



“SERVING THE HUNTER WHO TRAVELS”

“Hunting provides the principal incentive and revenue for conservation. Hence it is a force for conservation.”

Special To The Hunting Report World Conservation Force Bulletin

by John J. Jackson, III

White House Orders National Hunting Conference

The American Wildlife Conservation Partners, AWCP, is a forum begun by 38 of America’s leading sportsmen’s conservation organizations in 2000. The proof of its worth to the hunting community and wildlife conservation has never been in doubt. On August 16th, 2007, at AWCP’s annual forum taking place at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute and the King Ranch in Texas a historic announcement was made. Two White House representatives read from an Executive Order signed that day by President Bush. The title of the Order is *Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation* in full recognition of hunting and the force it is for wildlife conservation.

The Executive Order has four relevant sections. The first is the “purpose” which is “to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat.” The second commands that federal agencies take “actions that expand and enhance hunting opportunities,” “ad-

dress declining trends” and “manage wildlife and wildlife habitats in a manner that expands and enhances hunting opportunities.” The third is to hold a “White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy (Conference) within one year to facilitate these



goals.” Fourth, the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality is to prepare a *Comprehensive Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Plan* that establishes a “10-year agenda for fulfilling the actions identified in section 2...” The Chairman is to do that within one year of the Con-

ference.

This historic Order steps up the Governor’s Hunting Heritage Conferences of the past to a Presidential hunting heritage summit for the express purpose of devising a plan of action to expand the number of hunters, hunting opportunities, game and habitat. This is the result of the collective effort of the AWCP partners and the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation held in August, 2005. The collective actions of the finest hunting conservation organizations of our time have lead to this opportunity. It is the crowning achievement of the AWCP. Conservation Force and many of its supporting organizations like Dallas Safari Club, Houston Safari Club, FNAWS and QDMA are all members of AWCP.

The full Order follows so that the reader can revel in its message. It reads like an award and the inherent recognition of the conservation role of hunting is welcome and reason to celebrate. The document by itself is a historic one. We are going to put a copy on the wall. It provides the greatest and most

comprehensive opportunity in our lifetimes. There is no parallel in our lifetimes, but it follows in line with those conferences of President Teddy Roosevelt and Aldo Leopold. It does not directly cite international hunting or conservation, but perhaps there is still time for this administration to ad-

dress those worsening concerns as well.

No date or place has yet been selected for the Conference. A federal advisory committee that is made up of representative partners of AWCP called the Sporting Conservation Council is expected to take the conference planning lead for the hunting

EXECUTIVE ORDER

FACILITATION OF HUNTING HERITAGE AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of this order is to direct Federal agencies that have programs and activities that have a measurable effect on public land management, outdoor recreation, and wildlife management, including the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat.

Sec. 2. Federal Activities. Federal agencies shall, consistent with agency missions:

(a) Evaluate the effect of agency actions on trends in hunting participation and, where appropriate to address declining trends, implement actions that expand and enhance hunting opportunities for the public;

(b) Consider the economic and recreational values of hunting in agency actions, as appropriate;

(c) Manage wildlife and wildlife habitats on public lands in a manner that expands and enhances hunting opportunities, including through the use of hunting in wildlife management planning;

(d) Work collaboratively with State governments to manage and conserve game species and their habitats in a manner that respects private property rights and State management authority over wildlife resources;

(e) Establish short and long term goals, in cooperation with State and tribal governments, and consistent with agency missions, to foster healthy and productive populations of game species and appropriate opportunities for the public to hunt those species;

(f) Ensure that agency plans and actions consider programs and recommendations of comprehensive planning efforts such as State Wildlife Action Plans, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and other range-wide management plans for big game and upland game birds;

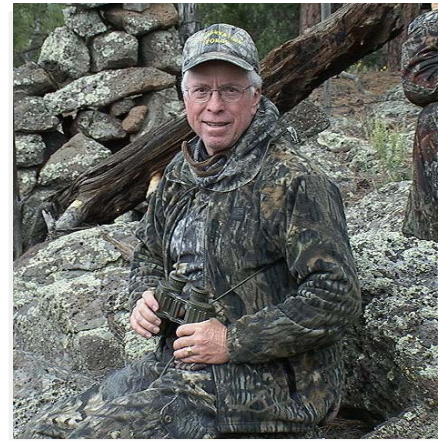
(g) Seek the advice of State and tribal fish and wildlife agencies, and, as appropriate, consult with the Sporting Conservation Council and other organizations, with respect to the foregoing Federal activities.

Sec. 3. North American Wildlife Policy Conference. The Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality (Chairman) shall, in coordination with the appropriate Federal agencies and in consultation with the Sporting Conservation Council and in cooperation with State and tribal fish and wildlife agencies and the public, convene not later than 1 year after the date of this order, and periodically thereafter at such times as the Chairman deems appropriate, a White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy (Conference) to facilitate the exchange of information and advice relating to the means for achieving the goals of this order.

Sec. 4. Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Resource Conservation Plan. The Chairman shall prepare, consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations, in coordination with the appropriate Federal agencies and in consultation with the Sporting Conservation Council, and in cooperation with State and tribal fish and wildlife agencies, not later than 1 year following the conclusion of the Conference, a comprehensive Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Plan that incorporates existing and ongoing activities and sets forth a 10-year agenda for fulfilling the actions identified in section 2 of this order.

Sec. 5. Judicial Review. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right, benefit, trust responsibility, or privilege, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

GEORGE W. BUSH
THE WHITE HOUSE,
August 16, 2007.



JOHN J. JACKSON, III
Conservation Force



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Editor/Writer

John J. Jackson, III

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Don Causey

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Conservation Force
3240 S I-10 W Serv Road
Metairie, LA 70001

Tel. 504-837-1233. Fax 504-837-1145.

www.ConservationForce.org

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The Hunting Report
9300 S. Dadeland Blvd., Suite 605
Miami, FL 33156-2721.
Tel. 305-670-1361. Fax 305-670-1376.

community along with federal, state and tribal representatives. The Executive Order is available on the web at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/08/20070817.html>.

SPECIAL REPORT

News Analysis

Growth In Big Game Hunting Tops Off

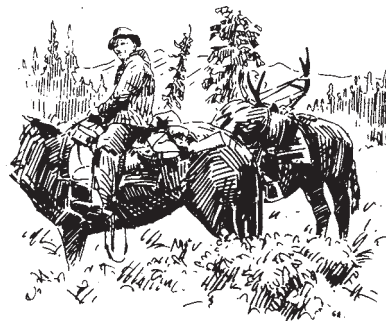
The preliminary findings of the 2006 *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* were issued in late May. Though the survey states “the number of big game hunters was relatively stable,” those numbers have declined a small amount for the second consecutive five-year period. The decline in the 2001 survey was three percent, and in the 2006 survey two percent, totaling five percent decline over the past ten years. This is something the Governor’s Hunting Heritage Conferences have anticipated and President Bush’s Executive Order of August 16, 2007 is intended to address.

The number of big game hunters is reported by the experts in the survey to have “remained relatively consistent.” Nevertheless, one conclusion can be drawn from the trend data. The phenomenal growth in big game hunting in America that past surveys had shown since they began in 1955 has stalled or topped off. The number of big game hunters doubled and tripled in the second half of the 1900’s unlike anything else in America. The recent decline is only nominal compared to the decline in most other outdoor recreational activities, but that trend is in fact negative. Conservation Force’s publications on the explosive growth of big game hunting are still true – for explosive growth was occurring at the same time many were lamenting a decline. We’ve been awaiting this survey. Now, after two consecutive declines, though small in comparison to many other activities and in an absolute sense, the inevitable has happened when there is a finite resource. Everything suggests that the final survey report due in No-

vember will reveal that big game hunters are still the most intense (spend the most days afield despite short seasons) and still expend the most per capita on their sport and on conservation. They are footing the conservation bills and are by far the largest segment of hunters: 85 percent.

The number of big game hunters is 10,682,000, down by 606,000 from 1996 when there were 11,288,000. This does not include those hunters that are less than 16 years of age. There are 1.6 million six- to 15-year olds that hunted in 2006.

The report expressly states that “it is not intended to reflect the total number (of) wildlife-related recreationists in the US since many individuals can be considered anglers and hunters even though they may not have participated in 2006.” According to the report, the real overall number (five-year) is 18.6



million hunters (all game) and 44.4 million anglers, still excluding the millions less than 16 years of age. The report states that those five-year numbers “could be considered a more accurate representation of the number of anglers and hunters in the U.S.” than those participating in only one particular year. The Service’s press release states, “It is important to note that the National Survey counts only participants who actually went hunting, fishing or observed wildlife in 2006 and does not represent the total number of anglers, hunters...in the United States.” This is a point we have made before in this bulletin. Those who hunt and fish only every two to five years still consider themselves hunters and anglers. They are sportsmen and sportswomen. Moreover, there are approxi-

mately 147 million living Americans that have hunted or fished. That is a super-minority, if a minority at all.

The cause of the negative trend over the past decade is open to speculation. The positive trend had to end at some time. After all, game and habitat are finite resources, and a number of surveys have shown that access and game availability are important to hunters. The affirmative action some states have taken to limit non-resident hunters has to have taken its toll. The aging of the whole US population must also be taken into account. There are many healthy young men and women in the armed forces. A recent survey by Southwick and Associates indicates that 40 percent of hunters surveyed are affected by rising gasoline prices (www.southwickassociates.com). Katrina impacted Louisiana and Mississippi.

Regardless of the cause, big game hunting is still extremely popular. In fact, it is by far the most popular form of hunting, as 85 percent of all hunters hunt big game.

It must also be noted that hunting generally and big game hunting are declining less than fishing, which has declined 15 percent over the past decade. They are both extremely robust recreational industries that have provided more than \$10 billion in excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, archery and angling equipment for fish and wildlife management. Hunters and anglers remain the force.

Some question how many hunters we really need. How many is enough? What do we need more of them for? Some believe that an excess of hunters has caused hunting prices to rise too high and caused all available hunting lands to be leased. Others simply tire of hillsides of hunter-orange. Hunting is certainly a very popular activity, with intense competition for available resources.

The preliminary report in May was followed by the state report in July. They are both available at <http://federalassst.fws.gov/surveys/surveys.html>. The final report will be out in November and available at the same website.

SPECIAL REPORT

News... News... News...

**Petitions Filed To
Free Seized Trophies**

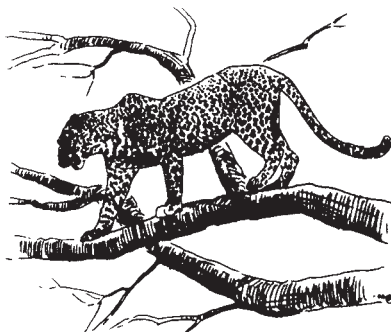
In early August, Conservation Force filed petitions for remission and stay orders for those Namibian leopard trophies that were seized for forfeiture because the type of CITES tags used by the Namibian CITES authorities was no longer acceptable to some law enforcement agents of the Service. We understand that most trophies were only detained temporarily. We filed on behalf of those hunters who had received formal notices of seizure and forfeiture and who had contacted us timely. There may well be others who failed to learn of our free public services through these pages.

The tags have been in use for 15 years. There is no mandatory tag requirement, though the Service does have such a regulation pending, but not yet adopted. The Parties to CITES “recommend” a self-locking tag in its quota resolution for leopard. It is only a procedural “suggestion” in a resolution the US Fish & Wildlife Service does not follow. The Service did not timely advise the Namibian authorities or the hunting community of their disagreement over the tags. It just kept seizing the trophies.

At the recent CITES Conference of the Parties, COP 14, Conservation Force helped arrange a face-to-face meeting between the highest Namibian officials and those of the US delegation to resolve the inter-governmental issue. The Namibian CITES Management Authority understands the issue and has changed its choice of tags so there should not be any further problem. Because of the cooperative attitude of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior that oversees the USF&WS, we hope and expect that those trophies formally seized will be returned in due course, but it was necessary to file petitions for the return of some within the time delays allowed by regulation.

A greater problem is that there is no provision in USF&WS regulations

for return of Appendix 1 trophies when there has been a technical error on the part of either the importing or the exporting country. Import brokers, taxidermists and hunters report to us that governmental errors are the basis of most trophy seizures, particularly this year. Conservation Force and other representative organizations such as the USSA and SCI have asked the International section of the USF&WS for regu-



latory change which has been denied. Now the International section of the USF&WS is adopting regulations codifying the practice of seizing and destroying trophies of Appendix 1 species even when the problem is a governmental error or perceived to be one. This calls for a Congressional fix, since the Law Enforcement Division is seizing such trophies and the Division of Management Authority has been unwilling to provide any avenue of regu-

Conservation Force Sponsor

Grand Slam Club/Ovis generously pays all of the costs associated with the publishing of this bulletin. Founded in 1956, Grand Slam Club/Ovis is an organization of hunter/conservationists dedicated to improving wild sheep and goat populations worldwide by contributing to game and wildlife agencies or other non-profit wildlife conservation organizations. GSCO has agreed to sponsor *Conservation Force Bulletin* in order to help international hunters keep abreast of hunting-related wildlife news. For more information, please visit www.wildsheep.org.

GRAND SLAM CLUB OVIS



latory relief. Conservation Force called for help with legislative oversight and reform at the most recent AWCP meeting. We have to take a stronger stand because of the losses we have observed and the regulatory attitude and denials of relief in the past. We have to establish protection of innocent trophy owners/hunters from the inevitable human technical and clerical errors of government employees.

In May, Conservation Force and the Presidents or leaders of USSA, DSC, HSC, Shikar Safari Club International and African Safari Club of Florida met with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior in Washington, D.C. to oppose a bundle of new internal CITES regulations of the International section of the Service that operates wholly apart from the rest of the Service. The meeting subject included the abusive seizure policies of trophies from foreign countries. We discovered that the restrictive regulations that are proposed had already cleared the signature chain and are now under review by the Office of Management and Budget. It is not promising, but more particulars could not be released to the organizations calling for relief.

The positive developments in other parts of the Service and under the Administration have disarmed many hunting organizations, while the interests of international hunters and related wildlife conservation are growing worse. The International section of the Service is wholly separate and apart and the esoteric CITES and *Endangered Species* laws and regulations confound the problem even more. There seems to be little or no hope without legislative reform.

Many of the trophies being seized cost as much as a new automobile and all are part of range nations' conservation programs and were taken on lawful, regulated hunts. Some have CITES quotas to promote the trade. The seizures fly in the face of all that. We need your help to deal with this worsening crisis. Please make a tax-deductible contribution to Conservation Force at PO Box 278, Metairie, LA 70004-0278 USA; or on the web at: www.conservaionforce.org. – John J. Jackson, III.