might encourage a late day snack for a bear, hopefully giving Jake an opportunity. I am a decent shot with a bow. Jake is better, but don't tell him I said that. I was optimistic that if given a chance he would succeed.

When we went to pick him up the lake was like glass. While Jake had seen a bear in the brush circle the bait clearing, it never came in.

Saturday, we awoke to a sunny day, by far the best weather of the trip. After talking it over and considering Bailey's review of the various game camera footage, we agreed Jake should try stand one. We dropped him off at 2 pm

and at 3:49 he was able to get a text out he had taken a shot. He was not at all confident he hit anything. I told him to stay in the stand and keep hunting, we would be out in a bit.

We waited about 30 minutes in case he had wounded a bear, giving it time to lay down. But Bailey quickly found the arrow and it had zero blood on it. Jake reiterated he made an awkward shot over the stand rail. We left him there to keep hunting.

I had the excellent idea that when stopped at my cabin on the way up, to have Jake practice out of the stand I have set up. While we had time, I made the mistake of offering him that

opportunity instead of insisting. Having his first shot out of a stand while on the hunt is as bad as trying to learn to flyfish on your first fishing trip. Maybe worse. In hindsight, I failed my son by not insisting.

The next day we set up a lawn chair and a target in the yard at the lodge and he practiced. Then when we next dropped him at a stand, we took along a target arrow and he took a practice shot. He was mostly concerned about how the stand rail would interfere with his draw. He was able to see that with only a modest forward lean, in no way over balancing forward, it did not.

Feeling way more confident the hunt continued.

But he never got another opportunity. Oddly enough a couple weeks later on July 2, at my cabin, at about 8 pm, while reading and sipping a fine bourbon, just inside the open garage door, I looked up. There was a bear 15 feet away sniffing the air for dinner. That is, looking for my garbage can. It looked just like the one I shot 4 weeks earlier. Maybe Jake's next hunt will be right there! We also learned just after the hunt that Jake is being promoted to Commander, USN. That makes the missing out on a bear pale in comparison.

## Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Sean Coykendall, President

The Wisconsin Chapter's 46th Annual Grand Banquet is now in the past. The banquet committee has put in a lot of hours on this event, and I can't thank them enough for their efforts. We look forward to sharing our results with you once we get all the numbers in. We are looking for ways we can continue to make the experience better for all our guests. If you attended and have some thoughts for us, please share them. It helps further the cause of protecting our right to hunt.

Our board decided for 2023 to fix our membership meeting costs at \$20 per person. Costs are rising everywhere, but we can't let that come between our

members and them experiencing all that our amazing chapter has to offer.

Joel Kleefisch spoke with us in January about the Red Stag he took in Spain on a hunt he bought at our 45th Annual Grand Banquet. These success stories are from those who get their hunts from our chapter are the most enjoyable to hear about because that could be any of us buying a hunt at a future banquet. Nick Heim, our Programs Director, is working hard on getting speakers for our membership meetings. Be on the lookout for a great line up for the remainder of 2023.

Lastly, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all our sponsors, volunteers, attendees, chapter members and



those on the banquet committee for their support and contributions to our Annual Grand Banquet. Without each and one of you we wouldn't be where we are today.

## SE WI Bowhunters Chapter Report

by Monte Whitaker, President

Our chapter was founded in 1998 by a group of friends who were passionate about the outdoors and protecting our sporting heritage, especially here in the great state of Wisconsin. That group of friends was looking to form an organization that would push for improving whitetail deer hunting and for managing the deer herd in a responsible, sustainable way.

Knowing SCI's longstanding history of fighting for hunting rights and for smart conservation, it was clear that

becoming an SCI chapter would be the way to go.

As the new President of the SCI Southeast Wisconsin Bowhunters Chapter, I plan to help the bow chapter, other members and fellow bowhunters and conservationists push for those same things. Special thanks to Alex Valley and other Presidents and long-time chapter leaders like Kaz and Dan Trawicki. All of them and you brought us to this point and I believe they will continue to share their expertise and insights.



I know that I can count on them and you.

# Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus Announces New Bipartisan Leadership

SCI members in Wisconsin and Illinois and across North America help support the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), which recently announced new leadership of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC) for the 118th Congress.

According to former CSF Board Member Mark LaBarbera, an SCI Life Member from Wisconsin, the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus is a bipartisan, bicameral, caucus that features approximately 200 members in the House and Senate, representing all 50 states. The CSC champions efforts on behalf of America's 55 million sportsmen and women. It promotes fish and wildlife conservation, sporting access and opportunities, and works to combat efforts that seek to limit our time-honored traditions of hunting, fishing, trapping, and recreational shooting. Collectively, the CSC is one of the most powerful and organized Caucuses on Capitol Hill.

In the new Congress, the Senate leadership is comprised of Co-Chair Senator Joe Manchin III (WV), Co-Chair Senator John Boozman (AR), Vice-Chair Senator Angus King Jr. (ME), and Vice-Chair Senator Roger Marshall (KS). In the House, leadership consists of Co-Chair Representative Bruce Westerman (AR), Co-Chair Representative Jimmy Panetta (CA), Vice-Chair Representative Garret Graves (LA), and Vice-Chair Representative Jared Golden (ME).

"Outdoor recreation is a way of life in Arkansas that has shaped me and countless other Natural State residents," said Sen. Boozman. "I'm proud to serve as a Co-Chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, which has been such a strong leader in advancing policies protecting the environment and conserving our planet for future generations to enjoy. I look forward to working together to continue this advocacy, crafting legislation to safeguard the long-term health of wildlife habitat, and promoting responsible stewardship."

"I am honored to once again serve as the Co-Chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus in the 118th

Congress. Growing up in West Virginia, I was introduced to all that the outdoors has to offer from a young age and to this day, I remain an avid sportsman. Our nation's hunting and fishing heritage is so important to who we are as a country, and the number of visitors to our public lands only continues to grow as more Americans fall in love with the great outdoors. I look forward to working with my fellow caucus members to ensure that people across this nation can continue to enjoy hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, and the outdoor traditions we know and love," said Senator Manchin, Co-Chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus.

"It's an honor to serve as a Co-Chair of the Congressional Sportsmen Caucus in the 118th Congress. I look forward to working with fellow Co-Chair Bruce Westerman (AR), our colleagues in the Caucus, and with the Congressional Sportsmen Foundation to promote the necessary conservation practices in order to perpetuate people's privilege to fish and hunt," said Rep. Panetta. "As the U.S. Representative for the 19th Congressional District, I have some of the West Coast's most pristine spots to fish and forests to hunt. However, we on the American West face the enduring threat of extreme weather events from wildfires to flooding which can restrict and reduce our outdoor activities. The Congressional Sportsmen Caucus will continue to advance bicameral, bipartisan legislation to help conserve, manage, and restore our forests, oceans, lakes, rivers, rangelands, wetlands, and grasslands and protect at-risk species and wildlife so that we also can support and sustain our nation's outdoor recreational heritage."

"Hunting and fishing are a way of life in my home state of Arkansas, so I very much look forward to serving as the Republican Co-Chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus," said Rep. Westerman. "My role as Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee presents a unique opportunity to further

collaborate with the Caucus, as we will work together on many issues. I am eager to work alongside my friends, Congressman Jimmy Panetta, Senator Boozman, and Senator Manchin, to advance the priorities of sportsmen and women around the country."

"The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation extends our gratitude to the new leadership of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus," said CSF President and CEO Jeff Crane. "In the previous Congress, CSF was encouraged by the number of critical conservation priorities that were ratified into law as well as the amount of anti-sporting initiatives that were defeated. This good work would not be possible without the work of the CSC, which is a model for bipartisan cooperation and science-based lawmaking, two things that can be in short supply in our current political climate. The leadership of the CSC in the 118th Congress brings unique and diverse expertise to the sporting-conservation policy arena, and CSF looks forward to all that can be accomplished for America's original conservationists, our sportsmen and women."

Notable Accomplishments of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus with help from SCI in the 117th Congress included:

- The inclusion of the Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act and the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act into the Omnibus Bill;
- The enactment of the Modernizing Access to Our Public Lands Act;
- The enactment of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which contained over \$40 billion in funding for sportsmen and women;
- The enactment of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Reauthorization Act of 2022;
- The passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act in the House and the Committee level in the Senate;
- The Committee passage of the Cottonwood Fix, the RISEE Act, and

- the America's Outdoor Recreation Act;
- The inclusions of the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 language into the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2023; and

- Defeating numerous pieces of legislation that sought to negatively impact our sporting-conservation heritage.

SCI's LaBarbera summed it up for SCI chapter members here in the

Midwest Region 16: "Over the years we've seen that it doesn't matter whether CSC leadership is from our home state. The important thing is that they are avid outdoorsmen who care about the issues that we rank as priorities."

## CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS LEADERSHIP: 118TH CONGRESS



Co-Chair: Senator Joe Manchin III (WV)



Co-Chair: Senator John Boozman (AR)



Vice-Chair: Senator Angus King Jr. (ME)



Vice-Chair: Senator Roger Marshall (KS)



Co-Chair: Representative Bruce Westerman (AR)



Co-Chair: Representative Jimmy Panetta (CA)



Vice-Chair: Representative Garret Graves (LA)



Vice-Chair: Representative Jared Golden (ME)

# Maggie the Mentor

**Breaking the ice, Maggie Carsello creates interest in fishing and the outdoors among young girls and adult women.**

by Ice Force

When the summer sun fades and the days get shorter, the snow forms plush pillows on the once-green land and lakes start to form a thin film of ice, the cold-averse angler might take nature's cues as a sign to tuck away their rods and tackle box for the year and wait (im)patiently for next spring and open water.

But for those truly thrilled by the sport, it takes a lot more than a little cold to keep them away from what they love. For these anglers, hard water and cold days mean only one thing: It's finally ice fishing season.

"Winter has always been miserable for me, but when I started ice fishing, it made me appreciate the cold and the snow," said Maggie Carsello (maggiejo\_outdoors). "I was thrilled when I first learned how to ice fish, because that meant that I could fish all year round. It gave me something to look forward to about winter."

Carsello is an avid angler and social media inspiration for girls and young



*Wisconsin bass and ice angling marvel Maggie Carsello shares her top ice fishing tips for a great (and warm!) day on the ice. Whether you are a seasoned professional or just starting out, everyone has something to learn from this fun-loving angler.*

women who aspire to enter the outdoors space. A resident of Stoughton, Wisconsin, the Madison Chain of Lakes is Carsello's "home water," though this angler travels frequently to attend bass-fishing tournaments across the United States. She uses her platform of nearly 50k

Instagram followers to give great advice to beginner anglers.

"I was hooked right away," said Carsello. "You can fish your whole life, but ice fishing requires an entirely different technique. Because the fish behave differently, you need different equipment and a different way of thinking about fishing...it was completely new territory for me."

To kick winter dread to the curb and get yourself enjoying your favorite sport all year long, Carsello offers these expert tips to bring you success reel-in' in big ones beneath the ice.

**Don't Be on Thin Ice** - Safety is key - always, all the time. Especially when ice fishing in the early season, make sure you are checking ice thickness and that you are wearing your floating ice suit. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recommends staying off the ice entirely if it is less than 4" deep.



**Read the Fish** - When it comes to fish under ice, inconsistency is (funnily enough) key. Carsello recommends trying out different tactics and observing how the fish react to the changes until you find a winner.

"Snow cover will affect how much the fish can see you through the ice. Note that early ice fish are not as finicky depending on how much snow cover there is," said Carsello. "You can also fiddle with vertical versus horizontal presentation and changing the depth you are fishing at. Sometimes I bang my jig on the bottom of the lake to stir up dust so I can read how the fish react to that and adjust from there."

"As long as the weeds are green, bluegills hang out in them. Try to find

holes and deeper depressions in the weeds if this is the fish you are going for," said Carsello.

"A lot of dads reach out to me saying, 'My daughter loves your content and always asks me if she can go on my Instagram and see your new posts.' That is so rewarding to me," said Carsello. "People also reach out to me with questions. Lots of folks wonder how to get started with ice fishing, how to learn, what gear to use...I am very fortunate to have this space where I can use my knowledge to connect more people to the sport."

Carsello has been an angler since before she could remember. Her earliest memories are sitting on a boat as a toddler with her father, gripping her little-kid fishing rod and watching in awe at any fish that tugged her line. But this aficionado began her ice fishing journey later in life, when a few of her fellow classmates at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point took her out on the ice for the first time.

**Have the Right Equipment** - "My ice fishing has definitely improved by getting better gear," said Carsello. "You don't need the flashiest or the most expensive gear, but, as you get out there more, you start to realize that it's worth investing in good gear to be that much more successful."

**Don't be Afraid to Move Around** - Spoiler alert: Fish swim. If you keep coming up empty, explore different sections of the water column to increase your chances of getting a bite.

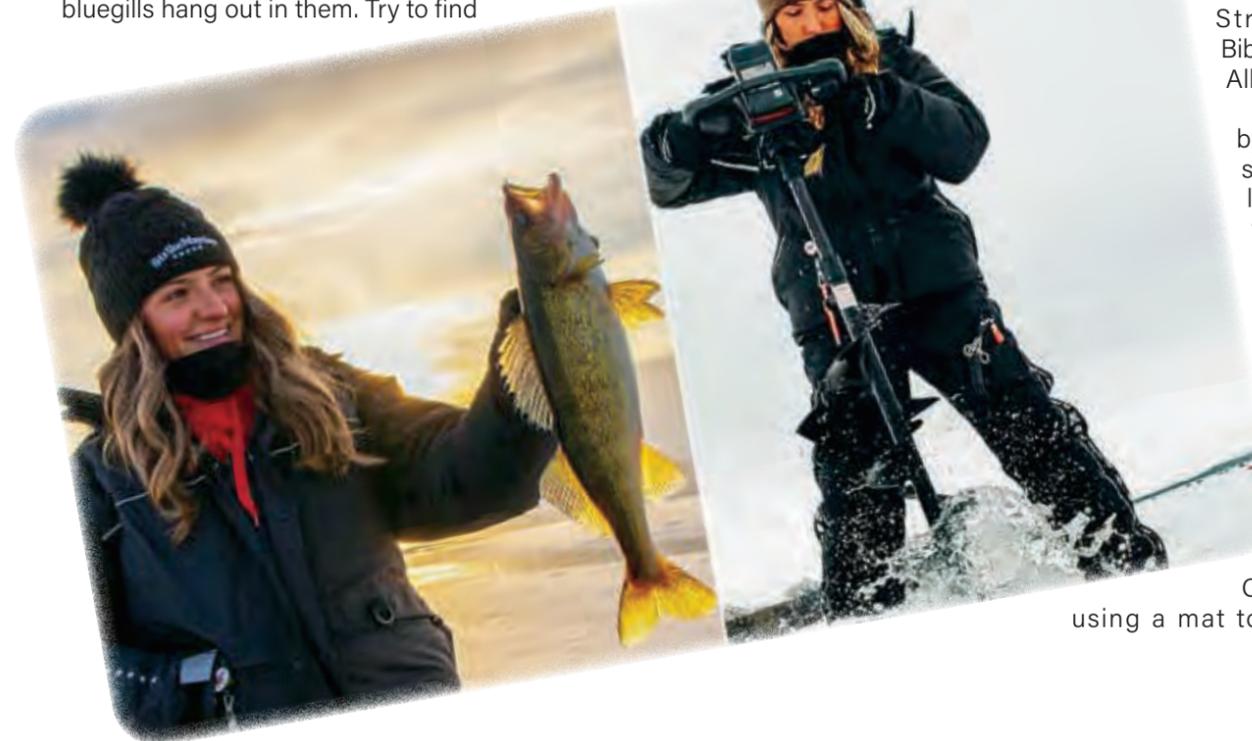
"Fish are always on the move!" said Carsello. "Don't feel like you always have to fish that bottom six inches of the water column. The fish like to come up for it sometimes, so play with your depth as you go."

**Gear Up for the Cold** - Winter is no joke. If you know, you know. That's why Carsello's biggest tip by far is this: "If you want to enjoy your time ice fishing, you need comfortable, warm gear."

Because staying warm means staying out longer, Carsello recommends (for women anglers) wearing the StrikeMaster® Allie Bibs and StrikeMaster® Allie Jacket.

"The women's suit by StrikeMaster® is so comfortable. It looks good and feminine without being too much. I have gotten so many compliments and good feedback about this suit," said Carsello. "And the best part: It floats!"

To keep the cold at bay, Carsello suggests using a mat to create a barrier



between you and the ice. And don't underestimate the power of a pair of warm gloves.

**Good Company Is Key** – There is nothing quite like the camaraderie of fishing with a group. Not only will you have the time of your life, but you'll improve your skills by learning from others and get to try out different gear.

"If you want to have a great time, don't go out by yourself," said Carsello. "The camaraderie of it all — talking and having a good time and making pizza rolls over a heater — is one of the best parts of ice fishing. My most favorite memories of the sport are the days I shared with my friends."

**Fry It Up** – When in Wisconsin... To Carsello, there is nothing better than a good ol' Wisconsin fish fry. To get to the eatin' faster, Carsello relies on the Rapala® Electric Fillet Knife. Maggie's favorite fish to eat are bluegill, perch, crappies, and, of course, walleye.

**Finally, Just Get Out There** – "Above all else, just get out there. There is no better way to learn," said Carsello. "What you need to succeed is so individual. Don't be afraid to try things and do what's best for you."



*"The women's suit by StrikeMaster® is so comfortable. It looks good and feminine without being too much. I have gotten so many compliments and good feedback about this suit," said Carsello. "And the best part: It floats!"*



*It's worth investing in good gear to be that much more successful.*



# New Science: Predators

**A**s SCI members participate in wolf and bear management discussions in our state and elsewhere, we are always on the lookout for news and research on the subject of predators.

This summary of a scientific article by Bernd Blossey of Cornell University and Darragh Hare of Oxford University was recently published in *Frontiers of Conservation Science* under the title "Myths, Wishful Thinking, and Accountability in Predator Conservation and Management in the United States."

Large predators are thought of as ecological keystone species, posterchildren of conservation campaigns, and sought-after targets of tourists and photographers. At the same time, predators kill livestock and huntable animals, and occasionally people, triggering fears and antipathy among those living alongside them.

Until the 1960's government-sponsored eradication and persecution campaigns in the United States prioritized interests of livestock producers and recreational hunters, leading to

eradication of wolves and bears over much of their range. Without large predators, subsidized by changes in agricultural practices and milder winters, ungulate populations erupted, triggering negative ecological impacts, economic damage, and human health crises (such as tick-borne diseases).

Shifting societal preferences have ushered in more predator-friendly, but controversial wildlife policies, from passively allowing range expansion to purposeful reintroductions (such as release of wolves in Yellowstone National Park). Attempts to restore wolves or mountain lions in the U.S. and protecting coyotes appear to enjoy strong public support, but many state wildlife agencies charged with managing wildlife, and recreational hunters continue to oppose such efforts, because they perceive predators as competitors for huntable animals.

There may be compelling reasons for restoring predators or allowing them to recolonize their former ranges. But if range expansion or intentional releases of large predators do not result in

ecosystem recovery, reduced deer populations, or Lyme disease reductions, conservationists who have put their reputation on the line and assured decision makers and the public of the important functional role of large predators may lose public standing and trust.

Exaggerated predictions by ranchers and recreational hunters of greatly reduced ungulate populations and rampant livestock killing by large carnivores may lead to poaching and illegal killing threatening recovery of predator populations.

How the return of large carnivores may affect vegetation and successional change, ungulate population size, other biota, livestock, and human attitudes in different landscapes has not been appropriately assessed.

Societal support and acceptance of living alongside predators as they expand their range and increase in abundance requires development and monitoring of social, ecological, and economic indicators to assess how return of large predators affects human and animal and plant livelihoods.



# Turkey Commander's New Book

Loren Voss is a cancer survivor who loves to turkey hunt. So much so, he's earned the nickname "Wisconsin Turkey Commander" after harvesting more than 150 turkeys. He's written a book about his life's journey titled, "Living on Death Row". Many people ask why I choose this title. In my career I worked in sales and service. I learned that you must get someone's attention for them to be interested in something. Death Row suggests the person that wrote the book did something bad. So, they will open the book and see what it was. When they open the book, they will see the picture of an Old Guy that didn't do something bad but had something bad happen to him.

The book takes you on his cancer journey of 30 plus years, (journey continues, have prostate cancer now) with his family. Loren has been married to his wife for over 50 years, his three children, children's spouses and his 8 grandchildren are part of that journey. You will read about trials and joys that he has had on his Cancer Journey and his passion for hunting. You will read

that the Faith in God that his mother and father instilled in him gave him the strength to be able to be writing this to you today.

What is remarkable is Loren wasn't what you would call a great student in school (you can ask his teachers; Loren was bad student) and he doesn't really enjoy reading. And with the help of Barb Kraft (Barb has written her own book about her adoption) his oncology nurse God had put in place this book was written. God still works miracles today.

I hear people saying, I could never do that.

Loren's focus on life. Yes, you can do it AND don't spend all day today on what MAY happen tomorrow. Then you will lose today.

You can get a copy of the book by contacting Loren Voss at 920-602-2898 or levoss@charter.net.

Loren add, "By the way. December 21st, 2022, I had what they refer to as the Widow-Maker heart attack. Thanks to the doctors and nurses God put in place and gave them the knowledge to



help me, I didn't die. Literally 73 minutes after heart attack I had catheterization done, stent installed, and balloon job completed on the other blockage I had. This happened on a Wednesday night. I got up and walked in the aisles of the ICU Thursday morning. I was out of the hospital Friday. I then went turkey hunting the next Thursday. I do have brains; I didn't use a shotgun to hunt that Thursday because of the kick. I used my crossbow. Didn't want the stent to fall out. LOL"

# Objection Stalls Deal, Showcases Transparency Issue

by Mark LaBarbera

SCI members value transparency in government. We want to know what our elected officials are doing, just like we want to know what's going on behind the scenes at the DNR and other state and federal agencies.

We entrust our tax dollars and our natural resources to them. As Ronald Reagan said, "Trust but verify!"

Recently the public spotlight has focused on the Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Finance Committee's (JFC) lack of transparency. The current law allows JFC to stop a project if even one legislator wants to put an indefinite hold on it. And the legislator does not have to be identified, let alone reveal the reason for the hold.

The JFC is chaired by Senator Howard Marklein and Representative Mark Born, both are outdoorsmen known to work well with SCI.

The most recent example of this issue now threatens Phase 2 of a world class

project and is drawing attention to this lack of transparency. Most SCI members and other voters are surprised when they learn about this practice that goes against what sportsmen value.

The Pelican River Forest Conservation Easement project is a once in a lifetime opportunity to protect 56,000+ acres of working forestland in Wisconsin. Current owner, The Conservation Fund, is partnering with the DNR to protect and keep open the largest remaining unprotected private working forest in Wisconsin.

The Pelican River Forest straddles the Continental Divide between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds and would be open to any of us. It's mostly in Oneida County and a little in Forest and Langlade, plus contains 68 miles of streams. It's in Wolf and Wisconsin River headwaters. Protection will preserve water quality. These rivers provide drinking water to more than 40,000 people. It will also permanently secure public access for hiking, hunting,

fishing, trapping, snowmobiling, ATV/UTV riding, and cross-country skiing, and guarantees permanent public access to the forested woodlands, plus vehicular access to over 40 miles of maintained interior roads. It includes a \$1M endowed fund for long-term road maintenance.

It would be funded by a \$600,000 gift from The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, a \$10.8 million federal Forest Legacy Program grant and about \$4 million from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. Since most funds are from outside sources, no wonder the DNR and sporting conservation groups embraced the project, and the Natural Resources Board Chaired by SCI Member Greg Kazmierski approved the deal in October.

SCI members, friends and others can let legislators know what you think about transparency and the JFC being able to conceal the elected official and reason for indefinitely holding a project.

# Mentored to Mentoring

by Monica Spaeni

## Part A - Being Mentored

From "food plot to food on the table" is why many hunters pass down their hunting heritage. Although this rings true for me in the areas of fishing and general outdoor activities, my learning of how to hunt starts with food on the table. My family didn't hunt, and we didn't own firearms. I had family friends and acquaintances that hunted. I tasted deer meet tacos early on in my youth. It was not until after my accident resulting in a spinal cord injury that I choose to actively participate in a shooting course with Becoming an Outdoors Women. About a year later, they wanted to put on a deer hunt for women with mobility and visual challenges. I was asked to participate. I had extreme trepidation. After discussing everything like clothing (what to wear to how to get it on), temperature issues, location, blinds, firearms, and safety, we had a few practice sessions with the

field deer and turkey hunting. My initial mentors were hunter safety instructors with BOW. My mentor, Steve Spaeni, whom I met after my first deer hunt, describes me as "sunshine and enthusiasm" as we are getting ready in the wee hours of the morning. He laughs when I am singing, "a hunting we will go" while we were driving to hunting locations or when I am trying the grunt tube, rattling bag, bleat call, and the variety of turkey calls. It takes time to understand how and when they work. I loved learning about the variety of decoys and scents, when and where food plots should be planted, and what to look for when scouting for the best places to put a blind. Being someone who has a physical disability and little access to the outdoors, we were always problem-solving about how to get to some of the best places. Unfortunately, until I could use an outdoor wheelchair (OWC also known as Action Trackchairs®), the best places were not viable options for my situation.



First Deer Hunt With BOW

My fascination with wildlife, habitat, conservation, and outdoor skills including hunting continues. I saw how Steve and others (Gary Turk, Ray Anderson, Irene Pawlisch, Diane Lueck, Peggy Farrell, and to name a few) took the time to work with me and knew when to bring other mentors for my many questions about how and why. Mentoring is a process, and it takes patience. This pheasant hunt was the

first hunt in which I harvested an animal, a pheasant hunt. In the field for the first time independently hunting without asking people to help! What an exciting adventure! After my first hunt, I braised the pheasants in burgundy, and yum! My youngest son said, "Way to bring the food to the table!" I spent years practicing with various firearms and being out in the fields and woods before I felt comfortable calling myself a hunter!

Because of our passion for hunting and sharing outdoor skills, both Steve and I went through the process of becoming both certified WI Dept. of Natural Resources Hunter Education Safety Instructors and Mentors. Throughout the years we have taught at hunter education safety classes in the Dane County area, helped staff stations at the annual Dane County Pheasants Forever Youth Activity Day held in the fall, and actively mentored in various other outdoor skills activities.

With additional Access Ability Wisconsin™ (AAW) volunteers, we have staffed many other partnering events including adaptive hunts and in prior years the big Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo by trailering multiple AAW Outdoor Wheelchairs (OWCs also known as Action



Smiles and Safety - Patience and Precision - So much to learn

firearms we were going to use. Finally, we went out.

On the morning of the hunt, I watched the morning wake up, and that is what hooked me. I was reminded of the serenity and peacefulness I used to feel when I was camping and fishing as a youth. I could not get enough of being out in the marsh pheasant hunting or on the edge of the woods and corn

Trackchairs®) to these events and outdoor activities. AAW facilitates accessing the outdoors by providing its adaptive equipment for participants with temporary and permanent mobility challenges to use at no cost; thus, promoting inclusion, equity, and healthy living. AAW is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization ([www.AccessAbilityWI.org](http://www.AccessAbilityWI.org)) that works to transform thinking around providing opportunities to access the outdoors for those living with mobility challenges who are underserved and represent the entire face of society. AAW stresses the importance of including everyone, regardless of ability, as leaders and participants at the forefront of planning instead of as an afterthought or not at all. AAW accomplishes this by facilitating access to the outdoors for people of all ages, cultures, ethnicities, and income levels.

### **Part B - Mentoring**

For me, the importance of mentoring is that it is my way to share those skills and qualities that I so appreciate and have learned from others. In the early summer of 2021, I met Sydney Gradel who was extremely shy at first. Once she got to know me, she was an excited nine-year-old girl who talked about her cats, horse, and family. She told me about her love of English horseback riding. She said she loves helping her

mother pick weeds. I asked her if she would like to come over with her family to learn about food plots and firearm safety. Over that summer we would practice shooting .22 rifles, shotguns, and 243 rifles at various targets – everything from soda cans and water bottles filled with water and food coloring to spinners and 3D targets. Anything to make learning fun! I was very careful at going her pace based on her interest and time with all her other hobbies and sports. This young girl plays basketball too! I spoke with Sydney's dad about the importance of using shotguns and rifles that are Sydney's size both from a recoil and a safety perspective. We worked with shooting systems, different loads, different types of padding in her clothing, and a padded recoil cover for the butt of the firearm as well as proper ear protection.

In September 2021, Steve and I invited Sydney and her family to come and help release some pheasants on our property. As Dane County Conservation League members, thankfully, we have access to pheasants through this club. What better way to get a family hooked – especially a young girl who is curious about wildlife? It was so much fun for all of us.

After that, we continued to prepare for the youth gun hunt in October.

Sydney and I were going out together. We saw some deer. Yet Sydney wasn't ready to pull the trigger. That was okay! She was enjoying her time asking all sorts of questions. She was learning how to use the bleat call and the rattling bag. We ended the hunt with no harvest but a young girl who wanted to go out again! This girl has stamina let me tell you. Not only did she get up super early to be in the blind, but she also stayed up all day to do the afternoon hunt. As it was getting about one hour from shooting time, she was falling asleep. Finally, I asked her if she was ready to go or wanted to stay. We left early and the point being it was her hunt and her hunt only. The most important thing was for it to be fun and safe. I wanted to instill a love for hunting so that she would want to continue. And she did!

This year we talked about hunting, and she wanted to hunt but wanted to use a crossbow. She really didn't like the sound of the rifle when fired and the recoil. That was fine. The goal of mentoring is to not pressure new hunters but to adapt and go at their own pace. I wanted to make sure I was mentoring in a way that Sydney would continue to learn and be passionate about hunting and the outdoors. We

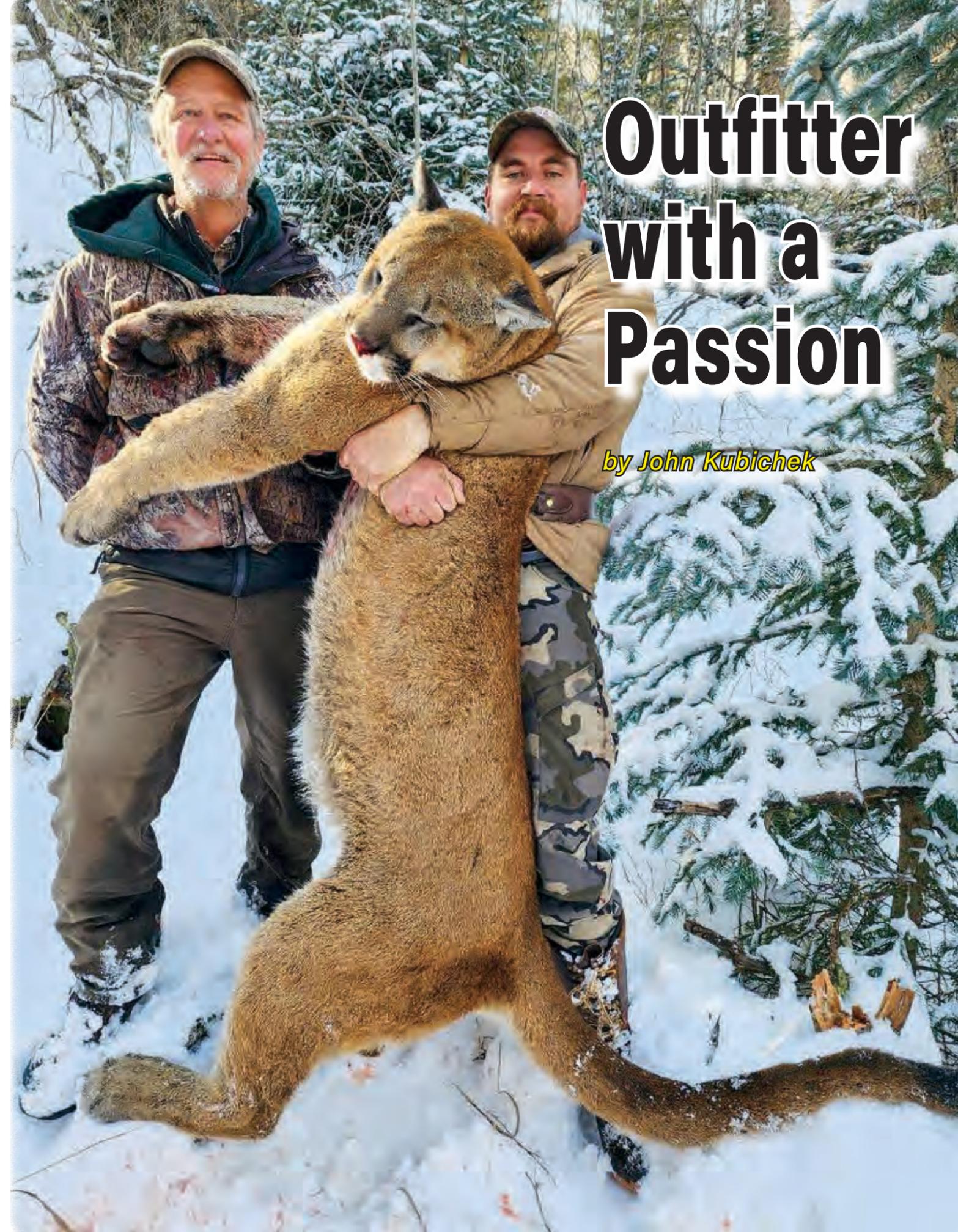
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# Outfitter with a Passion

*by John Kubichek*



Sydney Gradel and Monica Spaeni. Photos courtesy of Access Ability Wisconsin.





**F**ive years ago, I met Jacob Johnson. He's a New Mexico mountain lion and bear outfitter with a passion for hounds and hunting that is very rare these days. We hit it off and he helped a fund raiser I ran with a couple hunt donations. The hunters that he hosted collected some exceptional cats and bears. Being an outfitter myself, he would invite me to tag along on lion hunts when I traveled through the area. The first time I dropped in, we chased a tom over the Colorado State line where we could not follow. And we treed two female cats in New Mexico. The second time I was there, we chased several cats, and I was actually lowered 30 feet down into a cave with a flashlight in one hand and a 10mm pistol in the other to within 15 feet of a big tom the ranchers called The Llama Killer. I had no clear shot at the vitals before he descended further into the cave, but what a rush!

This year Jacob called me the day after Christmas, said he was between clients and that I should come up from Mesa as snow was forecast. Who would pass that up? I headed to Bloomfield, New Mexico on December 28, with the idea I'd take a big tom if the opportunity presented itself.

Jacob and his crew just enjoy cutting tracks, and four different trucks scoured the mesas and forests north, east, and just south of Bloomfield for two days. Nightly snow and high winds locked

most of the big cats down, but they still treed a female and trailed a medium-sized tom track until it crossed onto private land.

On the third morning, we trailered UTVs south to a heavily forested, 11,000 foot mountain. The usual array of deer and elk tracks were supplemented by wild horses - an unusual sight. A weathered monster tom track was spotted at 8:20 by one of the cutters. The cat was walking in circles and crisscrossing dense timber patches, obviously hunting for his dinner.

Although not as fresh as we would have liked, Jacob's experienced hounds took to the tracks and the chase began.

Snow drifts obscured the tracks a half dozen times over the next four miles. Almost 3 hours after the hounds were released, the tracks simply vanished under a series of drifts. I was becoming concerned as the tracks leading into the drifts appeared no fresher than when we first encountered them. It took 15 minutes to relocate the tracks and the hounds were redirected up a steep slope with innumerable deadfalls. We mounted the UTV's, backtracked and churned through the snow to the top of a ridge over a mile above where the relocated tracks led.



Immediately as we got to our vantage point, the collar monitor was checked. It showed "Treed!" What? How could that be? We had just left the dogs. The GPS showed the pack was only 500+ yards from where we had redirected them. The tone of the howls seemed to back up what the collars showed, and we descended toward the chorus.

There, sprawled across several branches, 25 feet up in a pine was an immense tom. He had been tending a mule deer carcass that he had killed the night before. The nervous cat climbed up and down several branches as the dogs were being tied up. As I maneuvered into position for a shot at his chest, he plummeted from the tree and bounded down the slope from where he had come. The hounds were unleashed again and treed him, 250 yards below us. Half sliding and half walking, we made it to the base of his tree. Again, the hounds were tied up and this time he presented a shot at his vitals. At the report, he recoiled, clung to the tree for 30 seconds, then did a free fall to the base of the tree, stone dead.

It's a pleasure hunting with such a dedicated, proficient outfitter and such a well-trained group of cutters and hounds. It's also nice to be hunting an area with healthy populations of lions AND an area with as many color phase bears as black ones.

Give Jacob at Double J Outfitters a call at (505) 360 1678 if you want an exhilarating experience like this.



met a half dozen times to practice on a target bag and 3D targets. We discussed where we wanted to sit and what we would do if Sydney shot, and the deer didn't go down and other scenarios. Finally, we agreed that we couldn't do the youth hunt as both of us had previous conflicts that couldn't be changed so we planned for the weekend following the youth hunt.

We had a "practice" hunt the first night out. We didn't want to arrive at 5:00 a.m. and make a

lot of noise to figure out distances (10, 20, 30 & 40 yds), etc. We saw turkeys. For the first time, Sydney got to hear the flock roost in the trees. She was a hoot with her eyes bugging out at the noise. We ended the night with the excitement of seeing 13 turkeys come within 20 yards. Sydney didn't have a turkey tag. We saw a doe and this year's fawn about 60 yds out about 2 hours from shooting time. There was no clear shot, and we enjoyed watching them eat leaves off the bushes and meander up the deer trail. About an hour from shooting time two different bucks came into view but neither ventured out in clear view within range. We kept watching them slowly traverse the middle to upper parts of the ravine behind lots of brush. We could see horns but not a clear enough view to know how many points. One had a significantly larger body. Shooting time ended and we said goodbye.

The next morning, we got to the blind and settled in. The doe and her fawn came out about the same spot. We watched them. We heard a turkey call - I looked in my bag and only had

my deer calls so I was attempting to yelp to see if she would come in. After an hour back and forth, we didn't hear any more return calls. Our morning was full of nuthatches, cardinals, and downy woodpeckers in sight but no harvested deer or turkeys. We called it and took a break for lunch to get back in the blind for the evening hunt.

It was 10 minutes until the end of shooting time. Sydney and I looked at each other and shrugged our shoulders - meaning, "oh, well! Perhaps tomorrow." I turned to look the other way to see if there was anything,



Sydney Gradel and Monica Spaeni. Photos courtesy of Access Ability Wisconsin.

Nothing, not even any turkeys. It was super windy, so I thought it probably isn't going to happen tonight. After looking to the left, I turned and looked back to the right at Sydney and there was a buck about 30 yards to her right, over her shoulder. I could see him through the window of another blind next to us. I whispered to ask her if she wanted to take him. At her angle, she

couldn't see him through her scope. She pointed to me to take him. I waited until he was in my scope. He was grazing on the clover about 25 yards away. I took the safety off, and he looked up and turned broadside to me. I took the shot. He went down less than 40 yards from the shot. After all these years of hunting, I finally got my first whitetail buck and with a crossbow. I was happy it was in a mentoring situation. Sydney was so excited. I made sure she was still okay and that I shot first even though she couldn't see him. She was excited to find him and be a part of the field dressing. I even got to drag my own deer up the hill to the field. Steve and Sydney's father, Joe, were very ecstatic about this.

After a busy night, we slept in the next morning. We met for the evening hunt. A flock of hens came in and I harvested a hen. Even though Sydney didn't shoot at an animal, she was happy and enjoyed our hunts. I am proud of how she has grown in her hunting knowledge and enthusiasm for wildlife.

In all my mentoring and hunting with Sydney, she never looked down on me or acted as if I needed help because I am a person using a wheelchair to get around. Thankfully, I could use an AAW outdoor wheelchair as my "hiking boots". Sydney thought that was cool! She epitomized the essence of seeing Monica, her mentor, the person!

Remember, despite having a mobility issue and any other challenge, you can still share your love of hunting, the hunting heritage, and the outdoors with the next generation. You can use your challenges to stop yourself or you can figure out how to overcome them and work around them. It is your choice!

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NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION®

# HOW WILDLIFE IS THRIVING BECAUSE OF GUNS & HUNTING

Since the late 1930s, hunters, target shooters and the firearms industry have been the nation's **LARGEST** contributors to **conservation**, paying for programs that benefit America's wildlife and all who love the outdoors.

## HOW IT WORKS



This System Has Provided **NEARLY \$9 Billion** For Conservation So Far

- Where the Money Goes**
  - Buy, develop, maintain and operate wildlife management areas
  - Research projects focused on wildlife conservation
  - Hunter safety and education programs
  - Construction and maintenance of public target shooting ranges

**Quick History**

- Early 1900s**  
As many wildlife species are dwindling in numbers or disappearing, firearms industry steps forward and asks Congress to redirect excise tax on sale of guns and ammo to help fund wildlife conservation.
- 1937**  
Congress passes and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act into law.
- 1938 to today:**  
Revenue from this act has purchased millions of acres of prime habitat that is maintained by state wildlife agencies. These lands, where game and non-game species flourish, are purchased with sportsmen's dollars but used by all Americans.

## THEN & NOW

White Tailed Deer Population		
1900	500,000	32,000,000 TODAY
Ducks / Waterfowl Population		
1901	FEW	44,000,000 TODAY
Rocky Mountain Elk		
1907	41,000	1,000,000 TODAY
Wild Turkeys		
1900	100,000	7,000,000 TODAY
Pronghorn Antelope		
50 YEARS AGO	12,000	1,100,000 TODAY

## OTHER WAYS SPORTSMEN CONTRIBUTE

- Excise taxes combined with revenue from hunting and fishing license sales fund the majority of state wildlife agency budgets.
- \$81 Million** CONTRIBUTED ANNUALLY  
Duck stamp proceeds are used by the government to buy or lease wetland habitat for ducks, geese and hundreds of non-game birds and animals.

## SOME HEROES OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CONSERVATION MODEL IN THE WORLD ARE:

