

HUNTERS

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF SCI CHAPTERS IN WISCONSIN AND ILLINOIS
JULY/AUGUST 2025

Randy Mayes' Gredos Ibex

- **Elisha's Wild Turkey**
- **Education: Chapters Treat 4,265 Students, Parents & Teachers to MOHEE**
- **Conservation: Tigers, Deer & Great Lakes Sport Fish**
- **Humanitarian: 7 Touch of the Wild Trailers Deliver Sensory Safari**
- **Chapter News & Events**
- **Legislative: Fed, State & DC Lobby Day**



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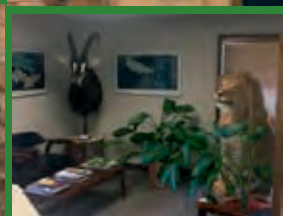
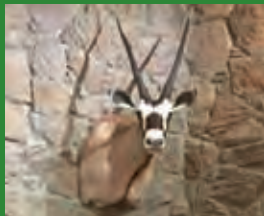
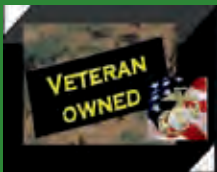


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Editor/Publishers: Mark & Coni LaBarbera

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 mlabarbera57@icloud.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
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HUNTERS

Official Magazine of SCI Chapters in Wisconsin and Illinois
July/August 2025

On the cover: No, the Governor did not declare this as "Randy Mayes Month," and yet Randy's Ibex and his grandson's turkey are both featured. See pages 24-28.

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SCI Region 16 Representative

Charmaine Wargolet

charmainew@ameritech.net

Badgerland Chapter Report

by Randy Mayes, President

Are you thinking there's really nothing much to do in the summer regarding SCI activities? I know everyone looks forward to the big annual chapter banquets and the national convention. Here's something for you!!

On August 2nd, Badgerland will have its annual "Shoot For Adventure" sporting clays shoot. It will be at our favorite venue, the Rio Conservation Club. In addition to an awesome sporting clays course, there will also be several shooting games. You will get a ticket for each clay you break which can be used to put in the special raffle bucket.

There will be a great lunch provided by the club as well as some "adult beverages" for after shooting. Dan Immel from PRP wines will also have some great samples!

This is a "fun" event. You don't have to be a seasoned clays pro to participate. Even if you've never tried sporting clays before, you will have a great time! The clays course provides so many different hunting-type situations. It's a great way to get in "shooting shape" for the upcoming bird hunting seasons.

We will also have LOTS of quality guns to give away including our annual "Big Five" raffle guns. Great guns, sporting clays, shooting games, wine tasting, other prizes and getting together with friends or meeting new ones... do you need another reason to



come?! I hope to see you at this fun event!

You can get all of the details for this event on our web site (scibadgerland.com) or the ad in this issue of Hunters Magazine.

I hope you have a hunting trip to look forward to this fall. I am hoping to have drawn my Wyoming mule deer tag by the time this issue comes out. I will of course be doing an archery hunt. My son lives in Wyoming, so the trip is doubly great as I get to spend some much needed time with him! Deer or no deer, being in one of the most beautiful parts of our country, hunting with son... it doesn't get much better.

SCI Region 16 Report

by Charmaine Wargolet, Regional Representative

On May 14-17, I attended the SCI National Board meeting and Lobby Day! I always look forward to visiting our nation's capital and have the chance to talk to our lawmakers about our sportsmen's issues, and it was made even more fun by having a friendly administration! We had four main issues we were presenting to them which I will explain here as briefly as I can. Monte Whiteaker, WI chapter President-Elect was also there, and we tag teamed visiting Congressional offices.

The first is our ongoing battle to get the Endangered Species Act overhauled to make certain all species are revisited on a reasonable basis and if the numbers support solid recovery of the species, they should be delisted or uplisted, as the case may be. Decisions should be based on sound science not emotion or politics.

Next, we asked for support for the Pet & Livestock Protection Act which would allow the Secretary of the Interior to reissue a 2020 rule issued by the USFW service removing the gray Wolf from the ESA endangered and threatened list. Gray wolves have met the recovery goals for over 20 years. Delisting wolves and returning their management to the state agencies is best for science based management. Tom Tiffany from Wisconsin is a co-sponsor of this bill and has been very supportive of all of the issues we brought to him.

We also talked about bill 556/S. 537 Protecting Hunter Access. It is a bill to stop federal lands being closed to hunting because of lead ammunition. The government is looking to phase out

lead ammunition and fishing tackle totally because of harm to the environment and waters but have no scientific evidence that point to this. This bill looks to put the decisions in the hands of the state agencies to determine what is best for their own lands and waters.

The last bill is HR 404/S. 364 the Hearing Protection Act of 2025 which basically says in short that we would like to see suppressors treated as a firearm, background check, etc. and subject to the 11% excise tax which becomes Pittman-Robertson funds. Currently there is a \$200 government fee when you purchase a suppressor and no one knows where that money goes, so this bill would make more sense to sportsmen. We did hear that the current \$200 fee may be eliminated but time will tell us where that ends up.

We ended up having five appointments and spoke with staffers at Senator Ron Johnson's office, Senator Tammy Baldwin, Congressman Glenn Grothman and Congressman Brian Stiel. Then last year and this year, Congressman Tom Tiffany met with us in person. He is actually quite gracious and his staffer who was in there too was very supportive as they both really listened to what we had to say. Senator Baldwin's staffer was clearly anti-hunting and was quite rude, but we will go back next year and try again. Congressman Grothman's staffer was great as she really listened to us closely and after we left, Monte received an email about five days later stating that the Congressman signed on to two more of the bills we talked about. He was already signed on to one of them, so his name appears on three of



the four. It shows that our efforts definitely work!

Another issue that we gave them all a heads up on as it is not formalized yet, but Alaska is gearing up for a fight over their public lands and navigable waters. Alaska became a state in 1959 and since then, they have been given just 6% control of their navigable waters, which is their rivers and streams! That means 94% remains under the control of the U.S. government and it has caused problems with access for locals and hunters. Many rivers are their highways! If they don't have access, it is really restrictive. Also, 70% of the public lands have been shut down to hunting for some flimsy excuse or another. Some outfitters have had to go out of business and if this keeps up, so will a lot more of them. Alaska's lands and waters have to be turned over to the state to manage. This is the only way to save hunting as we know it in Alaska.

Well, this has been a long one, but I feel these are important issues for us as hunters and we can feel hopeful with this administration (and hopefully an expanded one in two years) in office for the next 4 years. Thank you for reading this all the way through!

As always, shoot straight, be well, and God bless!





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Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Dean LePoidevin, President

As the month of June marks the midpoint of 2025, the end of the SCI WI chapter fiscal year and the completion of my first year as chapter president, I thought it appropriate to showcase just a few of the many fine trophies harvested by chapter members these past 12 months. Some of us were fortunate to have hunted outside the US, but many more have enjoyed the pursuit of game in North America, as evidenced here.

It has certainly been a productive year for the Wisconsin Chapter and the many dedicated people who serve as officers or on the board. Many thanks to all for your contributions these past 12 months. As hunters across the country know, SCI members are an experienced and knowledgeable group of sporting enthusiasts – just one of the many benefits of getting involved with a chapter. After all, where else can you get advice and remarkable stories about big game hunting and fishing?



Russ Van Lieshout and his Minnesota Turkey.



Betsy Martell and her impressive Namibian Sable.



Dean LePoidevin and his Argentinian Blackbuck.



Harry Mattox and his Nunavut Polar Bear.



Ben Laskowski with his beautiful Mahi Mahi from Mazatlán, Mexico.



Tim Novak and his Argentinian Stag.



WI SCI HUNTERS – July/August 2025



Monte Whiteaker and his Colorado trophy mountain lion.



Scott Phillips and his Nebraska Whitetail.

SE WI Bow Chapter Report

by Dan Trawicki, President

Summer has finally arrived, but bowhunting is still on our minds. Several of us just got back from our annual trip to Manitoba for Black bears. Wekusko Falls Lodge, never fails to produce great bears for its clients. Bryan, Ellisa, Naoto, and Brady work hard to make sure every client has a great experience. I've gone every year for the past 8 years, and am booked again for next year! With our annual banquet in the books on March 21, we look forward to several upcoming events. This year we partnered with the Wisconsin chapter for its annual golf outing and look forward to future events with them. We have two chapter events coming up in August.

The first is our annual wild game dinner scheduled for Thursday August 14 at the Golden Mast in Okauchee. This is a fun event that always sells out! This year we will also be having a fun 3D shoot at Buck Rub archery in Pewaukee. Scheduled for Saturday August 23rd, it will not only be a great way to get ready for bow season, but chapter members drink free beer after the shoot. More information on that will be coming up. At the bow chapter we are also in the process of updating our bylaws and looking at adding additional events for our members. Summer may seem like a slow time for bowhunting, but several of our members will be travelling to distant locations to continue the pursuit with stick and string! Our August events are



sure to spark that drive and desire that burns deep within us. I will have the pleasure of hosting past NE Chapter President Mark Jablonic, and Badgerland board member Steve Cripps at my farm in Buffalo county. Mark and Steve were the winning bidders.

Illinois Sensory Safari

The Illinois & Chicago Chapter's Sensory Safari Wildlife Trailer can come to your events. With the help of chapter members Ron and Colleen Riggsbee, and board members Steve Corcoran and Dale Rimkus, the trailer's make-over was completed in recent years in time to exhibit at the Illinois Deer Classic in Peoria, Illinois.

The interior of the trailer is still full of many beautiful wildlife mounts, with most species from North America and some from Africa. When the trailer arrives for an exhibit, the larger mounts are moved to the outside of the trailer for display, including full body mounts of a grizzly bear, black bear, whitetail deer, mountain lion, wild turkey and coyote. It also features a moose head

and caribou head that mount to the outside of the trailer. The Wildlife Trailer is a great way for the chapter to interact and educate the public about the important role of hunters and hunting in conservation, and to let them know about our chapter and SCI. To learn more, visit sci-illinois.com.



Plan Now for Big AI, Oct. 5

by Rick Rollo
I am trying to do a better job of reminding everyone of the date for the Big AI in an attempt to avoid conflicts. First, the Big AI Charity Hunt will be Sunday, October 5, 2025, at Wern Valley Sportsmen's Club. Thank you owner Steve Williams and family. I have talked to our friends at MacFarlane Pheasants, and

we have the birds reserved for that date. We would like to thank Mark LaBarbera for another fantastic article in SCI Hunters magazine. Many great photos pulled from the website, taken by Craig Brown at last year's hunt. As luck would have it (or maybe it is Big AI watching over us) it looks like the 5th is the Packer "By" week, so we don't have to worry about

missing any of the game that day! Last but not least, we would like to congratulate long time participant Lloyd Beres who will be graduating this spring from high school but will not be able to join us for the hunt because he will be in boot camp for the United States Marine Corps. Congratulations, Lloyd, we are all super proud of you.



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Legislative Update:

Leading The Way For Conservation

by Dan Trawicki, SCI Lobbyist

The potential Sandhill Crane hunting season as well as the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program continue to be the leading issues for this lobbying period. I've spent a fair amount of time at the Capital along with Joel Kleefisch and several others to lobby our legislators on the crane hunt. Beginning with a study group this past summer and what seems like endless communications and visits with elected officials and staff have got us in a position to hopefully have a hearing with the sporting heritage committee on the topic of Sandhill Cranes. We are extremely lucky to have Sen. Stafsholt and Rep. Pronschinske lead this very important and influential group. From my perspective, there is not a single hunting or outdoor bill that will pass without the support of this group. They both are avid hunters and always look for ways to support our outdoor heritage. If we are able to get this bill out of committee and to the Governor, will he sign it? The fact that his original budget had funds for a corn seed application (Avipel) that cranes don't like, illustrates the attention to this issue and the destruction and costs to our local farmers. Time will tell.

We have also spent a considerable amount of time encouraging legislators to once again support and fund the Knowles-Nelson stewardship program. This program was created in 1989 to preserve and protect lakes and streams as well as wildlife habitat. This program is funded thru tax dollars until June of 2026 and is being hotly debated in this current budget cycle. SCI has gone on record supporting this program and encouraging its continuation. Its success cannot be denied and has been a driving force in habitat restoration in virtually every part of the state. If you have ever been on public land, parks and wetland areas it most likely has been influenced by Knowles-Nelson. Contact your local officials in both the senate and assembly encouraging them to continue to fund this program.

Several other issues are on the table or currently being discussed to support



Joel Kleefisch, Dan Trawicki, and Sen. Rob Stafsholt

hunters. There is an issue of white deer in several counties that are actually beginning to get out of control. I've talked with hunters that actually will on occasion see more white deer than brown deer! There was a question at the spring hearing about having a hunting season in several central Wisconsin counties. The issue of having a limited hunting season passed overwhelmingly. The question is now will the DNR act on it by administrative rule. Another issue that passed was the formation of a k-9 unit for our state wardens. There certainly has been a need demonstrated. SCI supports both of the initiatives and we are in the process of working with the legislators to help support both issues.

This past banquet season I have had a chance to meet many of you and discuss conservation issues. Unfortunately, this year and again next year the Wisconsin chapter and Badgerland chapter were on the same weekend. I was however able to attend the most recent Badgerland monthly meeting and actually won a gun...

go figure! The Northeast chapters fundraiser in Green Bay is always a huge success and I had a great time.

Our national convention is once again in Nashville; you don't want to miss it. The venue and experience are the best. From my perspective and many of the outfitters I spoke to, it is much better than the previous locations of Vegas or Reno.



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SCI Tiger News

The BBC is reporting that Nepal's tiger population is a global conservation success, but the country's Prime Minister thinks otherwise, announcing that Nepal can't support the animals that reportedly mauled 55 people from 2019 to 2023. Environmental correspondent Navin Singh Khadka said conservationists disagree, saying instead that natural

areas with higher tiger density should be expanded and protected to decrease conflicts with humans. They suggest that looking at the fatalities as clues that their wildlife conservation model must change will champion both animal and societal safety.

A century ago, some 100,000 tigers roamed Asia - but deforestation and rampant poaching pushed them to the

brink of extinction. There are now only about 5,600 wild tigers remaining across 13 countries, including Nepal, China, India, Thailand, Indonesia and Russia.

All of these nations had committed to doubling their tiger numbers by 2022, but Nepal was the first to surpass the target - due in part to a zero-poaching initiative and a doubling of the country's forest cover between 1992 and 2016.

Connecting 16 protected zones in southern Nepal with areas across the border in northern India created forest corridors which helped too.

The growing number of tiger attacks has now tarnished that achievement.

Oli believes Nepal's tiger population is growing at the cost of human lives. Viable solutions, however, are not easy to come by.

The parks and wildlife department has acknowledged the challenge of managing tigers in Nepal, where those that kill humans are tracked down and taken into captivity.

"Zoos and rescue centers are already overwhelmed with problematic tigers," the department said. "A comprehensive protocol is urgently needed to cope with the rescue, handling, and rehabilitation of problem animals."

Some SCI members in Wisconsin, Illinois, and elsewhere might be able to offer an alternative way of getting rid of problem tigers with a more permanent solution.



Photo by PhotocechCZ

Past President's Main Store Welcomes Fellow SCI Members

Nestled in the heart of downtown Webb Lake, Wisconsin, you'll find the Main Store, a charming local gem owned by SCI member Burl Johnson, past president of the SCI Lake Superior Chapter. Located at 30328 County Rd H, this delightful establishment not only serves as a hub for essential goods but also embodies the spirit of the community. With a warm and inviting atmosphere, the Main Store is more than just a shopping destination; it's a place where friendly faces greet you. Whether you're in need of groceries, outdoor supplies, or a friendly chat, the store's dedicated team can be reached at 715-468-6886. Visit main-store.com for complete info about boat rentals, hours, and more.



Elk on the Ropes

by Jennifer McRae,
CBS News Colorado

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Officer Lucas Martin got a call after ice climbers in Lake City noticed a bull elk entangled in mountaineering rope near an ice wall. Martin was joined by other CPW officers to help with the rescue.

The elk was darted so officers could safely approach the stressed animal.

The team said they started by cutting away the rope from the elk's antlers. But then they needed a way to get the elk down from the climbing wall. The climbers who initially contacted CPW stayed on the scene to help the officers rig up the elk to belay him down to the base of the wall.

Once the elk was off the ledge and on the ground, the team reversed the tranquilizer. After about 12 minutes, the elk was running off down the canyon.



Touch of the Wild Delivers Sensory Safari

Ruth Ann Lee is a proven master of logistics and organization.

It's no wonder that the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame relies on her skills throughout the year

Wild mobile education units were invited. While some events will donate, OHEC relies mainly on sponsorships to make sure the sensory safari

trailers go to every school and community event possible. The units require constant maintenance, including fixing exhibits, replacing worn tires, and adding sponsor logos that are seen by millions on the highways and backroads of Wisconsin as trailers move from one event to the other. Winter events can be outside, or the Touch of the Wild trailers can move



here scheduling and logistical magic. More details and online scheduling requests can be found at www.OHECyes.org.

ToW 7, the latest addition to the fleet, has a forest wildlife theme. It is staged in Eagle River at Trees For Tomorrow, where educators take it to schools as well as on campus when TFT hosts summer camp students.

ToW 6 is Badgerland's big Sensory Safari trailer staged near Poynette at Scott McConnell's home. He, Dale Hudak, Paul Baker, Steve Cripps and other chapter members often accompany it to events and new venues.

ToW 5 is another big sensory trailer with wildlife of the world. It's staged in Stevens Point at the Bill Cook Chapter of Izaak Walton League of America, an OHEC sponsor like SCI is.



and especially when it comes to coordinating production of its induction ceremonies as well as videos for each of its inductees.

That is on top of her main job as Executive Director of the Outdoor Heritage Education Center, which includes among many other things organizing and scheduling the two big Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expos and seven Touch of the Wild sensory safari trailers.

More than 255,000 people were treated to the sensory safari last year at schools, community events, sports shows, marina days & lake-front festivals, plus county fairs, dairy breakfasts, youth learn to hunt & fish events, and anywhere Touch of the

indoors, like during the sports show season. Units are staged in various parts of the state to make it easy

for anyone to access them, but any Touch of the Wild can go anywhere in the state to meet the demand.

Here's a list of what OHEC, SCI and others make available for Ruth Ann as she works





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image of the Great Lakes and a family fishing on Lake Michigan. ToW 3 staging by Bob Wincek and others has moved from frequenting Gundy's home to easy I-94 access at Buck Rub

Archery thanks to SCI member Greg Kazmierski.

ToW 2 with its fish and wildlife exhibits also has Great Lakes features and Fishes of Wisconsin. It is staged in the Green Bay area thanks to IWLA Brown County Chapter volunteers Lee DeBruin, Pete Dannen, Steve & Jodi Labs, and others who also bring it to the Northeast Wisconsin chapter's big expo.

ToW 1 features fish and wildlife from Wisconsin and North America but also has SCI member Ken White's "Killer of Lohari," a full-mount tiger that everyone talks about as they exit the unit. LaBarbera, Kaz, and Quamme help stage it, but like most Touch of the Wild Sensory Safari trailers, volunteers will move it directly from one event to the next.

All of the units continue to attract interest and invitations far more than a



single location fish and wildlife museum would. OHEC and partners bring the education units to where the people are, and that makes all the difference.

If you would like to host, volunteer to work a trailer, or simply donate to keep them on the road, please see www.OHECyes.org or email RuthAnn@OHECyes.org.



Lee DeBruin is a key volunteer for Touch of the Wild reaching thousands of youth and adults.



From left (Standing) LTH Co-Coordinator Ted Fischer, Zack Keefe, Joe Frank, Scott Clark, Doug Arendt (Standing on Table), Scott Bessette, Nolan Draeger, Keith Lange, Hudson Piorkowski, Devon Linzenmeyer, James Blackburn, Every Nusslock, Charlie Vallee, Drew Nelson, Renee Buchholz, Pat Hoffmann, David Rusch, Jim Vitella, Bill Buchholtz, Josh Terry, Leo Terry, Dominic Burescia, (Standing) Phillip Pujanauski, Kevin, Grant, and Chase Lauters, Art Gnodtke. From Left, sitting on table mentors, Greg Grimm, Paul Frank, Brian Hoffman, Jeff Miller, Matthew Esselmann, Dave Grisar, Harper Dickmann, Ed Alexander with Eli Alexander, Gregory Koc, Mike Eernisse, and Colten Schwittay, (Kneeling) Megan Davis, Nolan Karrels, Bryan Medinger, Ava Voller, Kennedy Alexander. Hunters with Harvested bird on Saturday morning, Ashiya Clark, Carter Kuhns, Jack Vallee, Samuel Jakubowski, Micah Schultz, Beau Dickmann, Kolby Rusch, Aniela Van Hecke, and Nolan Murray.

Lives That Touch Others Go On Forever

North Shore Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation held its 21st Learn to Hunt on March 29-30 and wants to thank SCI and others. About 21 years ago, Michael Keefe had an idea to get people involved in hunting and show them the ethical, safe way of doing it by having a trained mentor take a person on their first wild turkey hunt. For 21 years mentors have worked with landowners and hunters for an experience that will never be forgotten.

Mike passed away from cancer 10 years ago, but his legacy lives strong! There are two benches outside Herbert Peters Youth Camp, one for the first president of North Shore, Mr. Lynn Robertson, the other is Mike's. Mike's wife, Debra Keefe is the co-coordinator for the North Shore LTH to this day. She does a lot for the event. Debbie wanted this on his bench: "A life that touches others goes on forever." So many new hunters have had the great experience of the mentored hunt!

This year is also very special, because Co-Coordinator Debra Keefe (Mike's wife), was named Sportsman of the Year

by the Chapter. This prestigious award is given to individuals or organizations that give back in many ways to help wildlife thrive and preserve our hunting heritage.



Successful hunters on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning from left are Joe Frank, Grant Lauters, Drew Nelson, Charlie Vallee, Rob Wilde, Nolan Karrels, Ted Fischer, Kennedy Alexander, Mike Eernisse, John Roden, and Paige Borchardt.

For the Learn to Hunt, 38 participants and mentors needed to complete a four-hour class at Ozaukee Fish and Game on turkey hunting, hunter safety and live fire to meet the requirements from the DNR.

Ted Fischer, hunt co-coordinator, said he cannot thank the many landowners enough. This wouldn't be possible without their gracious help. It's more than just taking a person hunting for the

first time; these mentors teach life lessons. How to handle a gun safely, respect a firearm, hunt safely, respect the landowner and other sportsmen, how to properly scout and set up on a hunt, how to make an ethical and safe harvest, how to respect the game we are hunting. The NWTF is greatly involved in making better habitat, for not just wild turkey, but for all God's wild creatures.

Ted said "The North Shore LTH committee and our mentors are the best out there, they take hunting a person they have never met, and the results last a lifetime! Not only the hunters, but also the person that goes out on the hunt to observe. This is a group of people I am so

glad I have had the privilege to know and to work with on this journey called life. Also, a great shout out for SCI and DNR, Emily and Tony. They are great to work with and give us tools to be able to do the program."

SCI, CSF & Sportsmen Oppose Public Land Sales



by Chris Dorsey in Forbes

The so-called Big Beautiful Bill suddenly turned ugly for America's 60 million hunters and anglers after Utah Senator Mike Lee proposed selling up to three million acres of federal land in the West. Sportsmen and women are traditionally among the most reliable Republican voters, but the nation's hunters and anglers are drawing a line in the public sand with the proposed disposal of federal ground through the reconciliation process.

"I fear some members of Congress are taking the continued support of sportsmen for granted," says Jeff Crane, President and CEO of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF). "For sportsmen, selling millions of acres of our federal lands in a fast-tracked budget reconciliation effort is unacceptable."

CSF is a bi-partisan Washington, D.C.-based organization that advocates for sportsmen's interests on Capitol Hill and in statehouses across the country with the support of the largest caucus of the U.S. Congress—some 250 members in all. In addition, CSF has sporting caucuses in all 50 states with more than 2,500 members of state legislators and 25 governors. When it comes to advising members of Congress on sporting, conservation and public lands issues, few groups carry more weight on the Hill.

"For many hunters and anglers," says Crane, "America's federal lands are the bedrock of our access to our outdoor

sporting traditions. For tens of millions of sportsmen and women, it is this network of federal public lands where deep connections to fish, wildlife and the outdoors are born and where families forge lifetime memories." It's also where conservation ethics are born, the kind Theodore Roosevelt memorialized in his many speeches and writings as he inspired the framework for America's environmental ethos. "Land is the only thing in the world that amounts to anything," he wrote. "For it's the only thing in this world that lasts. It's the only thing worth working for, worth fighting for..."

Sportsmen have long embraced Roosevelt's words, for when a similar measure to sell federal lands was raised in the house version of the bill, it quickly created a storm of opposition among sportsmen's groups and was ultimately pulled thanks, in part, to CSF's opposition. That the measure was even proposed, however, has given many sportsmen pause regarding their historic support of Republicans.

To many of the nation's outdoorsmen and women, disposing of federal land is seen as something akin to pawning a family heirloom to pay a bank overdraft. If you're perceived—rightly or wrongly—as someone standing between sportsmen and the ground where some of their greatest memories have been made, you can count on living in infamy in that community. It's the kind of

perceived betrayal that causes some voters to switch party affiliations. You need not be a political wonk to understand that when a constituency feels their voice is ignored or marginalized by those they've supported, they are ripe to be assimilated by the opposition. Democrats who watched legions of union voters embrace Trump with his message of bringing jobs back to America witnessed this phenomenon firsthand. He attracted dramatically higher union support than previous Republican presidential candidates. Many pollsters credit Trump's message to labor as key to his victory in swing states like Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin—coincidentally, all states with high numbers of hunters and anglers.

"In the West, more than 70 percent of sportsmen say they rely on federal lands to participate in our cherished pastimes," says Crane, "and the concept of losing access to this ground is considered un-American."

For Senator Lee who heads up the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, however, these federal lands represent a partial solution to both the budget deficit and the affordable housing crisis. In a taped statement, Lee noted that some 70 percent of his home state of Utah is owned by the federal government, "That's not serving the Americans who actually live here," he said.

Instead, he says, he wants to expand housing, support local development and

get Washington out of the way of communities looking to grow while at the same time helping reduce budget deficits.

Monitor sportsmen's chat rooms, podcasts, influencers and industry media that have become a force in recent years—counting avid hunter Joe Rogan's media empire among them—and few are buying what the Republican senators are selling. Not surprisingly, sportsmen are skeptical that a Congress that hasn't balanced a budget in a quarter century is going to suddenly sell land assets to solve the deficit problem.

Furthermore, Lee's home state of Utah has among the highest per capita numbers of sportsmen. In 2024, nearly 800,000 residents and non-residents purchased hunting and fishing licenses with a total population of 3.5 million people. Given the significant pushback by hunters and anglers to the initial land sale effort in the House, other Republicans—like Montana Senator Steve Daines—are opposing Lee's new land sale effort in the Senate.

While Utah is blessed with stunning landscapes and tremendous natural resources (home to five national parks), understanding how the sale of millions of acres of federal lands might be part of a solution to the affordable housing crisis in that state is seen as a head-scratcher by many.



Jeff Crane serves as President & CEO of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation.

Salt Lake City, for instance, only encompasses 70,000 acres, and the state is feverishly working to solve one of the West's most challenging environmental crises as Great Salt Lake is drying up. A significant expansion of homes in the area will only exacerbate the water shortage that is plaguing the region.

Ultimately for Crane and CSF, however, there may be a rationale for the sale or swap of some federal lands, but the budget reconciliation process is not where any transaction should be sanctioned.

Instead, CSF cautioned, any disposal or sale of federal lands should follow the long-established protocols of both the Federal Land Policy and Management

Act (FLPMA) and the Federal Lands Transaction Facilitation Act. These measures are in place to, among other things, allow for public input and transparency.

In a statement released Friday, CSF shared their reasons for their opposition to the Senate language, writing, in part, "Unfortunately, the Senate public lands language guts the public's voice in determining how their lands are managed, or which lands are sold. An arbitrary, undefined, percentage-based target is the opposite of a thoughtful and transparent process. As written, the Senate language omits critical detail to determine what specific lands would actually be disposed of, regardless of whether they are underutilized or highly valuable, and instead essentially gives carte blanche authority to determine which lands would be sold."

While 3 million acres is a pittance when compared to the national total of 245 million acres of Bureau of Land Management land and nearly 200 million acres of national forest property, sportsmen worry that such a sale in the reconciliation process, which only requires a simple majority—rather than a 60 percent majority under FLPMA—represents a dangerous precedent. Once the land is sold in this manner, what's to stop this from happening to ever more federal ground most ask? When the land is transferred, there's realistically no mechanism to ever get it back.

For Republicans, the larger political question is what becomes of their relationship with their core voting block of 60 million sportsmen? Can they afford to alienate them as the midterm election cycle gets underway—especially in key states where a public land sale will be anathema to the camo coalition?

For now, American sportsmen have turned their attention to Senate Majority Leader John Thune who hunters know as one of their own and who represents their best hope of stripping the land sale provision from the bill.

Even if the sale language is struck, however, after weeks of a national media barrage against the measure and those who proposed it, Republicans must wonder what political price they will pay with heretofore loyal supporters. The question will be: Was it worth it?

Tom Brokaw, center, hunted South Dakota with CSF's Jeff Crane.



Tristan Bagley, 13, Appointed to FPGF Board, Youngest State Conservation Group Board Member

POYNETTE, WI—Thirteen-year-old Tristan Bagley of Packwaukee has been traveling with his grandpa Keith Bagley to spend volunteer hours sexing chicks and fulfilling other hands-on duties.

Harold Drake of Juneau said, “Tristan’s hard work separating day-old hens from roosters helps restore my faith in the next generation.” Drake and both Bagleys together have donated hundreds of volunteer hours in recent years to help Manager Kelly Maguire at the State Game Farm in Poynette produce and release about 75,000 pheasants each year on 85-90 public hunting grounds.

Drake is long-time Secretary of the Friends of Poynette Game Farm (FPGF), and Keith Bagley is Vice President. Fellow Board members, including SCI members Tim Kill and Mark LaBarbera, noticed that Tristan was helping a lot without pay at the new hatchery as well as at FPGF booths at sports shows and youth events, plus attending FPGF Board meetings. So, at its March 17, 2025, meeting, FPGF Board President Kevyn Quamme, a longtime SCI member and supporter, made history by appointing Tristan to fill a director’s vacancy, making him what they believe is the youngest conservation group board member in Wisconsin history. At its elections in May, young Bagley is expected to be nominated and elected to fill a full three-year-term on the Friends Board.



Tristan and Drake sort day old chicks by gender.

Quamme said, “Tristan is a great example of a hard-working contributor who may not talk a lot but always steps up and pitches in. I know quite a few sportsmen’s clubs and conservation groups that would welcome more members of any age like that.”

Young Bagley simply said, “I’m glad to help. It’s fun. I’m learning a lot and meeting a lot of interesting people.”

Quamme said that Tristan may also help FPGF recruit, retain, and reactivate (R3) hunters. The group’s work includes both hosting Learn to Hunt events for youth and adults but also helping the State Game Farm provide free pheasants for dozens of other R3 events conducted by local groups all across Wisconsin.

“Whether you’re a seasoned professional or a newcomer with fresh perspectives, your unique insights and

dedication are valuable assets to our cause,” said Quamme. “You decide if you’d like to be a mentor, dog handler, sports show booth worker, or member of the Board, and you’ll have the opportunity to:

Influence Strategy: Contribute your expertise to shape the future direction of our organization and have meaningful impact as we pass along our hunting heritage;

Foster Collaboration: Have fun working with like-minded shooting sports enthusiasts, sharing your thoughts and ideas;

Amplify Impact: Make a tangible difference by being part of initiatives that help other individuals and organizations also make a lasting impact;

Help Yourself: Enhance your leadership skills, expand your network of contacts, and gain valuable experience that will enrich your life.”

FPGF Treasurer Linda Woldt added, “No matter what your skills are, there’s a place for you with the Friends of Poynette Game Farm, a 501(c)3 charitable nonprofit organization. Please act today to be part of something greater than yourself. Join now to make a difference and leave a lasting legacy.”

Visit www.friendspgf.com or follow us on Facebook.

At a time of tight budgets, many volunteers and Friends groups are making a positive difference at state properties all across Wisconsin.

A Rich Man’s Trophy

by Jay Trudell

I didn’t intend to shoot a Roan, but I did, by accident.

We booked a hunt with Jannie Otto Safaris at the SCI Badgerland Chapter Banquet. What intrigued us about the package was that it could be used on a bow only venue and it included a separate trip to see Victoria Falls. We couldn’t pass this opportunity to hunt and see one of the Wonders of the World!

Once we booked the hunt, Jannie was wonderful about helping us get set up with dates and arrangements. We communicated several times until it was finally time to head to South Africa. He made sure nothing was overlooked.

We arrived early at the airport, got checked in, and everything got tough after that with our flight. We were

leaving in late July 2024 during the beginning of huge flight delays and cancellations. Long story short, we got delayed a full day and they didn’t ship our luggage along with us; that ended up in Atlanta. This is where we really learned how good an outfitter Jannie Otto is! He made sure our hotel in Johannesburg moved our stay and the same with our connecting flight to Kimberly.

When we finally arrived in Kimberly, our guide was waiting for us. Because we had no luggage, he took us shopping immediately. We bought clothes, hunting gear, and personal items. When I got to camp, Jannie had a borrowed bow for me to use. He also contacted his doctor and got us in to see him the next morning so we could get some replacement meds that were in our lost

luggage. Try pulling that off here in the States!

After all that, we were ready to hunt, finally. We hunted the first day with the borrowed bow, but we were unsuccessful. The next morning, we found out our luggage had finally arrived at the airport, so we went back to town to recover our luggage and my bow.

That afternoon, I harvested an awesome Cape Eland. The next morning, I was able to get a beautiful Common Springbok. We were on a roll late in the hunt. I came close in the afternoon to getting a crack at a big Copper Springbok, but he stayed just out of range.

The next day was our last hunting day. I had really wanted a Gemsbok, so we decided to focus on an area where were seen the previous day.



SCI member and FPGF President Kevyn Quamme welcomed Tristan Bagley. From left, Directors Jeff Weishoff and Eric Slifer, VP Keith Bagley, Game Farm Manager Kelly Maguire, and Secretary Harold Drake.

The morning started out slow, only a few animals, including a big Roan antelope. We had kidded about Roans the evening before as being a rich man's trophy. They aren't inexpensive; let's just say that they were a lot more than I cared to spend. As the morning got closer to mid-morning, we saw some Gemsbok moving toward us. I got excited as a couple were nice ones! As things usually go, the big boys stayed out of range while the smaller ones ate and drank. Soon after, they all moved off and I was a bit dejected.

Then we saw an awesome Golden Gemsbok coming in!

Suddenly, we had animals all over the place. I concentrated on that golden trophy. He soon committed to coming in and stood perfectly broadside. I came to full draw and really took good aim and settled the pin. I let the arrow fly, and at that instant, all hell broke loose. As I was aiming, I didn't see that a big Roan was just forward and much closer than the Golden Gemsbok. Something startled the big Roan just as I released my arrow. The Roan jumped backward into my line of fire and took my arrow in the back leg! The hit wasn't a fatal hit, but once you wound them, they're yours. I couldn't believe my eyes! I was stunned, shocked, sick...so many emotions and a few bad words! I looked at Cheri and she was shocked too.



Once I settled down, my guide told me that the Roan was still in sight. This suddenly became a hunt I hadn't wanted. We talked about stalking him with a rifle; if you're a bow hunter, that's not something you want to hear. Luckily, the time of day was on our side. The big Roan had made his way into a very open and visible spot, so we decided to wait and watch him for a while. He was with another smaller Roan, and after a while, that smaller one laid down. The big guy

seemed content to stay put and lick his wound. We considered a stalk, but it was just too open.

Then suddenly, the smaller Roan jumped up and took off. Out of nowhere, a group of the three other Roan bulls came charging in at the big wounded one! He stood his ground, and they hammered him. My guide told me they would try to kill him because he was the dominant bull. They saw the opportunity and could smell blood. They fought and were beating on him good, dust flying chaos. The next thing we knew, they chased him right into our waterhole. I drew my bow as he turned to defend himself and he gave me a 20-yard quartering away shot. I smoked him! He piled up about 40 yards out! My heart was pounding, I couldn't believe that the good Lord arranged a second chance for me! Wow! Some would say they'd rather be lucky than good. Well, I'd rather be blessed, and I sure was! Thank you, Lord!

All in all, we had everything on this trip. From wondering if we'd even get there with the flight delays, to witnessing a blessing like the Roan, to seeing one of God's wonders in Victoria Falls. I can't say enough about Jannie Otto Safaris. All three of my trophies easily made the SCI Record Book! Jannie's company and staff are truly first class all the way! We had one of, if not our best, trip ever! I even have a Roan hanging proudly on my wall. You know, a rich guy's trophy!



Conservation Congress Honors Gundy

by Mark LaBarbera
The Wisconsin Conservation Congress honored longtime SCI supporter and friend Scott “Gundy” Gunderson with the prestigious WCC David A. Ladd Delegate of the Year Award.

This top honor is presented to a delegate who embodies the ideals of the Congress and works to improve the organization, is dedicated to the conservation of our natural resources and continuing our outdoor heritage, and has selflessly served the people of Wisconsin through countless hours of dedicated service.

That perfectly describes Gundy, who has been extremely helpful as a key volunteer for the Friends of WCC’s work, including SCI’s and OHEC’s programs with DNR, WCC and more than 40 conservation partners in Wisconsin. His extraordinary efforts contribute greatly to conservation of natural resources and passing along our outdoor heritage to the next generation. He helped all of us who care about the future with his volunteer leadership on so many fronts, including building the free Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo into the largest free outdoor skills field trip in the United States. And he helped as MOHEE added a second venue, reaching so many more students, families and teachers in the Milwaukee area in addition to thousands attending the original MOHEE at MacKenzie Center, Poynette.

Gundy’s generous sharing of his time and talent for the WCC and citizens of Wisconsin reached new heights this past year as he stepped up to help Chairman Rob Bohmann at every turn, including filling in when a vacancy was created by resignation of the WCC Shooting Range Committee Chair, and when the Friends of WCC needed volunteer time before and during convention.

Gundy also gives freely of his time and expertise to other delegates and



Recently re-elected WCC Chair Rob Bohmann presented Scott Gunderson with the Delegate of the Year Award at the Congress’ annual meeting in Oshkosh, May 9.

conservation partners who seek his support and guidance. This is in addition to what he does for civic groups and his faith community. In addition to those extraordinary contributions in 2024 that embodied the ideals of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, his selfless service can also be seen in his long-standing dedication to conservation, the shooting sports, and our outdoor heritage, including having his student clay target team members work at SCI chapter events.

Here are 20 other examples as just some of Gundy’s history and contributions:

1. Elected to WCC in 2015. Chair Shooting Sports Advisory Committee. Past Chair Legislative Committee.
2. Attended Convention as a Legislator and Assistant Deputy Secretary of the DNR.
3. Served in the State Assembly for 16 years, 1995-2010.
4. Assistant Deputy Secretary WDNR 2011-2015
5. Ducks Unlimited volunteer over 35 years.
6. Chairman DU South Suburban Chapter 20 years.
7. Life Member Ducks Unlimited

8. Wings Over Wisconsin volunteer over 35 years.
 9. President Wings Over Wisconsin-Fox River Chapter 15 years.
 10. Founder and President of the Waterford Wolverine Shooting Team 2011-present. First year, he helped recruit and teach 26 athletes, growing annually to 67 this year.
 11. SCTP Varsity State Trap Champions 2013, 2016, 2019 and 2022.
 12. SCTP National High School Trap Champions 2022, inspiring other schools to launch teams.
 13. One of the original members of the Pishtaka Wildlife Society, 1995-present and currently serves as Chairman of the Board.
 14. He continues to coordinate an annual Disabled Deer Hunt since 2013.
 15. Also, has been coordinating an annual Turkey Learn to Hunt since 2016.
 16. Somehow, he also finds time every year since 2015 to teach Hunter Safety.
 17. He’s the Burlington Conservation Club Past President, current Vice President and Banquet Chairman.
 18. He helps move and host some of the 7 OHEC Touch of the Wild trailers.
 19. He arranges for guns and other prizes, then sells tickets and coordinates Friends of WCC raffles and silent auction at convention.
 20. And he helped Kyle Zenz and the Youth Conservation Congress in a number of ways, including serving as volunteer auctioneer at last year’s fundraiser.
- When someone does so much every year, some people risk taking him for granted or having him burn out, but many of us appreciated how he did even more in 2024, and that motivated me to nominate Scott “Gundy” Gunderson as WCC’s David A. Ladd Delegate of the Year.

Pro-Hunting Ad Passes \$5 Million in Earned Media and 225 Million Impressions

The Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF) and Midwest partner Outdoor Heritage Education Center (OHEC) are celebrating a significant milestone with the “Keepers of the Wild” public service announcement (PSA). Since its launch in September 2024, the PSA has generated more than \$5 million in donated media value and delivered more than 225 million impressions across the general population, including OHEC’s airing on SCI Member Dan Small’s “Deer Hunt Wisconsin” annual TV special.

As the general population’s acceptance of activities such as hunting and target shooting continues to decline, it is imperative for those involved in the outdoor space to expand their communication efforts.

Gun owners, hunters, target shooters and the firearms industry contribute significantly to the betterment of

society. From addressing food insecurity by donating millions of meals worth of game meat to being primary funders of wildlife conservation, their impact is substantial and often never heard by the general population.

The “Keepers of the Wild” campaign is the largest national PSA initiative to improve cultural acceptance of gun ownership, hunting and target shooting among the general population, according to SCI Life Member and OHEC Founder & Chief Volunteer Mark LaBarbera. OSCF’s 60-second PSA features double-exposure visuals depicting landscapes across the country and narration that educates viewers on how hunters, target shooters and the firearms industry have been primary funders of wildlife conservation for over 80 years.

“I’ve been working in the outdoor space since 1970 and am a big proponent of communicating outside the

choir. You can imagine my excitement when, one evening while watching the local primetime news, the Keepers of the Wild commercial came on,” said Al Stewart, director of Nimrod Education Center at Hillsdale College (Hillsdale, MI). “Kudos to Outdoor Stewards for this tremendous effort! I implore others to follow their lead and look for ways to promote such positive messages to a larger audience.”

SCI Chapters and other friends of the Outdoor Heritage Education Center can become OSCF project partners and distribute the “Keepers of the Wild” PSA via websites or local radio and television stations. The initial response has been overwhelmingly positive with the PSA being picked up by stations nationwide. The campaign has exceeded projections and is reaching a massive audience. LaBarbera praised OSCF’s leadership and success and said SCI chapters can expect to see additional PSAs.

“With a constant barrage of negative messages about firearms, hunting and target shooting making their way to the general population, it is more important than ever to fight back with our own messages to change the narrative,” said Tim Brandt, president of The Murray Road Agency and Outdoor Stewards Board member. “The proven success of the ‘Keepers of the Wild’ PSA provides the blueprint to expand efforts to reach new audiences and champion essential messaging in an impactful manner. We have additional projects and plans in the works to significantly increase efforts in this area in 2026 and beyond. With the support of the outdoor industry, we can win back cultural acceptance of gun ownership, hunting and target shooting among the general population.”

OSCF and OHEC encourage other organizations connected to firearms, hunting or target shooting to promote the PSA through their newsletters, social media and website postings.





Flipped Out For Turkey Hunting

by Randy Mayes

My grandson Elisha is totally "head over heels" crazy about hunting and fishing! I guess that term kind of figures into how our plans ended up playing out for our recent turkey hunt.

Last year, Elisha, now 11, got his first animal while hunting. It was a joke that came into our decoys along with two others. He made a great shot and was SO excited to get it! Grandpa was more than just a little excited as well!

Though it was a fun hunt and exciting, he did not get to experience the "typical" turkey hunt including the back and forth calling and gobbling as well as seeing a big tom come strutting into range!

My daughter and her family, including Elisha, live in Monticello, MN. This makes it a little challenging to get Elisha here very often for hunting and fishing which he loves so much.

Our plan was for my wife and I to drive the four hours or so to get him on a Wednesday and then turn around and come back home the same day.

On Tuesday late morning, I went out to the land and set up our blind. On my way back to work, I had one small errand I wanted to take care of at a local print shop. I had just pulled out of the print shop and was driving through the green light of the intersection in town. The speed limit was 25 mph. I was about halfway through the intersection when "BAM!" I felt and heard a loud bang, then another bang, then I was hanging upside down, held in by my seatbelt! Since my side and front airbags deployed immediately, blocking my view of anything outside, I had no idea what happened. I didn't even see any of the vehicles involved in the crash. It wasn't until I crawled out the door (helped by a couple of good Samaritans who had witnessed the crash) and I saw the other two vehicles that I was able to piece together what just happened.

A young woman had driven through a red light, hit the right side of my Toyota Tundra pushing me to my left where I hit an SUV that was waiting for me to pass through so it could make a left turn. Hitting that SUV apparently caused my truck to flip over, landing on it's roof. Though the accident totaled my nearly new truck and I'm sure the car that hit



me, miraculously, no one was injured! Not even a scratch!

When my my wife, Carla, came to pick me up, she was insistent that I get checked out at the hospital. When we were in the waiting room, Carla said "I guess we won't be going to pick up Elisha tomorrow"? I said, "I'm OK, your car is OK, we're going to pick him up tomorrow (Wednesday)"!

By 3:30am Thursday, I was waking Elisha up for his big day! It took a little while, but the birds finally started gobbling a little after the start of shooting time. About 6:00 we heard a shot ring out in the direction of the gobbling. It sounded like it might have been a little past where the gobbling was coming from, but it was hard to tell. We were relieved when the gobbling resumed a few minutes later! The birds were definitely getting closer! Eventually, I looked over and saw a fan across a small part of the field and in the woods a bit. I could hear some hens yelping near the strutting tom and hoped they were not going to prevent us from calling him in.

A few minutes later, three big toms came out into the clearing, about 75 yards away and were heading right for us! I knew this was looking good! The birds were strutting and gobbling as they closed the distance. Unfortunately, Elisha's view of the birds was blocked. I was letting him know what was going on as they moved in. I told him when they first come into his view, they are

going to be REAL close! We had his .410 on a Death Grip Bog Pod so he was super steady and just waiting for them to come into view. When the toms came into his view they were at eight yards. I whispered, "take your time and shoot when you're comfortable." A few seconds later the .410 rang out and Elisha had his first big tom!

There's nothing much more exciting for an 11-year-old boy who loves hunting and his grandpa who loves sharing it with him than to experience a moment like this! After lots of hooting, hollering and hugging, it was time for pictures and then packing everything out. Then we stopped by the landowner's house to show off his bird, share the story and thank him for allowing us to hunt.

He got his bird about 1 ½ hours into the hunt. Now we both knew what this meant. We were going to have time to go fishing! The white bass were running, and Elisha had never caught one so by that afternoon, we were fishing on the Wolf River. We had a great time and caught lots of very good-sized white bass. The next day Elisha and I worked on food plots at my hunting land followed by some fresh turkey for supper! On Saturday, we were headed back to Monticello along with some great memories from the last few days!

The week started out with our plans nearly getting flipped upside down. Though I may have gotten flipped, our plans for a great hunt and more certainly were not!

Bow Hunting Gredos Ibex

by Randy Mayes

Hunting Ibex in Spain has long been on my “to do” list. I started doing some research on a hunt pre-2020. Of course, that got shot down.

Once travel started normalizing, I once again started looking into my options. Giuseppe Carrizosa has been donating to our Badgerland Chapter for probably 30+ years. Naturally, he was one I wanted to talk to about my hunt. I have known many people over the years who have hunted with Giuseppe,

had for bow hunting in particular were very appealing to me as well, so I decided to book with him.

We would hunt the “north slope” of the Gredos mountains. There were many things about this area that made it more conducive to bowhunting. Curro’s confidence that I would likely get an opportunity at my ibex on a three day hunt was very appealing to me, since we had about 6 days of touring planned after the hunt.

One interesting aspect of this hunt is that you have two “Game Keepers”

who accompany you and your guide. They make the ultimate decision as to which Ibex you can shoot. This is mainly determined by age. They are targeting animals in the 13-16 year old range. The average lifespan of these ibex is in that same range. One of the things they look for when field judging their age is how skinny they look. At this extremely old age, they start to get very thin which is especially noticeable in the hind quarters. At closer ranges, they can also count the age rings on the horns.

The area we hunted was the “Hunting Preserve Sierra de Gredos.” It is approximately 125,000 acres. This is a totally free range area in which the hunting is VERY tightly regulated. The amount of Ibex I saw during my short hunt was impressive.

We hiked about 4 miles to get to a valley in which a local had reported seeing quite a few old ibex. During our very scenic hike, we saw quite a few ibex but many were on the other side of a raging river and not in an area that was very conducive to getting in bow range.

When we finally made it to the valley it was clear that this was the spot! We spotted a herd of 15-20 billies that looked very nice to me. What looks nice to me and what is a shooter according to the game keepers can be two very different things. The game keepers did not speak any English so when they were pointing to billies and chit-chatting in Spanish, I was just trying to read their body language and see if they were indicating there was a shooter. Of course, my guide Curro spoke English and was able to eventually let me know which one we were targeting.

Our stalk on the big group of billies was interrupted when we bumped into another, smaller group of ibex. There were both billies and nannies. The game keeper carefully scrutinized the group to see if there was a shooter. There was... game on! There was one billy in a group of about 10 animals that I was to target. Now figuring out for absolute certainty which one it was, was no easy task!

Curro said, “It’s the one looking at us right now.”

“Now he’s looking away.”

“It’s the third one... wait, now he’s the second one.”



Randy Mayes Ibex

By the time I was absolutely sure, it was too late. They had made their way into some thick cover and were out of sight.

“No problem,” said Curro. “This will give us a chance to get out in front of them and maybe a little closer.”

I was looking at about a 50-yard shot with that first opportunity. I can certainly do that, but I was more comfortable with 40 yards.

We were able to maneuver in front of them as planned. We played a little more of the “figure out which animal to shoot” game but this time I was actually able to get a shot. It was 43 yards. Though I hit him, I was a few inches off and we had to get up on him again after more than just a small effort in order to make a good finishing shot. It wasn’t the best situation, and I should have made a better first shot but we got the job done!



Randy Mayes bowhunt hike Spain

and I have only heard good things.

My wife Carla was joining me on this trip, so I wanted to choose someone she would feel comfortable with. The plan was that Carla would have someone take her around to do some local “touring” while I was hunting. After speaking with several Spain outfitters in Nashville, the last one we spoke to was Curro Carrizosa who is the son of Giuseppe and does much of the guiding. We were both very impressed with what Curro had to say and to show us. Curro had an option for Giuseppe’s wife to take Carla around while I was hunting. The options Curro



Walking tour in the streets of Madrid.



Had to do a little four wheeling to get to our hunting area.

My Gredos Ibex ended up being 15 years old and scored 217 cm in the CIC scoring system which is what they commonly use. I was very happy with the trophy as well as the whole experience!

Having taken the ibex on my first day of hunting, that gave Carla and I a little more time for touring. This was my first time touring in Europe. We spent 6 days traveling around the country. Some of the towns and cities we visited were Madrid, Seville, Ronda and Granada. Seeing so many 1,000-plus-year-old intricate and sometimes massive structures was quite impressive!

We used Esplanade Travel for all of our touring. They are based out of Boston. We had used them when we hunted and toured in New Zealand and were very impressed with how well they planned out our itinerary.

The outfitter, Giuseppe Carrizosa, was very organized and helpful on all levels with regards to the hunting portion of our trip. Curro, Giuseppe's son, is a very personable and knowledgeable guide. I would highly recommend them! Their web site is www.bowhunteurope.com. Though the site address indicates bow hunting, I believe a majority of their hunters use a rifle.

We saw quite a few ibex on the hike up to our destination



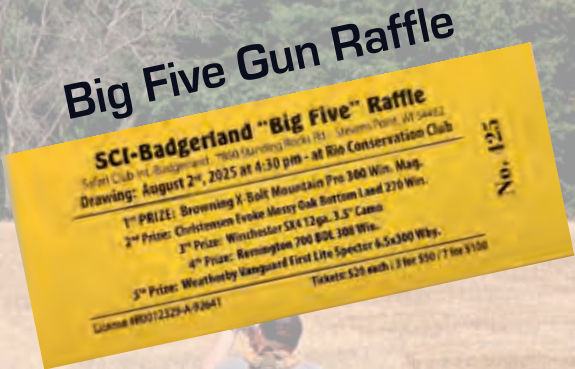
The town of Ronda built on a cliff!



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MOHEE Connects Kids with Nature

Growing more than 300% from the first Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo in 2014, this May's free MOHEE youth events in Milwaukee and Poynette reached 4,265 students, parent chaperones, and teachers, thanks to major funding from SCI and others.

Busloads of mostly 4th-7th grade students were treated to nature-based educational activities where they tried first-hand to call wildlife, cast, shoot bows and BB guns, tie flies, work with hunting dogs, identify animal tracks and scat, plus learn about bat species, turtles, forestry, aquatic species, fish

cleaning, bowfishing, firefighting, and more.

Friends of Poynette Game Farm had live pheasant chicks and Ducks Unlimited had live ducklings along with key messages about habitat and conservation.

"Everyone had fun and learned a lot again this year," said Ruth Ann Lee, Executive Director of the Wisconsin-based charitable nonprofit Outdoor Heritage Education Center (www.OHECyes.org) which owns and operates MOHEE. With critical support from dozens of sponsors and more than 100 volunteers we were actually ready to

host 4,591 guests that pre-registered, but four Milwaukee schools were no shows. There's no bigger free outdoor skills field trip in the country that we could find."

The first MOHEE (pronounced "MO'-hee) in 2014 hosted 1,420 at the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources' MacKenzie Center in Poynette and was two days, according to OHEC Founder & Chief Volunteer Mark LaBarbera. The SCI life member said two key elements made that first event possible: 1. Big financial support from Friends of NRA and the Wisconsin Chapter of SCI; and 2. Behind the scenes work of Scott

Gunderson, Scott Taetsch, Charmaine Wargolet, Kaz, and Dan Trawicki. Without those founding efforts, there probably wouldn't have been a first or any future MOHEE youth events from OHEC. Those funds helped cover out-of-pocket expenses including some school buses for schools to be able to attend. He said OHEC has continued to offer transportation stipends, but he has seen an increase lately in bus driver shortages, which can cause last minute cancellations.

OHEC added the Milwaukee event in 2023 at the DNR's Havenwoods State Forest.

With two venues, plus the growth in attendance and inflation, Lee said OHEC has covered rising costs for transportation by adding sponsors and partners, most recently Pheasants Forever, including its SE Wisconsin and Columbia/Marquette Chapters.

Founding Sponsors who continue to provide major funding include Friends of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, National Wild Turkey Federation, Dane County Conservation League, Safari Club International's Badgerland, Wisconsin, and SE WI Bowhunters Chapters. Ongoing funding from Izaak Walton League of America, Wisc.

Trappers Assoc., Wings Over Wisconsin's Coulee, Fox River, Denmark, Black River, Beaver Dam, Northeast, Kettle Moraine, and TriCounty Chapters, plus Wisc. Bowhunters Assoc., Wisconsin Bear Hunters Assoc., Friends of Mackenzie, and Friends of Poynette Game Farm In recent years, NE WI SCI, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, and Blackhawk Bowhunters have joined Wisconsin Waterfowl Assoc., Manitowoc Co. Fish & Game, Field & Stream Sportsmen's Club, Pumpkin Center Sportsmen's Club, 4imprint, NRA Foundation's Friends of NRA, Lafayette Co. Sportsman Alliance, Dodge Co.



Sporting Conservation Alliance, Sally Schoenike, and Mike Fuge in providing funding for the event.

DNR Secretary Karen Hyun and her team attended the Poynette event, continuing the agency's legacy of supporting environmental education and helping partners recruit, retain, and reactivate license buyers and other outdoor participants, including future conservation leaders and stewards of healthy natural resources.

Hyun and Lee praised DNR staff who work year-round at the MOHEE venues, Havenwoods State Forest in Milwaukee and MacKenzie Center, as well as the DNR fish, wildlife, parks, forestry, law enforcement, and natural heritage conservation professionals who helped

introduce MOHEE students, parents, and educators to life-long outdoor activities. They and volunteers from other sporting conservation groups not only create awareness, interest, and opportunities to try these activities, but they also share information about where to go for on-going mentored experiences, safety classes, and "learn to" events.

The first thank you notes that arrived in May from students shared their gratitude and enthusiasm, despite the spelling mistakes:

"Evre thing was SO MUCH FUN!!!" wrote Joyce.

Jackson's note said, "Thank you again for letting us come."

"One of my 'fav' field trips. Thank you!" wrote another student.

Averie shared, "I'm very grateful that you let us have a blast."

"We had an awesome field trip! My favorite part there was fish sticks. Also the fire tower and BB guns."

Brynn wrote, "Thank you for hosting such an amazing event! I loved all the animals and activities."

And Jacob said, "My favrate thing was the fly fishing and lure making."

Almost every note from students thanked the volunteers.

Teachers, school administrators, and others who would like to participate in 2026 MOHEE youth events in Poynette May 6-7 and Milwaukee May 13 can email RuthAnn@OHECyes.org.

About Outdoor Heritage Education Center

OHEC, a 501(c)3 charitable nonprofit organization based in Wisconsin was founded in 1998 by Mark LaBarbera to connect people and resources. OHEC volunteers and donors have helped launch archery and clay target teams in a number of Wisconsin schools along with scholarships, nature trail signage, and FFA career development. OHEC is an active leader in recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) efforts that fit with its mission to help pass along our outdoor

heritage to future generations who are losing touch with the natural world, and to increase the public's understanding, appreciation, and sense of stewardship for natural resources and related activities like fishing, hunting and other shooting sports. For information about its youth expos, Touch of the Wild education trailers, OHEC Mobile Closet, and other conservation and education programs, visit www.OHECyes.org or email questions to RuthAnn@OHECyes.org.





Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is!

The angling and boating community has been doing it for 75 years

by Chris Horton, CSF

At the turn of the last century, it became apparent that fishing and hunting license fees alone were not going to be enough to restore habitats and bring back healthy populations of fish and wildlife after decades of unfettered natural resource extraction in this country. In 1937, through the efforts of hunters and firearms and ammunition manufacturers, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, also known as the Pittman-Robertson Act, redirected an 10-11% (depending on the product) excise tax on firearms and ammunition, later amended to include archery equipment and other items, into a separate account in the United States Treasury that was to be used only for wildlife conservation purposes with most of it going back to the state natural resources agencies.

The Wildlife Restoration Act and resulting program was so successful for funding wildlife management that anglers and the fishing industry stepped up and supported a similar tax program on fishing equipment to be used for fish

and aquatic resource conservation. In 1950, the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, also known as the Dingell-Johnson Act, became law. The Act was amended in 1984 to expand the taxable items, including the portion of the federal fuel tax attributable to motorboat and small engine fuels which provided a significant bump in the overall program funding.

Since 1950, the Sport Fish Restoration Program has been a principal funding source for state fish hatcheries, fisheries management, boating access, recruiting and reactivating anglers and boaters, boating safety, and aquatic education programs. From 1951 to 2025, the revenues generated by the program for states total an impressive \$19.3 billion when adjusted for inflation. It's a program that is vital to providing Americans with healthy fisheries and easy access to our waters.

These excise taxes through Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson, combined with fishing and hunting license revenues, constitute the

American System of Conservation Funding, a model unlike anything else in the world. Unfortunately, policy makers sometimes assume these funds come from general taxes on the public and are subject to appropriations or spending cuts, but they are not. These funds are derived from those who hunt, fish, and boat and the industries they support for one purpose – to make sure we have access to healthy fish and wildlife resources.

In recognition of the 75th Anniversary of the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act and the highly successful program it has become, CSF is working with the state legislative sportsmen's caucuses to pass celebratory resolutions while educating federal legislators, state legislators and governor's offices on the importance of this program. It is also timely as CSF and other members of the Angling and Boating Alliance will be working on the Congressional reauthorization of the program in 2026. This "user pays – public benefits" system of conservation funding is unique, incredibly effective, and worth protecting for the next 75 years and beyond.

Why It Matters: *Though relatively few people are familiar with the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, 2025 marks the 75th Anniversary of this important program and the greatest fish and aquatic resource conservation story ever told. Without it, there would be far fewer places to launch a boat, piers to fish from, or fish to catch. The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation is using this historical marker to educate Members of Congress, state legislators, and the public on just how vital this "user pays – public benefits" program is to the nation and our aquatic resources.*



WI SCI HUNTERS – July/August 2025

So, You Want to Buy Land

by Mark LaBarbera

Realtor Alex Weber of First Weber Realty is an avid outdoorsman who knows how to buy and sell land. SCI member Dan Small interviewed Weber on "Outdoors Radio with Dan Small" on 22 stations about buying and selling outdoor recreation land.

Weber grew up in the family real estate business. His dad and uncles taught him to hunt and fish, and they shared insights that helped him become one of the most knowledgeable and connected realtors in the state. He chooses most often to focus on the Driftless Area of western Wisconsin where SCI members know big bucks, turkeys, and trout thrive along with waterfowl and other game birds.

Weber worked statewide for Pheasants Forever before changing careers to become a successful realtor trusted by fellow members and outdoor sports enthusiasts. He is an avid hunter and conservationist who currently also sponsors "Deer Hunt Wisconsin" TV. Here's what Alex Weber shared in his conversation with fellow SCI member Dan Small.

"Most of my uncles and my dad have been in real estate my whole life," said Weber, "but they're also very dedicated outdoorsmen, so I've spent my life outdoors. First Weber sells all kinds of properties from homes to second homes to raw land and my focus is wild land.

"When an SCI member or other avid outdoorsman approaches me about buying property, the first thing is to identify your needs and goals, and then what's the budget," Weber said. "Just like every SCI member is unique and is looking for something they have been dreaming about, so is every property we list. Whether you're looking at recreational land or a country home, we know it's very different than someone buying a three bedroom, two bath home in town where you might find another 10 of them in the same neighborhood."

Weber said, "There's a lot of different factors that go into what you want and then how it's going to affect the price. Are you a dedicated fly fishermen that wants to be close to some of our Driftless streams or are you a hunter

looking for big deer and turkey habitat or are you just looking for quiet enjoyment and outdoor recreation. We get to know what you like and where you want to be, as well as how far do you want to be from your home or is this going to be your new home?"

Wisconsin is a very diverse state, so Weber said, "There are pockets of incredible things all over the place but matching people up with the right property is where I think we do a really great job. We also represent a lot of sellers and finding that buyer that appreciates every bit of their property is important."

Small, who lives in the Driftless Area, noted, "This part of the Midwest has some unique challenges. We have coulees that flood when there's heavy rain and rivers that overflow sometimes. How do you focus on finding property in the Driftless that is not going to be more of a liability than an asset?"

Weber said, "That is where knowing somebody's needs is such a huge piece of the answer. Some people want to live on the top of the hill and are willing to pay the price. Others want something that costs less and are happy to live in flood zones that can be very affordable but they're not going to fit for somebody that needs to have a cabin or home there someday. How you access it is a factor. Sometimes you do have that hilltop cabin but the only way to get there is to cross the river. If it's a trout stream there's only certain ways you can do it. Most of them you can drive through it, or you have to put in a bridge using Dept. of Transportation specs."

Weber said, "We're still seeing a strong market and very strong interest. That's not to say there isn't a deal to be found. You know there are still properties that are poorly marketed. Sometimes you have to be able to see the forest through the trees. Take for example black walnut trees. That's the one species that most affects price. Not so much with other species. A black walnut can be worth thousands of dollars for a single tree, but it's not every black walnut. Some people also look for maple trees and want to make syrup.

"We own a farm in the Driftless and my favorite thing is doing camps. We have sugar camp, and we have turkey



Alex Weber

camp, and we have trout camp and deer camp and all the excuses to get together with family and friends and share the outdoors," Weber said, "because I think that's really what it's all about. We share your values, like the importance of having a place for family and friends to spend time together outdoors. It's another reason why owning a bit of land of your own is so valuable."

Dan Small had one final question: "Alex, before we let you go, I gotta ask you--because we have trout streams pretty much everywhere here--what's your advice if a trout fisherman wants to buy land should he buy it on a trout stream or near a trout stream?"

Weber said, "I love that question because I've been fishing since I was about four years old and it's near and dear to my heart. It really again comes down to what you want. I've had clients whose dream was to restore a stream and enhance fishing opportunities for them and their grandkids. However, if you're just looking to get out and use the resource there is an abundance of trout streams in the Driftless region so you don't need to own the stream to be able to really take advantage of it because we have so much access for the public. There's a ton of easements. There's a ton of bridges where you can get down to the water. The opportunity to go fish other streams is huge. Again, it comes down to one what is your budget. I'm glad to discuss any questions SCI members may have about this or other wild land property issues."

Learn more at wildlandprop.com.

WI SCI HUNTERS – July/August 2025

Badgerland Chapter Bourbon Anyone?

by Steve Cripps

The Badgerland Chapter with sponsors Woodman's Foods and Chula Vista Resort held an exciting new event on May 31st at Buck and Honey's in Monona. This event was held to welcome new members and provide existing members a chance to do something different.

There were three types of "new" bourbon-based cocktails offered as well as some special reserve bourbons offered by the High West bourbon distillery.

Buck and Honey's outdid themselves with a spectacular array of appetizers that offered something for everyone. Most people really liked the Firecracker shrimp. My dad questioned why anyone would eat dates, but with the bacon wrapping, they were delicious.

The 60 people in attendance did not go away hungry or thirsty.

We had several door prizes donated by Buck and Honey's and High West, a rifle raffle, a Pappy Van Winkle whiskey raffle donated by Woodman's, and a nice donation from Vortex of several optics from their Viper line.



The food was delicious and well presented. It was a treat for the palate and the eyes.

After the rifle raffle was drawn, my wife started cheering, and I thought I had won.

Unfortunately, she was also watching the tickets of a friend, Dan Trawicki, who won the Browning X-Bolt Max.

This is an SCI Badgerland Chapter event that we are looking to hold each year, so look forward to more information for an event next year. If anyone has any comments or critiques of the event, please email scibadgerland@gmail.com



Members and friends learned about High West's distillery history and products.



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