



# HUNTER ADVOCACY

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPORT



## *SCI IN ACTION*

- On Capitol Hill
- In State Capitals
- In Court
- Around the World

Spring's Field Notes  
April - June, 2023



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*A Message from CEO W. Laird Hamberlin and  
EVP of International Government & Public Affairs Benjamin Cassidy*

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It has been a packed quarter for SCI Advocacy, and we are proud to showcase our Spring Field Notes covering our activities around the world from April to June, 2023.

In May, we hosted the SCI Board Meeting in our DC Headquarters - for the first time since Covid - with unprecedented engagement. We had 100 SCI members meet with 60 Members of Congress to fight for our hunting rights and advocate for what matters most to hunters. Our DC office, just steps away from the U.S. Capitol, is perfectly located for in-person engagement. Building off the success of this year's lobby day, we have already hosted a happy hour with African Ambassadors and a political fundraiser, with planning underway for events in the near future.

In addition to strengthening relationships, this quarter has been characterized by on-the-ground advocacy. From state sportsmen's events, to Congressional clays competitions, to CITES representation in Switzerland, to appearances on Fox News, to increased European engagement, your advocacy team is working for you **everywhere we need to be**.

Attacks to our hunting rights and access are constant, ranging from the makeup of state wildlife commissions, to trophy bans in the UK, to litigation by anti-hunting groups. Our team is just as constant though, fighting against misguided policy and supporting science-based management - and our freedom to hunt. Hunters also have champions in state, federal, and international legislatures who introduce strong legislation supporting hunting and wildlife conservation, and SCI is the first to support them and their efforts.

Looking ahead, we are focused more than ever on increasing our footprint around the world, assisting with good legislation, defeating bad bills, and fighting for hunters in court. Our team is ready to take on the challenge and will always be First for Hunters.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Laird Hamberlin".

W. Laird Hamberlin  
CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BJC".

Benjamin J. Cassidy  
EVP of International,  
Government & Public Affairs

## LEADING THE FIGHT

SCI EVP Ben Cassidy recently appeared on Fox News to represent the hunting community in discussing the annual Hunt Fish Rule from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. From the [article](#): "Every year, there's a hunt and fish rule that comes out at the end of the season," Benjamin Cassidy, the executive vice president for international government and public affairs at the pro-hunting Safari Club International and a former senior Interior Department official, told Fox News Digital. "When I was in the [Trump] administration, these were big packages to celebrate opening of access, expanding opportunities for access." "Since this administration's been in, the numbers have shrunk every year to lower numbers. It's really just kind of been masking tape over what's really been bans," Cassidy continued. "We've seen millions of acres closed and we've seen lead bans being put in place." [Watch the full interview here.](#)



## WORKING FOR YOU

SCI's fully staffed advocacy team offers a unique synergy to advance the interests of hunters everywhere. SCI is uniquely positioned with in-house attorneys who can draft or review legislation to support our lobbyists, who then work with members of Congress and state legislators to promote hunting and hunting access around the country. SCI's attorneys and federal and state liaisons collaborate to petition for regulatory change or comment on proposals for regulatory change. And when litigation is unavoidable, SCI's attorneys work with our federal and state experts, as well as biologists in the SCI Foundation, to defend hunting and its critical role as a management and conservation tool. SCI's communicators ensure the message gets to SCI members and hunters and conservationists everywhere.

## DC HEADQUARTERS

SCI brought together African Ambassadors, Congressional leaders, and hunting and conservation organizations for our first Hunters on the Hill event in our DC office. We were honored to host Ambassador Tadeous Chifamba of Zimbabwe, Ambassador Onkokame Kitso Mokaila of Botswana, Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith of Mississippi, and several other Congressional leaders, Embassy dignitaries, and hunting and conservation partners.



## THE FUTURE OF HUNTING

Our Women Go Hunting campaign kicked off supporting the 2024 SCI Convention theme The Future of Hunting with more than 150 women joining SCI's new Women Go Hunting Facebook page. Plans are also underway for related events to culminate at convention.

## ACCESS

Threats to hunting access take many forms and SCI puts them all in the crosshairs. In Alaska, we filed an amicus brief in the Supreme Court defending nonresident permit allocations. We opposed restrictions on a Vermont wildlife refuge, testified against a ban on hunting preserves in Maine, and opposed lead ammo bans on wildlife management areas, national wildlife refuges, and state and private lands. SCI also reminded the Biden Administration that we will accept nothing less than No-Net-Loss, signing onto letters supporting the Voluntary Public Access Improvement Act of 2023 and encouraging funding to implement the Modernizing Access to our Public Land Act. We also supported the Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act and the oversight hearings and investigations into the Biden Administration's attempts to limit access.

## STATE COMMISSIONS

Anti-hunting forces have identified state wildlife commissions as a way of shutting down hunting opportunities across the country. SCI met them toe to toe, alerting members to encourage the Arizona legislature to confirm nominations for the Game and Fish Commission and supporting a bill that requires members of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission to hold a hunting or fishing license in four of the previous six years. In Oregon, we joined a coalition supporting a bill that would prevent anti-hunting efforts to slant the makeup of the commission towards urban representation.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The Biden Administration plans to reinstate a previous blanket rule applying the requirements to import endangered species to threatened species too. SCI's legal team met with the feds on the impacts of this rule. We also supported the Listing Reform Act to modernize the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and are doing a deep dive on ESA reform this summer - stay tuned for more!

## EVERYWHERE WE NEED TO BE

The best way to forge partnerships and alliances is working shoulder to shoulder. That's why SCI representatives have participated in meetings, conferences and special events in eight US states and five countries this quarter. That includes gatherings with sportsmen's caucuses, associations, leadership at wildlife departments, workgroups, congressional leaders and committees, and international ambassadors.

## FEDERAL OVERREACH

The Federal Subsistence board in Alaska continues to propose shutting down hunting opportunities – an additional 38 closures! – and SCI continues opposing them.

## FIREARMS

The assault on firearm ownership is hot and furious, not only affecting current hunters but also deterring or blocking up-and-coming hunters. SCI led a coalition in filing an amicus brief challenging onerous permitting to purchase a firearm in one state and filed a second brief in another one challenging the collection of personal information from firearm purchasers. We supported a bill to protect access to firearms and ammo during declared states of emergency, and we opposed legislation restricting potential hunters 18 to 21 years old from possessing or operating firearms.

## NONRESIDENT STUDENT HUNTING

SCI recognizes that keeping hunting accessible for nonresident college students on a budget is a must for hunter recruitment and retainment, so we've supported bills allowing reduced costs on hunting licenses for this group in numerous states.

## INTERNATIONAL FOOTPRINT

In Australia SCI sent an alert, motivating hundreds of advocates to submit letters urging the government of Victoria not to close duck hunting or adopt more restrictions. Over in Europe, SCI participated in the seminal Sign for Hunting Campaign, a petition calling on the EU to collaborate with hunters on conservation efforts.

## PREDATOR MANAGEMENT - BEARS, MOUNTAIN LIONS, WOLVES

Misinformed legislators continue trying to meddle with science-based predator management across the country. Whether it's irresponsible wolf reintroductions that handcuff wildlife managers, prohibitions against hunting and trapping, arbitrarily truncated hunting seasons or bans on coyote hunting contests, SCI is there to defend science-based management of all wildlife and has alerted members to contact their legislators or has submitted commentary on efforts in five states.

## TROPHY IMPORT BANS & PERMITS

This quarter we warned NY that we will sue should they pass the Big Five African Trophies Act. Across the Atlantic, the UK Trophy ban has moved to the House of Lords, where we expect favorable amendments will be proposed.

## RIGHT TO HUNT

State constitutional amendments are one of the best ways to ensure hunting rights, and SCI actively supports these efforts, working with chapters and sportsmen's organizations. In Montana, we alerted sportsmen to support an amendment there, and in Florida, efforts paid off with a constitutional amendment scheduled to appear on the ballot.

## HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES

Wherever new or expanding opportunities are possible, SCI encourages authorities to make them available. This quarter saw us supporting new conservation funding in Maryland and Montana and the renewal of the State Trust Land Hunting and Fishing Access Program in Colorado. Plus, we're shouting out to our partners in South Carolina and Pennsylvania who helped create new or expanded Sunday hunting opportunities.

## HUNTING REGULATIONS

We submitted comments on changes to Utah's swan hunting regulations and supported Vermont's recommendations for 2023 moose harvest.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA

SCI's digital footprint is bigger every quarter. We now have 188,850 followers to SCI's Facebook page, and 50,000 subscribers on our YouTube channel have racked up 15 million views! The SCI Podcast continues cranking up sportsmen and women with fascinating interviews on topics they care about. In public relations, we helped beat back social media attacks on NFL quarterback Jay Cutler when he posted a photo with a black bear he hunted in Montana. And a member of our advocacy team appeared on the Houndsman XP Podcast, promoting SCI and its mission.

## SCI STORE

SCI's new online store has geared up with a Summer Vintage Line no sportsman wants to miss!

After a 4 year hiatus, 100 SCI volunteers/staff visited Capitol Hill on Thursday, May 11th and participated in 60 meetings with Members of Congress and their staff. There was great dialogue on the issues that matter the most for hunters. Progress was made in both chambers in advancing our top advocacy priorities:

- SCI remains committed to **opposing trophy bans** at the federal and state levels because well-regulated international hunting is vital to conservation, maintaining biodiversity, and species survival in southern Africa and around the world. Hunting programs, especially those involving rural communities in conservation and management, are proven tools to sustain species and habitats.
- SCI will continue to support **access to lead ammunition** as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state governments attempt to enact unnecessary and misguided bans on public land. There is not enough scientific evidence to show that hunting with lead ammunition causes significant harm to habitats or animals. Without readily available and cost-effective alternatives, a ban will only serve to downsize the hunting community.
- SCI **opposes all legislation that would defund wildlife conservation**, such as RETURN (Repealing Excise Tax on Unalienable Rights Now) our Constitutional Rights Act which would repeal the Pittman-Robertson Act. Pittman-Robertson is essential to the hunting community – it has contributed \$15 billion towards wildlife conservation, hunter recruitment, construction of public shooting ranges, and other activities.
- SCI will steadfastly **oppose predator control restrictions on federal land**. Wildlife management decisions, including predator control, should be left to state wildlife management agencies and not dictated across the board by Congress. Each state is different, and each state should have the authority to manage its wildlife as needed.
- SCI continues to **support No-Net-Loss** to maintain or increase the current level of hunting and fishing access nationwide. This includes physical access to public lands, economic access, and access to information. Committing to supporting a No-Net-Loss policy means one thing: sound stewardship of our natural resources, as hunters and anglers are essential to effectively managing public land.
- Finally, SCI seeks to **modernize and strengthen the Endangered Species Act**. The ESA's inadequacy in recognizing states' input has resulted in uninformed and damaging decisions. States' role in species recovery and conservation is essential, and the ESA must be amended to give them a louder voice in decision-making.

SCI is building off the success of lobby day and utilizing our proximity to the Hill to host an event welcoming Members of Congress, Ambassadors, and other hunting and conservation organizations to our DC office this past June. We will continue to lead on these issues with several virtual and in-person events throughout the year, with constant engagement from our advocates through the Hunter Advocacy Action Center.



SCI is the first voice for hunters in Washington, D.C. by monitoring, evaluating, and lobbying on federal legislation impacting hunters and wildlife conservation. SCI ensures that hunting interests are at the forefront when important bills come up by building relationships with Congressional leaders as well as staying current on the issues.

## WINS THIS QUARTER

**Holding the Biden Administration Accountable:** Senator Cynthia Lummis (WY) and fourteen of her colleagues in the Senate introduced a Congressional Review Act (CRA) disapproving of critical habitat designation regulations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Last year, the Biden Administration rescinded the 2020 Trump Administration rule that stated that habitat must be “occupied”, meaning the species currently or periodically inhabits the area, to be considered critical habitat under the ESA. This reform was essential in preventing land management agencies from designating vast swaths of land as critical habitat that do not actually contain populations of the species in question. The rescission by the Biden Administration once again gives agencies blanket authority to designate critical habitat to control land and prevent multiple use, not species recovery. SCI applauds Senator Lummis for standing against this baseless regulation and overt government overreach.

**Supporting hunting opportunities:** SCI joined the 36 hunting and conservation partners in [this letter](#) to support the Voluntary Public Access Improvement Act of 2023. Senator Steve Daines (MT) was joined by Senators Roger Marshall (KS) and Michael Bennet (CO) in reintroducing this legislation to expand public opportunities for hunting in America. This bill would reauthorize and strengthen the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) by increasing funding from \$50 million to \$150 million over five years. The VPA-HIP provides competitive grants to states and tribal governments to be used to incentivize private landowners to voluntarily open their lands for public use while upholding private property rights. These grants have helped facilitate the opening of 60,000 acres for hunting and increased public access in Montana. SCI thanks Senator Daines and his colleagues for continuing to support hunting access and SCI’s No-Net-Loss policy.



**Great American Outdoors Act:** On Tuesday, April 18th, the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands held an oversight hearing titled “Examining the Implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act and the Growing National Park Service Deferred Maintenance Backlog.” The Honorable Chuck Sams, Director of the National Park Service, provided testimony.

**Department of Interior:** On Wednesday, April 19th, the Committee on Natural Resources held an oversight hearing to examine and discuss the President’s FY 2024 Budget Request for the Department of the Interior. Interior Secretary Deb Halaand, Deputy Secretary Tommy Beaudreau, and Director of Budget Denise Flanagan provided testimony and answered questions on behalf of the Biden Administration.

**Letters to Congress:** In April, SCI joined the American Wildlife Conservation Partners in two letters sent to Congress. In a letter to Senate and House Appropriators, SCI and AWCP requested that Congress prioritize recreational access to our nation’s public lands and provide \$13.5 million to implement the Modernizing Access to our Public Land Act. In a letter to the House Committee on Natural Resources, SCI and AWCP requested a fix to the “Cottonwood” issue. SCI thanks Congressman Rosendale for addressing this in H.R. 200, the Forest Information Reform (FIR) Act, and the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands for holding a hearing on the FIR Act last month.

On April 25th, SCI joined AWCP in a letter to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees requesting \$30 million in funding for the research and management of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The potential for concerns about the human health impacts of CWD or from declining populations of susceptible species would undermine the funding and participation models that underlie wildlife management in the United States, and we thank Congress for its consideration of this critical funding.

**Protecting Access:** On Wednesday, April 19th, Senator Steve Daines reintroduced S. 1185, the Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act, with 24 Senate cosponsors. This bill would prohibit U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) from banning the use of traditional lead ammunition and tackle absent approval by the applicable state fish and wildlife department and proof that lead ammunition and tackle is primarily causing wildlife population decline. “On behalf of SCI members across America, thank you Senator Daines for being an unwavering champion for hunters and our access to public lands by introducing the Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act of 2023. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife’s 2022 Hunt Fish Rule shuts down a lawful method of harvest – use of traditional ammunition – through either immediate prohibition or rapid phaseout. Scientific studies have not demonstrated detrimental population-level impacts on game species. Emotion based bans are a blow to economic access and negatively impact Pittman Robertson revenue. Wildlife and habitat win when federal land managers base their decisions on best available science while giving deference to state management authorities.” – Ben Cassidy, EVP for International Government & Public Affairs, Safari Club International.

**Committee Hearings:** In the week of May 16th, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held hearings on the proposed budgets of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) respectively, with directors testifying. The House Committee on Natural Resources also reported favorably on H.R. 200, the FIR Act, and SCI expressed support for Rep. Pfluger’s H.R. 1142, the Listing Reform Act, which aims to modernize the Endangered Species Act and consider economic impact in species listing decisions.

On Wednesday, May 24 the Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held an oversight hearing titled “Examining the Biden Administration’s Efforts to Limit Access to Public Lands.” SCI thanks the Committee for their attention to the administration’s continued attempts to limit hunting access across the country.



**Congressional Clays:** On April 25th, SCI participated in the annual Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF) Congressional Clays Event. SCI is a proud sponsor of the event each year, which brings together bipartisan Members of Congress, staff, and other hunting, fishing, and conservation organizations. Team SCI included Federal Liaison Nick Uberti, Administrative and Communications Specialist Tipton Wagner, and Communications Specialist Claire Fortenberry Zunk – Claire won the award for female Top Gun! We also had a blast shooting with Rep. Bill Huizenga of Michigan. SCI extends a huge thank you to CSF for hosting another great event and can’t wait for next year.



**Leadership Award:** On June 8th, SCI’s Ben Cassidy was named a Future40 honoree by Maverick PAC, recognized as one of the top conservative young professionals in the country. Congratulations, Ben!

**DC Summer Internship:** SCI welcomes Phil Slaughter, our new intern in Washington D.C.! Phil is a Law Jurisprudence and Social Thought (LJST) and History double major at Amherst College in Massachusetts and a member of the Amherst College football team. He grew up fishing and hunting ducks and deer around Bryson City, NC, with his father and brother. We are excited to have Phil on board and appreciate his contributions to the team.



## CURRENT THREATS AND ISSUES

**Endangered Species Act:** SCI advocacy staff have collaborated on advancing the Lobby Day issue of amendments to the Endangered Species Act. SCI has prepared a “wish list” that would better implement Congress’ original intent to encourage foreign conservation programs and to allow for the removal of species from the Act’s protections when they have successfully recovered. Staff are working with Congressional champions to push these ideas forward.

**Federal Overreach:** In May, the Bureau of Land Management, the largest landowner in the United States, published a proposed rule on Conservation and Landscape Health that looks more akin to a protectionist rule from the National Park Service than one from an agency obligated to provide for multiple use and sustained yield. Among other things, the proposed rule would designate “conservation” as a formal use of BLM lands, on par with development, grazing and recreation. Of course, SCI does not oppose conservation. But in the context of the proposed rule, “conservation” is defined as “preservation,” not the “wise use of resources.” In response to the proposed rule, past SCI “Legislator of the Year” Senator John Barrasso (WY) has introduced a bill that would require the BLM Director to withdraw the proposed rule. In support of his bill, Senator Barrasso emphasized that, “[t]he so-called public lands rule ... is nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to eliminate economic activities on federal lands in Wyoming and across the West.” He “strongly urge[d] [withdrawing] this disastrous and illegal proposal.” If the rule is adopted, SCI will work to ensure that hunting is not prohibited on BLM lands traditionally open to recreation. SCI will continue to push the federal government to implement a “no-net-loss” policy for public lands access across the United States.



SCI is unique among hunting organizations for having in-house lawyers dedicated to defending hunting as a conservation tool. Our attorneys have litigated dozens of cases throughout the United States involving domestic and international hunting-related issues and filed seven U.S. Supreme Court briefs on wildlife law. A staff attorney in the European Union's capital of Brussels, Belgium, monitors issues in Europe. Our team is the only one among hunting rights organizations that defends all hunters for all species from anywhere in the world. [Read SCI's most recent case updates.](#)

## WINS THIS QUARTER

### A Trio of Amicus Briefs:

- SCI, SCI Alaska Chapter, and Alaska Outdoor Council submitted an amicus brief in the Alaska Supreme Court in defense of the Alaska Board of Game's allocation of resident and non-resident permits to hunt brown bear on Kodiak Island. [Read more.](#)
- SCI led the Sportsmen's and Women's Coalition in filing an amicus brief in support of a lawsuit challenging Oregon Ballot Measure 114, which imposes an arduous permitting process for purchasing a firearm in Oregon, potentially reducing a hunter's ability to purchase firearms for legal hunting. Read more about this litigation.
- In late June, SCI filed an amicus brief in support of a challenge to a California law that requires disclosure of personal information collected from firearms purchasers to researchers at approved state university programs. SCI explained to the Court how the Second Amendment rights of hunters are being chilled and how this law conflicts with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's R3 efforts.



**Colorado Wolf 10(j) Rule Comments:** In April, SCI submitted extensive comments in response to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed rule for an experimental wolf population in Colorado. Because state law requires reintroduction of gray wolves into the state, Colorado requested the Service issue a "10(j) rule" under the ESA. A 10(j) rule will give Colorado the authority to take management actions otherwise prohibited by the ESA, such as to control wolves that prey on livestock and domestic animals. SCI strongly opposed the ballot initiative which forced reintroduction of wolves to Colorado, but we support (with significant reservations) the issuance of a 10(j) rule. [Read more.](#)

## CURRENT THREATS AND ISSUES

**New York Trophy Import Ban:** Earlier this year, SCI warned New York’s Legislature that if it adopts the “Big Five African Trophies Act” SCI would sue. If made law, this act would ban the import, possession, and transport of African elephant, leopard, lion, black and white rhino, and giraffe, including hunting trophies. The state Senate passed the bill, but the Assembly has yet to consider it. [Read the letter from SCI’s attorneys.](#)

**Lead Ammo Bans:** Last year, the Center for Biological Diversity launched a two-part attack against the use of traditional ammunition on National Wildlife Refuges: it submitted a petition requesting that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service phase out lead ammo on all refuges, and it challenged the 2020 Service rule which expanded hunting and fishing access on refuges around the country. SCI sought to intervene in the lawsuit, but the court denied that motion and dismissed the case based on a settlement between the Center and the Service. As part of the settlement, the Service responded to the Center’s petition for rulemaking in early June 2023. The Service denied the petition—but it did not decline to consider a phase-out of lead ammo. It simply declined to adopt a national rule, preferring to address lead ammo on a state-by-state or refuge-by-refuge basis. SCI expects that the Service will soon announce additional phase-outs of lead ammo on National Wildlife Refuges.



**State v. Federal Management:** Federal Subsistence Board actions continue to threaten to shut down hunting opportunities and override state wildlife management authority on extensive public lands in Alaska to all but federally qualified subsistence users. The Board is evaluating proposals for the 2024-2026 Wildlife Regulatory Cycle. 38 new proposals and 18 existing closures are up for review. In prior cycles, the Legal Advocacy team submitted comments on several proposals that impact non-rural and non-resident hunters, including three proposals to close non-subsistence deer hunting or reduce bag limits around the communities of Angoon, Hoonah, and Pelican that were ultimately rejected. These proposals have been renewed, and SCI intends to resubmit its objections. SCI will continue to watch and comment on proposals to shutdown hunting in Alaska.

**ESA Blanket 4(d) Rule:** Section 9 of the ESA prohibits certain activities involving endangered species, including “take” and import without a permit, but the ESA does not contain similar language for threatened species. Although the ESA directs the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to adopt regulations “necessary and advisable” to conserve each threatened-listed species, the Service previously took a shortcut and adopted a “blanket rule” which extended the same prohibitions for endangered species to all threatened species. The Trump Administration withdrew this “blanket rule,” but the current Administration is planning to reinstate it. In April, the Legal Advocacy team met with the federal Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) to highlight the significant international impacts that would come from reinstating the blanket rule. [Read more.](#)

In every state, SCI monitors, tracks, and evaluates legislation impacting hunting, hunters, and wildlife conservation. SCI works with pro-sportsmen elected leaders through the collaboration of the individual state sportsmen's caucuses. Building relationships between state leaders and sportsmen as well as staying current on the issues ensures that SCI is protecting your freedom to hunt. The SCI State Advocacy Network and local state chapters play a critical role in the success of SCI's advocacy efforts. Hunters become a valuable voice in each state by joining SCI's Hunter Advocacy Action Center.

## IN THE FIELD

**Alabama:** In late May, SCI Eastern States and Local Liaison attended the Alabama Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus breakfast in Montgomery.

**Florida:** In mid-April, SCI Eastern States and Local Liaison Bee Frederick, SCI Director-at-Large Sean McCann, SCI South Florida Past President Tom Van Note, and SCI Government Affairs Committee Co-Chair Trevor Santos joined numerous sportsmen's organizations at a press conference in support of Florida's Right to Hunt and Fish legislation. At the event, Frederick joined a number of speakers to highlight the importance of hunting and constitutionally protecting it as a public right. The sponsors of the legislation, Representative Lauren Melo and Senator Jason Brodeur also attended and spoke at the press conference. The day prior Frederick attended and testified in support of the legislation in the respective committee hearing as well. The Joint Resolution ultimately passed both chambers of the legislature and will be on the November 2024 ballot.

**NEAFWA:** SCI Eastern States and Local Liaison Bee Frederick attended the 78th Annual Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Conference in Hershey, PA. In addition to attending various conservation sessions related to R3, lead ammunition, CWD and other important topics, he presented to the state agency directors on SCI's mission and how SCI, and our members, can be partners in the states on legislative and regulatory issues related to hunting.

**Indiana:** National Rifle Association Annual Meeting: Gun owners, shooters, collectors, hunters and Second Amendment advocates from all across North America gathered in Indianapolis, Indiana, during the week of April 10th for the annual National Rifle Association Meeting and Safari Club International was in attendance to represent its membership and engage on conservation and hunting issues. State and Local Liaison Chris Tymeson attended the 24th Annual National Firearms Law Seminar while there and SCI had a membership booth on the show floor. SCI continues to lead from the front and is always first for hunters. Pictured L-R: Chris Tymeson, State and Local Liaison, Jason St. Michael, Member and Chapter Services Director, and Jason Curtis, Membership Services Supervisor.



**Pennsylvania:** SCI Eastern States and Local Liaison Bee Frederick attended the Pennsylvania Sportsmen and Women Policy Workgroup Advocacy Day in Harrisburg, where the group promoted various pro-sportsmen's policies, such as expanding Sunday hunting in the Commonwealth, and advocated for the preservation of PA's hunting, trapping, and fishing heritage (above).



**Kansas:** SCI State and Local Liaison Chris Tymeson attended the annual meeting of the Kansas State Rifle Association in Lenexa, Kansas in April, engaging with legislators and statewide elected officials on topics of importance to SCI, its members and chapters.

**Colorado:** Western State and Local Liaison Chris Tymeson and Litigation Associate Madie Demaske attended an event in April at the Colorado Capitol organized by the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and the Colorado Wildlife Conservation Project, which was attended by over 400 people and 63 legislators. Madie is pictured with other advocates below.

**Alaska:** SCI Western State and Local Liaison Chris Tymeson travelled to Alaska in May to attend the Kenai Peninsula Chapter's Midnight Sun Fundraiser and Banquet in Soldotna and to meet with Chapter leaders and Department of Fish and Game officials. Over 400 members of the community attended the Midnight Sun Fundraiser and Banquet. Pictured L to R, Chris Tymeson, Western State and Local Liaison and Gary Gearhart, Regional Representative for SCI Region 33, working in the SCI membership booth.

**Houndsman XP Podcast:** SCI Western State and Local Liaison Chris Tymeson appeared on the [podcast](#) to discuss SCI and its mission.

**Texas:** SCI Western State and Local Liaison Chris Tymeson and Texas Trophy Hunters Association CEO Christina Pittman traveled to Austin, Texas in June to meet with leadership within the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). SCI/F Large Carnivore Program Manager Maria Davidson also attended virtually due to travel delay issues. The TPWD has a relatively new Executive Director, David Yoskowitz, and the purpose of the successful meeting was to forge new partnership opportunities and re-kindle existing relationships with SCI, SCI/F, TTHA and the TPWD.



## WINS THIS QUARTER

**Alaska:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments in support of House Bill 61. House Bill 61 generally prohibits state agencies or municipalities from limiting an individual's access to firearms, ammunition, and components during declared states of emergency, in addition to other similar anti-firearms ownership and firearms commerce measures. The bill would also allow individuals whose rights are infringed upon, a form of recourse in the court system. As was seen during the pandemic, access to firearms was a critical part of the well-being of individuals seeking to recreate outdoors including hunting, as well as the basic fundamental right of self-protection. The bill was passed by the Legislature.

**Colorado:** SCI joined a coalition letter in support of renewing a lease with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado State Land Board for the continuation of the State Trust Land Hunting and Fishing Access Program.

**Colorado:** SCI joined other hunting and conservation groups in a letter supporting the recommended Big Game License reductions based on recently published data by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

**Florida:** House Joint Resolution 1157, a joint resolution to preserve in perpetuity hunting and fishing as a public right and enshrine hunting and fishing as the preferred means of responsibly managing and controlling fish and wildlife, passed the Florida legislature in late April. SCI advocates supported this through the HAAC. This now means that the voters in Florida will have the opportunity to vote on the Right to Hunt and Fish in Florida as a constitutional amendment in November of 2024.

**Maine:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted a letter in opposition of LD 814, which would have reduced the current year-round coyote season by more than half and significantly reduced the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's (DIFW) ability to appropriately manage coyote populations. The legislation did not advance.

**Maine:** Legislation to ban "fenced" hunting preserves, which was vaguely defined in the bill and would have had far reaching implications for hunting within any type of "artificial enclosure" including bird hunting operations and other types of hunting, failed. Earlier this year, SCI New England Chapter President testified in opposition to the bill and, ultimately, the bill failed to move.

**Maryland:** Senate Bill 327, which was signed into law, will provide a tremendous increase in conservation funding for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources while also increasing access and opportunities for both experienced and beginner sportsmen and women through a very moderate license fee increase. Sunday hunting expansions were, unfortunately, pulled out of the bill during the legislative process.

**Minnesota:** SCI issued an action alert to Minnesota members encouraging them to contact the Senate after the House amended a budget bill on the floor to prohibit any future wolf hunting or trapping seasons should wolves be delisted. Wolves in Minnesota far exceed recovery levels for both state and federal plans and wolf management should be returned to the DNR when wolves are delisted in the state. Wolf management will require all available options and must include a scientifically based, regulated hunting and trapping season. Further, limiting future wolf management decisions should not be done without extensive public input and the opportunity for comment. SCI subsequently joined a coalition letter to the Senate on the same issue. The wolf hunting and trapping issue did not make it into the final bill version.

**Minnesota:** SCI issued an action alert to members regarding a proposed House ban on traditional lead ammunition on Wildlife Management Areas in the state and asking members to contact the Senate to oppose the ban. The lead ban issue did not make it into the final bill version.

**Montana:** SCI joined a coalition letter opposing SB 533, which would have repealed the ability of nonresident students to obtain licenses at a reasonable cost while attending school in Montana. The bill failed to pass out of committee.

**Montana:** SCI signed onto a joint comment letter for SB 442, in support for tax revenue in percentage to conservation through a new Habitat Legacy Account to conserve habitat and restore more of Montana's land and waterways.

**Nevada:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments in opposition to AB 355, related to firearms. AB 355 would have restricted potential hunters under the age of 21 from possessing or controlling a semiautomatic shotgun or semiautomatic centerfire rifle. Semiautomatic shotguns are the most popular firearm type for waterfowl hunting, a typical pathway for introducing new hunters to hunting, and semiautomatic centerfire rifles have grown in popularity over the last 20 years in the hunting arena. This bill would undoubtedly have had a disparate impact on the recruitment of younger and new hunters and ultimately impact conservation and funding of conservation. SCI subsequently issued an action alert to members encouraging them to contact House members to oppose the bill and additionally joined a coalition letter opposing the bill. The Governor ultimately vetoed the bill after the legislature disregarded the will of hunters.

**Nevada:** SCI joined a coalition letter opposing SB 90 and the designation of the invasive wild mustang as the State Horse. The bill failed to advance in the Legislature.



**Pennsylvania:** SCI, as part of the Pennsylvania Sportsmen and Women Policy Workgroup, signed onto a group support letter for Senate Bill 344, which would allow nonresident college students to purchase a hunting license at resident pricing. The bill unanimously passed out of the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee and is awaiting further action in the Senate.

**South Carolina:** At the end of May, South Carolina will officially allow for Sunday hunting during certain months on a majority of their public lands! SCI thanks our conservation partners as well as former SCI State Legislator of the Year Rep. Bobby Cox for their continued efforts to promote seven-day public land hunting opportunities in the Palmetto State.

**Utah:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments on the proposed changes to Utah's swan hunting regulation, encouraging the Division to take a light-handed approach as the transition occurs from a mortality quota system that allowed the harvest of trumpeter swans to a tundra swan only season.

**Vermont:** SCI President Sven Lindquist sent a letter to the VT Fish and Wildlife Department expressing strong support for the proposed recommendations for the 2023 moose harvest.

**Wyoming:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments in support of the annual wolf regulation hunting season proposal.



## CURRENT THREATS AND ISSUES

**Arizona:** SCI issued an action alert to members to encourage the Legislature to confirm the nominated commissioners of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. The two fully qualified commissioners at issue could only serve one year without confirmation by the Senate.

**Colorado:** SCI issued an action alert to Colorado members requesting they contact the Governor and encourage him to sign Senate Bill 256. The bipartisan bill would have prevented the reintroduction of wolves into Colorado without a Section 10(j) experimental population under the Federal Endangered Species Act, thereby giving the state wildlife agency greater flexibility in managing a federally protected species. The Governor vetoed the bill.

**Michigan:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted a letter of support for House Bill 4386 that would require newly appointed members of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to have held a hunting or fishing license in four of the last six years prior to appointment. The bill is currently awaiting further action in the House of Representatives.

**Montana:** SCI issued an action alert to Montana members regarding supporting HB 372, the constitutional right to hunt, fish and trap amendments.

**New York:** Assembly Bill 2084 would prohibit the harvest of wildlife using lead ammo on any state land open for hunting, as well as any land - state or private - contributing surface water to the New York City water supply. In addition to the economic access issues caused by this bill, the surface water language is especially problematic and would restrict private property rights. The bill, unfortunately, passed the Assembly but did not receive further action before the legislature adjourned for 2023. Assembly bill 2084 will still be able to be considered when the legislature returns in 2024. SCI's HAAC can be found here.

**New York:** Assembly Bill 2917 and Senate Bill 4099 attempt to prohibit competitions or contests in

**New York (cont'd):** which certain animals are harvested. These types of events, which are legal and regulated hunting, are typically geared toward coyotes and have been the target of anti-hunting groups across the country. Senate Bill 4099 unfortunately passed the New York Senate on June 7 and has been assigned to the Committee on Codes in the Assembly. SCI submitted a letter of opposition and an ongoing HAAC to AB 2917 where SCI also advocated for the management authority of the DEC. The legislature has adjourned for the year but will return in January 2024 and will be able to take these bills up.

**Oregon:** SCI joined a coalition letter opposing HB 2005, a bill that would restrict firearms ownership for 18–21-year-olds, among other gun controls provisions, and that would subsequently impact conservation and funding. The bill is still alive at this time but the ownership of firearms restrictions on 18–21-year-olds has been removed.

**Oregon:** SCI joined another coalition letter in support of the most recent rendition of House Bill 3086. HB 3086 would determine the geographic makeup of the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Anti-hunting forces have made a concerted effort this year to slant the makeup of the commission towards urban representation with other bills and proposed amendments to this bill.

**Oregon:** SCI issued an action alert to Oregon members regarding supporting House Bill 3086 with the -4 amendment, which would change the membership of the Fish and Wildlife Commission from a congressional district representation model to a watershed representation model.

**Pennsylvania:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted a letter of support for Senate Bill 67 which would significantly expand Sunday hunting in the Keystone State past the current three Sundays where it is allowed.

**Vermont:** SCI submitted comments on the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Plan and Supplemental Environmental Assessment. Read them here. SCI recommended Alternative B, but the FWS chose Alternative A, disregarding sportsmen and women and implementing restrictions on dog training and hunting with dogs that were illegitimately added to the 2021 hunting plan.

SCI's specialized staff have collaborated with conservation partners and our international chapters to interact with government leaders and agencies on behalf of the hunting community. Together we challenge efforts that threaten hunting freedoms, trophy importation and conservation efforts abroad. Whether it's hunting partridge, roe deer or Cape buffalo, SCI has and will continue to defend your freedom to hunt.

## WINS THIS QUARTER

**Sign for Hunting Campaign:** On June 6, the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE) handed over 360,000 signatures to the Commissioner for Environment, Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius. This is one of the major environmental campaigns that has ever taken place at the EU level. The campaign is a call on the main European institutions to improve collaboration and work with hunters for nature conservation and the future of hunting. SCI supported the FACE campaign encouraging hunters to sign the petition.

**CIC'S 69th General Assembly:** SCI's EVP Ben Cassidy and European Liaison Juan Magaz attended and participated in the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation's (CIC) 69th General Assembly in Paris, France. The theme of the conference was Biodiversity 2030 which was discussed throughout two days of speeches, presentations and panels.



**FACE's General Assembly:** SCI EVP Ben Cassidy and Europe Liaison Juan Magaz attended FACE's General Assembly & Member Meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, which included discussions around the pro-hunting petition and a presentation on the American model by Ben Cassidy. Additionally, there were presentations on conservation of small game on farmlands. They participated in the communication working group focusing on the petition to the European Commission, the drafting of the manifesto for the 2024 elections, and the goal to increase awareness of hunting to Europeans to up to 70% by 2027.

**Italian Chapter Success:** The Italian Chapter organized its 36th Convention in Verona with a record-breaking number of participants. Led by President Tiziano Terzi, the event was a huge success. SCI President Sven Lindquist, CEO Laird Hamberlin and EU Liaison Juan Magaz participated at the Europe Committee meeting led by Dr. Estade, as well as attending the Chapter's festivities. The European Committee laid out goals for SCI Europe, including hosting an event in the UK, conservation projects in Portugal and Switzerland, and overall strategy.



**CITES:** SCI staff attended the 32nd CITES Animals Committee meeting (AC32) in Geneva, continuing SCI's long commitment to engage on CITES issues and work to ensure international trade in hunting trophies. Fortunately, the Committee did not initiate any actions that directly implicate trade in trophies, a welcome relief from the typical and unnecessary hyper-focus on African charismatic megafauna. Nevertheless, relevant to SCI's interests, African lion and leopard conservation guidance documents, which have been in development for several years, will be updated with range state input and submitted later for consideration by the Animals Committee. Additionally, the Animals Committee recommended that CITES recognize two species of African elephant, splitting one species into two. The southern African range states, SCI, and other pro-sustainable use groups support splitting elephants into two species, so this is a positive development. Although AC32 was relatively quiet, SCI will stay vigilant and continue to represent the interests of the hunting community worldwide.



## CURRENT THREATS AND ISSUES

**UK Trophy Ban:** On March 17, the UK House of Commons passed the “Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill.” The bill covers more than 6,500 species, a vast majority of which are not hunted game species. Nevertheless, it is now being considered by the House of Lords. In mid-June, the Lords had a “second reading” of the bill and now moves to Committee consideration, where favorable amendments will likely be proposed. [Read more.](#)

**Duck Hunting in Australia:** The state government in Victoria, Australia recently imposed arbitrary limitations for the 2023 duck season and established a Select Committee to review waterfowl hunting in the state. SCI and hundreds of SCI advocates submitted comments explaining that hunting drives conservation programs and urging the Select Committee to base its decisions on science and to ignore anti-hunting bias. [Read more.](#)



SCI's Hunter Advocacy Action Center (HAAC) is the most effective tool for sportsmen and women to take action on critical issues affecting the hunting community. The HAAC achieves real results in local, state, federal, and international governing bodies. Your voice matters – take action today at <https://safariclub.org/haac/>.



## NEW AND CONTINUING CAMPAIGNS THIS QUARTER

### TOP CAMPAIGNS

**Hunting Priorities:** Based on the results of the SCI advocacy poll, a letter to Representatives and Senators on priorities for the hunting community; these are opposing trophy bans, opposing anti-conservation bills, supporting no-net-loss, fixing the endangered species act, opposing predator control restrictions, and supporting access to lead ammunition.

**No-Net-Loss:** Petition to the Biden Administration to maintain the current level of hunting and fishing access across the country. We have also added a letter to Director Martha Williams as part of our membership campaign.

**Women Go Hunting:** These stories are showcasing women in the SCI community in publications and digital media. To date, 100+ women have shared their stories with great success on social media and other communications.

**State HAACs:** This quarter featured many state and local issues with our advocates taking action. The full list can be found in the Around the States section of this report.

### TOP CAMPAIGNS THIS QUARTER

State HAACs Across the Country



Hunting Priorities



Women Go Hunting



No-Net-Loss



# Moving the Needle

## DEFENDING HUNTERS

Online activists have called out former NFL quarterback Jay Cutler for posting a photo of a beautiful black bear that he hunted in Montana. Cutler is right to be proud of that bear, and himself, and SCI defended him publicly.

## WOMEN GO HUNTING

Building off the success of last Convention's Women Go Hunting theme, planning is well underway to continue celebrating women as part of the Future of Hunting. In addition to women continuing to share their stories, we have also started the SCI Women Go Hunting Facebook group to encourage further participation.



## MEDIA

Media: SCI Digital Marketing Specialist Chris LaCivita attended the Professional Outdoor Media Association (POMA) in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Chris was invited to help host two panels at the conference with Gabriella Hoffman, an independent journalist with Townhall and the Independent Women's Forum. These panels focused around digital strategies and were well attended by independent writers, media professionals, and industry marketing executives.

## PARTNERSHIPS

SCI is thrilled to announce its partnership with none other than the legendary Patrick Smith Roping, a two-time world champion and thirteen-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualifier hailing from Lipan, Texas. Known for his exceptional roping skills and unwavering passion for the outdoors, Patrick Smith is eager to join forces with SCI in this exciting collaboration.

## GUIDES & OUTFITTERS

SCI has established a WhatsApp group to deliver weekly updates on advocacy to guides, outfitters, and SCI exhibitors from all over the world.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media continues to be a focus of SCI Advocacy, and even after the convention "high" of followers and engagements, we are continuing to see growth on our platforms. Notably, We broke 30,000 followers on Instagram and 50,000 subscribers on YouTube.

## PODCAST

On the "First For Hunters" Podcast, we recorded eight new episodes and we are currently working on a regular schedule of impressive guests.

## SCI STORE

SCI Store: Released new Summer "Vintage Line" and sold off 80% of leftover shirts and sweatshirts from convention. We also sold all but 8 Beretta Gun Cases to chapters – which they used for their events.

## WEEKLY UPDATES

Subscribe to SCI's International Government & Public Affairs email updates, delivered to your inbox for free every Tuesday morning! Sign up here.



## SCI STAFF HUNTS

Even with a busy spring, SCI staff managed to find time to do what we love most – get out in the field. Here are the highlights!





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### *About SCI*

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Safari Club International (SCI) is the leading defender of the freedom to hunt and supporter of wildlife conservation worldwide. SCI is unique in the scope of our ability to defend and advance our freedom to hunt, mobilizing 146 chapters and an affiliate network representing 7.2 million hunters around the world.

SCI is also the only hunting rights organization with an international advocacy team based in Washington, D.C. and an all-species focus. In the U.S., SCI's fulltime staff of professional advocates speak for hunters at federal and state levels on important issues such as access to hunting on public lands and the authority of states to manage their wildlife.

Through SCI's Hunter Advocacy Action Center (HAAC), SCI educates and activates hunter advocates on issues in their communities and states, as well as nationwide. SCI's chapter networks in Canada and Europe are involved in advocacy on local and global hunting issues, protecting sportsmen's rights to hunt and import trophies. For more than two decades, SCI has been the major defender of hunters in courtrooms throughout the country.

SCI is First for Hunters.