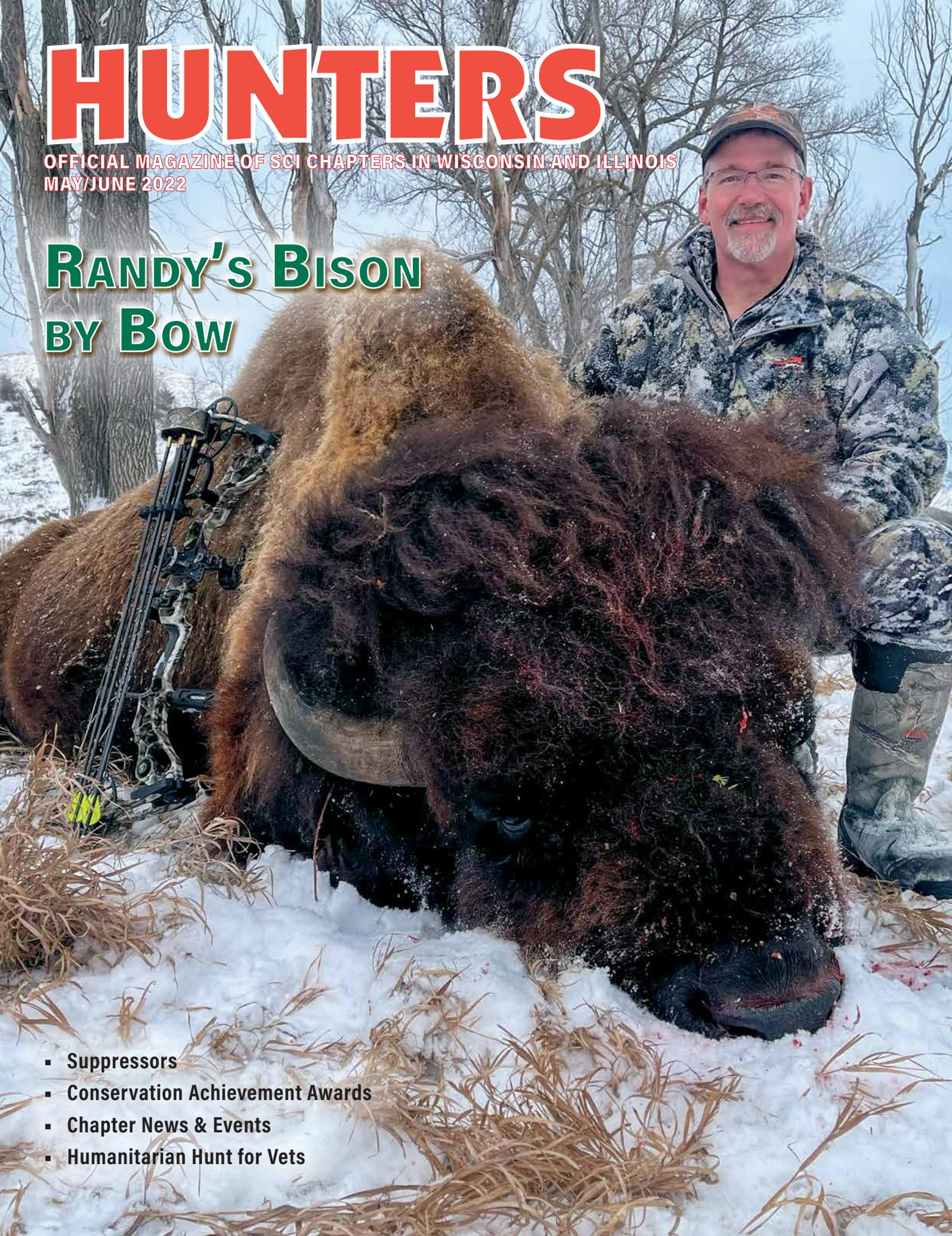


# HUNTERS

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF SCI CHAPTERS IN WISCONSIN AND ILLINOIS  
MAY/JUNE 2022

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# HUNTERS

Official Magazine of SCI Chapters in Wisconsin and Illinois  
May/June 2022

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*by Mark LaBarbera*



# Join today!

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

# SCI Region 16 Report

by Charmaine Wargolet, Regional Representative

Happy Spring, everyone! The sun and warmer temps along with all the rest of nature's majesty tends to rejuvenate the soul! Enjoy this time out of doors.

January through April is fundraiser time and all the events I attended did very well. Hunters are tired of staying home and have come out to our individual chapter events and have supported SCI generously! And the banquet committees for each of these events deserve a standing ovation. If you have ever worked a chapter event, you know it is a gargantuan amount of work! Thanks to all of you who worked and to you if you attended. We can put on a great show, but if no one comes, it is for nothing. It even appears that attendance at chapter meetings seems to be a little better. What an awesome way to spend an evening, visiting with other sportsmen and women to talk about recent hunts or even planned hunts!

On the subject of meetings, I wanted to bring something up that has been on my mind. We are a membership-based organization and are constantly striving to recruit new members, (which I hope everyone does by the way). But when new members come to a meeting, are we all trying to make them welcome? Certainly, we have our friends that we look forward to seeing and sharing a beer or cocktail with, but when a new member attends a meeting, I hope we all are aware of them and go out of our way to welcome them and introduce them around to the group. I am sure we

have all been the "new kid on the block" at one time or another and was grateful when someone was kind enough to take the time to make us feel at home. As chapters, we all deal with not only recruitment of members but the biggest stumbling block, retention. It is easy to retain a member when they feel welcome and have a great time at a meeting or fundraiser or other chapter event. You don't have to be an officer or director of a chapter to be kind to someone (smile).

I hope by the time you receive this magazine that the brave Ukrainian people have prevailed. It is heart-breaking what they are going through, and I know we have all been praying for them.

As always, good hunting and be well!

## Join Big AI's Team

Rick Rollo and his team recently announced that they have "... met with the wonderful people at Wern Valley Sportsmen's Club and picked the date for the 25th Annual Big AI Charity Hunt. It's Sunday, October 16, 2022. Everyone is invited to pitch in."

Rick added, "We are hoping for our biggest year ever. We will have space for 56 shooters this year, so it should be a great time. Please start saving your nickels, dimes, dollars and hundreds!" See bigalcharityhunt.com.

# Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Charmaine Wargolet, President

The Wisconsin Chapter has been very busy! The Grand Banquet February 11-12 was a huge success! Over 40 exhibitors, a lot of high quality vocal and silent auction items, and of course, over 80 of the highest quality hunts. Not to mention the laughter and conversation between friends, some of which you may not have seen for a year! A HUGE thanks goes out to the Board of Directors and the rest of the banquet committee for all their hard work! And if you attended, thank you! We are glad you were there!

We have had a new programs chair for our monthly meetings, Nick Heim. Nick has been doing a great job of finding some really cool speakers which everyone has enjoyed. In March we heard from a Marine veteran who told us about his personal struggles when he got back home and how hunting helped save him. He is in the process of collecting one of every species of waterfowl in the world. He is also a photographer, so the pictures he had were beautiful. In May, Sally Kloosterman will be telling us about her elk hunt in New Mexico where she harvested a Governor's tag quality elk. He was huge and gorgeous! So, plan on attending and be sure and call our SCI office for a reservation.

## SCI Helps Ukrainians

SCI Wisconsin has a Ukrainian outfitter who along with his family, is working to feed and help refugees at the border. The Chapter's Board of Directors has authorized a \$1,000 donation to assist in this effort. Rick Rollo recently shared news that the Big AI's Fund has also authorized \$1,000 from the Big AI Fund to aid in this effort.

As Rick said with full transparency to donors, "I hope you all agree that although this does not technically fit our mission it is the right thing to do!" They agreed, and people will benefit from yet one more humanitarian act of giving by hunters who are SCI members.

For those who were unable to make a monthly meeting, I reported on what grant requests were approved by the Board. One was a \$3,000 donation to Nick Meier of Meier K9 to help with his getting and training dogs to chase down poachers in South Africa. The S. African game guards are so grateful for these animals. The other request was humanitarian. We voted on a \$1,000 grant which was then matched by the Big AI fund to make it \$2,000 and then matched by Harry Mattox and Jeff Belongia to make it \$3,000, to be sent to a Ukrainian hunting guide whose family and friends are helping refugees with food and supplies to get across the border into Poland. This way we knew every penny that was sent would be used to help people, and they need it so badly.



Well, folks, this will be my last Wisconsin Chapter President's message. The last two years have flown by and June 30 ends my term. It has been an incredible honor and privilege to serve as a leader for this chapter! I appreciate all the support the Board of Directors has shown me as well as all of the members! I have had so much fun! Thank you!



Rick Rollo, right, shared news about the charity pheasant hunt and humanitarian efforts with Mark LaBarbera during the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show where the SCI Wisconsin Chapter logo was prominently featured on an OHEC Touch of the Wild Sensory Safari education trailer.

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# Northeast Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Marty Witzak, President

I find myself in a happier and lighter mood these days as the sun shines brighter and warmer. It has been a long winter with some enjoyed activities and some cancelled activities due to "Mother Nature" and her plans for all of us. It has been great to get outdoors again, rake the yard and shoot some trap.

I know I touched on the enjoyment and all that we in the Northeast WI Chapter of SCI accomplished during our 23rd annual SCI banquet and live auction at the end of February but I just needed to toot my horn one more time!

Our evening was extraordinarily successful as we ushered in and greeted a full house! Check out the photos Mark LaBarbera put on pages 12-15. The meal was excellent, Kurt Walbeck and Melissa Bachman were very entertaining, and the live auction was a huge hit! I know at the end of the evening there were hunters and outfitters displaying smiles from ear to ear. Many great hunts, vacations, fishing expeditions and merchandise were auctioned off at the pleasure of the outfitters and the buyers.

I also want to mention between the SCI event and the Hunting and Fishing

Expo, our chapter grew by 22 brand new SCI members that took advantage of the show special on their membership cost. Overall, we had 60+ memberships sold including renewals and many of those were for the 3-year term and the opportunity to own the unique vest that came with the membership. What a great feeling to know that there are others out there that are committed to helping preserve our hunting rights.

I would also like to personally thank all the board members for the countless hours they worked putting the day and evening of the banquet together so everyone could enjoy the meal, auctions, and the raffles. Of course, I need to give a huge shout out as well to the volunteers who worked tirelessly, we could not have done it without all of you!

Our members have continued to meet at least seven months of the year to enjoy a meal together and share in a hunting or fishing experience of one of our members. It is always an enjoyable time spent in each other's company. We invite all our new members to join us and enjoy the evening. We meet at a local restau-



rant, have an excellent meal, and enjoy the program. For all the new members that joined in February, look for a bright yellow post card in the mail to inform you of the dates, restaurant and the individual (s) presenting the program. You will not want to miss these dates and of course you are encouraged to bring your significant other or a friend. It is a great evening!

I enjoyed meeting and talking with most of you during the banquet and expo and look forward to seeing you again. Until then, enjoy the warmer weather and start dreaming of those hunting, fishing or vacation trips you purchased at the auction. Thank you for believing and sharing with others your commitment to preserve our hunting rights.

# Calling All Chapters

Groundwork is being laid for one of the most important initiatives we will ever undertake in Wisconsin. All the pieces are falling into place for SCI members and chapters to lead the way on this initiative designed to reverse or slow the trend that have been plaguing the shooting sports, hunting and conservation. That is, the loss of hunters.

The concept has already proven successful in Iowa with help from the SCI Iowa Chapter. Now the stars are in alignment for Wisconsin to surpass Iowa and lead the national R3 initiative in a way that becomes a model for other states to follow as we all pull together to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters and shooters.

"The stars are in alignment," said SCI Life Member Mark LaBarbera who has been working on this initiative behind the scenes with Outdoor Heritage Education Center, Pass It On Outdoor Mentors, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. "We are now ready to bring a detailed request for matching funding to SCI

members, chapters and partners so we can launch this initiative in Wisconsin this year."

The concept is simple. The challenges are great. The possibilities are endless.

The idea is to dedicate a full-time staff member to identify and coordinate with willing mentors, land-owners, partner organizations, and equipment suppliers to dramatically increase the number of mentored hunting opportunities in Wisconsin. Once the opportunities are created, the coordinator's job will shift to filling every available hunt opportunity. The coordinator's time will be dedicated to facilitating the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and venues, and then helping to match a student to the mentored opportunity. After each hunt, the coordinator's role shifts to following up, reporting, and publicizing what we are accomplishing.

LaBarbera said funding will be matched 3:1, so he is optimistic that SCI, OHEC, WWF, and other partners will be able to generate the \$20,000 per year needed to receive \$60,000 per year in matching funds.



"I believe," he said, "that it is within our reach to more than double the number of new hunters coming out of the R3 program if we do this as planned without the restrictions placed on state employees." The coordinator would not be a state employee but would be an employee of one of the partnering charitable nonprofit conservation organizations.

Some SCI chapter leaders will be looking at being the lead funder, but individual donations are also welcome. They can be sent to OHEC R3, 2955 Kennedy Road, Hazel Green, WI 53811.

# Badgerland Chapter Report

by Randy Mayes, President

"Have you left yet?" Back in March, as I had mentioned in my previous President's Report, I was headed to western Iowa for a spring snow goose hunt. This was a trip arranged by Mark LaBarbera for 6 of us to see what we could do to help trim the burgeoning snow goose population.

The previous days I had the usual anticipation and preparation which I'm sure you are all familiar with before going on a trip. Even though this wasn't a "big" trip, it was still a trip. I still needed to pack and prepare. And yes, there was anticipation.

I left Stevens Point at noon for what was to be a 7-hour drive. After about 2 1/2 hours, I was cruising west on I-90 enjoying the sights. My phone rang and the caller ID told me it was our guide Eric Moltzan. Hmmm, I wonder why he

would be calling me, I thought as I answered. "Have you left yet?" he asked. I already had a weird feeling about when he called and him asking this question didn't help. I told him I was 2 1/2 hours into my trip. "So, Mark didn't talk to you earlier huh?" Ah, no, I replied. "Well, you can come if you want." I knew this trip was about to unravel.

Eric informed me that they had several inches of snow over-night and temps in the teens had everything frozen up. He said the geese were going to be heading south for what would likely be several days, according to the forecast. I turned around and headed home.

Though it was bad news, the good thing about it is this guide, Eric Moltzan, was considerate enough to call and tell us not to come. Many guides would have had you come anyhow, even if



there weren't many geese around. The guide doesn't make any money when you don't show up.

I bring this up because through my time with SCI, I have been introduced to many great guides and outfitters. When you get a personal recommendation such as I got from Mark LaBarbera about Eric, that, to me, is much more valuable than hand-picked references from a web site. Reason #2001 to be a member of SCI!

Just a parting announcement... mark down August 6, 2022 on your calendar as this is the date for the Badgerland Sporting Clays shoot at Rio Conservation Club! More info to follow!

# Legislative Update

by Dan Trawicki, SCI Lobbyist

Banquet season is coming to an end here in Wisconsin, and what a great season it was! I spent the weekend at the Wisconsin chapter and Badgerland chapter. Unfortunately, this year I had a conflict and did not make it to the Northeast chapters event. This was a great way to connect with guests and members across the state. As your Lobbyist working on behalf of the Wisconsin chapter, SE Wisconsin bow chapter, the Northeast chapter, and the Badgerland chapter, I always welcome your ideas and input. We have all spent much time and energy trying to preserve our right to hunt and fish in this great state and across the country.

I am currently involved in supporting or in some cases opposing over 26 different bills going thru the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate. We have many great friends in the legislature that support us and work with us to sustain our heritage and hunting rights. Unfortunately, we also have those in elected office that oppose our constitutional rights to hunt and fish and are working to reduce our outdoor opportunities. As your lobbyist, and thru the funding

of 501 C (4) chapters we are able to financially help those in public office, and those that seek public office. In many cases this puts SCI in the spotlight fighting for our freedoms and the future of our children. Only three bills SB609 dealing with pheasant stocking, SB 612 Brook trout stocking and SB563 regarding hunting of Bovines in high fence operations made it to the Governor's desk where they were vetoed.

As you all probably know by now, our wolves have again been listed by the Federal government. Both Sen. Johnson and Sen. Baldwin have come out against the listing and are working with us to again get them delisted. SCI National was assisting in the review and response to the numerous lawsuits that were filed to again return wolves to the endangered species list. As a member of both the wolf and bear committee representing SCI, I have been following this closely. One of the biggest concerns and questions is why has our own DNR after all the previous years of listing and the past few years of delisting not completed our wolf plan update? My time on the wolf committee was very frustrating to say the least. I'm told the wolf plan

update is scheduled to be completed by this summer. Let's hope so.

I previously mentioned our effort along with Hunter Nation in getting out the vote. I can work on bills and legislation, but if we don't elect people that will support us in a bi-partisan way we are losing ground. Hunting and the outdoors are not a Republican or Democratic issue. We need to get people from both sides of the aisle to understand us and support us. I find it shocking that we all complain about the lack of political involvement and support, then don't vote to help those that are willing to help us. That has got to change! You will be seeing more of this in the near future to be sure. But always remember "if you're not part of the solution, your part of the problem" Get out and vote! It matters!

Lastly as a reminder, our spring hearings were April 11 and once again virtual. This is a great way to give your input. Many times, I have seen spring hearing results mentioned and used as reference when proposed bills or legislative action is being discussed. I'm always available to talk with each and all of you to discuss your thoughts and concerns. I look forward to success and big wins for SCI in the coming years.

**Conservation:**

# Prairie Chickens

Here's information about the Greater Prairie Chicken in Wisconsin from the GPC Plan from the DNR and other interested parties.

Ring-necked Pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) have been shown to negatively impact GRPC through nest parasitism, aggressive behavior, and competition for similar resources, particularly in areas with more fragmented habitat (Sharp 1957, Vance and Westemeier 1979, Kimmel 1988).

In Illinois, male pheasants have been observed interfering with male GRPCs on leks (Walk 2004). Also in Illinois, Westemeier et al. (1998) detected pheasant nest parasitism in 43% of GRPC nests in the mid-late 1980s and recommended against introducing or managing for pheasants where small GRPC populations occur, and also demonstrated that controlling pheasants (via habitat manipulation and opportunistic shooting) successfully eliminated nest parasitism.

Ring-necked pheasants do occur, however, on the WDNR properties inhabited by GRPC in central Wisconsin. Although the WDNR does not release pheasants on state-owned or managed lands where GRPC occur, pheasants are raised and released on some adjacent private lands for purposes such as dog training.

A limited number of observations have been reported by WDNR staff and survey volunteers in recent years of pheasants harassing GRPC males on booming grounds during the breeding season on the Paul J. Olson Wildlife Area (L. Kardash, pers. comm.). No observations of pheasant eggs in GRPC nests were made during research studies involving nest monitoring in central Wisconsin from 2006-2009 and 2014-2015.

### Climate Change Impacts

Climate predictions for Wisconsin over the 21st century indicate that Wisconsin's annual average temperature is likely to warm by 4-9°F by the middle of the century, a rate of warming four times greater than what the state has experienced since 1950, with winter temperatures increasing more than those of other seasons (WICCI 2011).

Winters are projected to be milder and shorter, with decreased snowfall. An increase in the frequency of days with temperatures above 90°F may also occur during the summer months. Average annual precipitation is projected to increase, with more precipitation during spring and fall and increased frequency and magnitude of severe rain events in winter and spring, while summers are likely to be drier.

Greater Prairie-chicken are considered to be especially vulnerable to climate change as they are perhaps less likely than other grassland birds to move in response to changing conditions (NABCI 2010). In Wisconsin, loss of grassland habitat, limited dispersal, and surrounding land uses (intensive agriculture, increasing forest encroachment and development) compromise the species' ability to respond to novel conditions or shift its distribution (WDNR 2013). Greater Prairie-chicken are sensitive to weather extremes, as heavy rain, cold wet springs, or heat stress may reduce survival of young chicks. Projected increases in spring precipitation, in the frequency and magnitude of severe weather events, and in summer temperatures could have disproportionate effects on a species already beset by many conservation challenges. As noted above, milder winters may allow competing ring-necked pheasants to increase their distribution and numbers in GRPC-occupied areas.

### Health Considerations

On a nationwide scale, there has not been any disease agent or parasite identified as a threat to GRPC on a population scale. However, similar to the restraints previously mentioned, diseases can have a disproportionate effect on small populations (Johnson et al. 2020). These effects can be secondary to disease introductions affecting a large proportion of the population as they are confined to a small location or due to increased susceptibility. In Wisconsin, the relatively small geographic area available to GRPC coupled with climate change and other inciting factors as mentioned could also increase the general physiological stress response for the population.

This response could increase susceptibility of the GRPC to disease agents and other inflammatory processes (Hing et al. 2016).

While health screenings and necropsies of GRPC populations in Wisconsin and Minnesota have occurred with translocation and monitoring events with no significant health concerns identified, monitoring these populations for possible health related impacts that could contribute to the overall health is warranted. Results from these screenings indicated that a few GRPC were exposed to West Nile Virus. While WNV does not appear to be associated with population concerns, inclusion of this and other disease agents in health exams of any planned live bird handlings, as well as post-mortem investigations can contribute to further understanding of exposure and disease susceptibility changes over time.

This also provides details on the clinical implications of the presence of infectious organisms that may not be readily discernable with post-mortem exams alone, as detailed in the analysis of findings of gapeworm (*Syngamus* spp.) infections in GRPC (Shurba et al. 2021).

In general, there are certain diseases that are considered a greater threat to gallinaceous birds, wild and domestic. The Wildlife Health Committee of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAWFA) developed a health screening protocol to use for screening and sampling of wild Galliformes prior to translocation events (WAWFA Wildlife Health Committee, 2017) which is inclusive of many of the diseases that could put wild galliform populations at risk.

In addition, in captive settings, reticuloendotheliosis, a neoplastic disease that has been found in domestic chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese that is caused by a retrovirus of the same name, has been associated with Greater Prairie-Chicken mortalities (Drew et al. 1998). GRPC show little to no immune response to reticuloendotheliosis, and thus there is potential for this to be a disease of concern when having to temporarily hold GRPC in a captive setting or at domestic-wildlife interfaces.

**Humanitarian:**

# Wounded Warriors Hunt

Thanks to North Oak Hunt Club LLC and its members, plus SCI member Otto Reetz of Wounded Warriors of Wisconsin, 38 veterans enjoyed a heart-warming experience on a cold, windy day last month. All pheasants were donated for this hunt.

The Meat Block in Greenville donated 25 pounds of barbecue for this event. It was awesome. Larissa Franzen's grandmother made all the desserts, and they were awesome also!

It was great day for everyone. Here are a few of the photos.



# THE DIXON VEST

by Jessi Cole

In 2007, exactly 1,986 Dixon Vests were created. No more, no less. The number was chosen carefully to represent the year Mossy Oak was founded. It's only been 15 years since the vest was released, yet in that short time, an absolute lore and legend has formed around it in the turkey hunting community.

Bob Dixon was one of the original members of the force that was the Mossy Oak executive team. A team that helped launch the brand to the forefront of the hunting industry. Bob joined Mossy Oak to lead sales in the early days of the company in 1986. Alongside

— building relationships with others. His genuine love for all people garnered countless friends in the community as well as the outdoor industry, and he always made time to be a devoted husband and father to his two children.

In 2005, when Clay White, Ben Maki, Sheldon Lovelace, and Steve Culhane set out to begin a project to honor and memorialize Bob, it didn't take long for the idea of the ultimate turkey hunting vest to form. Toxey Haas, founder of Mossy Oak and friend to Bob, says, "Ol Hollywood Bob Dixon, he was a pioneer in so many ways for us and with us. He was really a pioneer in the use of a vest."

And the four set out to do this "ultimate turkey hunting vest" the right way. Though at the time they were pressured with the normal worries of profit margins and cost reduction, they knew they couldn't and wouldn't cut any corners with this vest. Stronger magnets, better zippers, higher quality fabric, reinforced straps—they were designing a vest light-years ahead of its time, putting into reality every thoughtful concept a turkey hunter could even think to wish for.

They ordered every turkey vest on the market and began to piece together a design that took the best parts of every vest they had seen—and adjusting and honing those parts still further. They engineered features never-before-seen on the market, features like waterproof pockets, angled stitching for easy pocket access, striker pockets that snapped closed themselves, and the infamous green Rubber Quake shoulder straps. They wanted it to truly be a run-and-gun vest, a vest for the dedicated turkey hunter on the move.



Will Dixon's turkey harvest with Dixon Vest #0039.

But the four didn't want to just create the best turkey vest on the market—they wanted it to serve as a real connection to Bob.

Clay White says, "The lens we viewed everything through—we thought, 'Is this going to be a real, legitimate connection to Bob?' We're not trying to make this commercialized. We want it to be real. Every turkey hunter needs to know who Bob is, and we want to make it a legacy that everyone can be a part of."

They then came up with the idea of numbering the vests and producing a limited run of 1,986. And they didn't stop there. They began calling call manufacturers to donate turkey calls to the first 100 vests—calls that Bob himself loved, swore by, and would have been carrying in his own vest, down to the strikers.

The calls included in the first one hundred were 'The Green Machine' glass and slate call from Cody Calls, a 'Purple Heart' Primos Box Call signed by Will Primos, a, a box call created and signed by Preston Pittman of Pittman Game Calls, and, finally, an 'Unfair Advantage Box Call' replica by Woodhaven, crafted with permission

from the family of Doug Camp of Camp Callers.

Each of the calls were also numbered to correlate with the number of the vest. Each of the manufacturers donated these 100 calls to the cause, dedicated to the spirit of helping a cause bigger than any individual company.

And the manufacturers were able to include their own personal touches. Bill Zeiring, founder of Cody Calls, remembered Bob joking around at trade shows and stealing his striker that had a red "x" marked on the end. Bob knew that the marked one was Bill's favorite striker and his go-to to grab when a customer asked for a demonstration. Bob would always return it with a smile, teasing Bill. It only seemed right that the strikers Bill's call company provided for the Dixon Vest would be a striker with a red "x" on the bottom.

The Woodhaven box call, a replica of Bob's favorite Unfair Advantage call, was engraved with the message "This special edition 'Unfair Advantage' box call has been built in and is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Doug Camp and Mr. Bob Dixon. Cancer took these great woodsmen away from us and they both left the woods way too soon."

These personal touches and the thoughtful care that went into every component of the vest is what created an instant legacy and an instant connection to Bob and to every turkey hunter who has left us too soon.

The design was finished with an incorporation of new meets old—the new Mossy Oak Break-Up pattern adorned the outside of the vest while

Mossy Oak's first pattern, Bottomland, decorated the inside of the vest. It was a nod to the past, a nod to origins, and a nod to the work of those before us.

When the prototypes were ready to review, Steve Culhane and Clay White drove to Bob's wife's house in Pine Apple, Alabama, to get her blessing. The two ended up staying all day, drinking tea, eating cookies, and listening to stories and tales about Bob. They learned small details, like the fact that every time Bob came home from a work trip, he would stop and do an owl hoot in the driveway. His small son, Will, would hear the owl hoot and know his dad was home.

Clay remembers this day with Mrs. Faye as his favorite, most humbling, moment of the project.

He says, "It's was never about the vest or the stuff that went in it. It was all about Bob. It captured his personality of 'we're friends if you like the outdoors.' You didn't have to earn your spot or prove yourself with him."

With the blessings from Bob's family on the design, plans to release the Dixon Vest began. They knew without a doubt all proceeds were to go to cancer research, specifically the ALS Cancer Research Fund. And they knew that Dixon Vest #0001 would go to Will Dixon, Bob's then 19-year-old son. Vest #0039 went to his daughter, Braden Dixon.

Dixon Vest #0002 was auctioned off at the 2007 Shot Show, landing on a \$10,000 price tag with proceeds going to NWTF and ALS Cancer Research Fund.

Dixon Vest #0003 hangs in the Mossy Oak museum down in West Point, Mississippi, and Dixon Vest #0006 hangs in the NWTF museum in Edgefield, South Carolina.

The rest of the first 100 vests were sold through auction batches on Ebay. Mossy Oak Apparel



would release a few vests every week, each Dixon Vest going to the highest bidder. Most of these vests were bought by friends of Bob and industry professionals who respected the work he had done to kick open doors for turkey hunters across the country.

Through the auction sales of the first 100 vests alone, \$65,000 was raised for cancer research.

And as for Dixon Vests #101-1986, they were released to retailers around the country, selling for \$149.99. The lucky few who found the vests bought them quickly, and the entire run of Dixon Vests sold out in a matter of weeks.

It seemed as if every serious turkey hunter had to get their hands on one, and fast.

Ben Maki, one of the leaders of the project, says "You rarely see a big company that puts its shoulders behind an initiative that wasn't about profit, that was about honoring someone. And now that project is the most long lasting, legacy projects the company has ever made."

He continues, "You can talk about features and benefits about a vest, but very few products represent something like this. A universally loved and respected guy that everyone lamented losing so early. It struck a chord with a lot of people that can remember clearly when there weren't a lot of turkeys

**Continued on page 38**



founder Toxey Haas and executives Ronnie "Cuz" Strickland and Bill Sugg, Bob Dixon helped lay the foundation for a camouflage revolution, along with the many others who believed in the Mossy Oak vision.

In 2000, Bob was diagnosed with an advanced stage of colon cancer, and on April 11, 2003, he was called home to his Maker. In his too-short time on earth, he made immeasurable contributions to Mossy Oak by doing what he did best





# Northeast Wisconsin FUNdraiser

SCI members and friends at the Northeast Wisconsin SCI annual fundraiser had fun and raised funds to support conservation, hunters' rights, humanitarian efforts and outdoor education. Here are some photos from the event courtesy of Zach Thede and Darren Mizia. The chapter invites you to join the fun next year. Watch these pages for future invitations.

SONORA MEXICO





## Hunt Report:

# Bison Hunt

by Tom Fisher

November 1, 2021, was the start of my bison hunt. Barbara and I, along with Gary and Cindy Schuepbach, had driven to the Brownotter Ranch which is located on the Standing Rock Lakota Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota, near Mobridge. This Ranch covers 32 square miles of private land where Sitting Bull hunted and camped and where we had permission to enjoy hunting on 20,000 acres of wild, rolling plains. Ron Brownotter is the owner of the ranch and our host. The reason for this November preliminary adventure was to participate in the annual "Buffalo Roundup."

There are approximately 600 to 700 American bison on the ranch and, with very limited interaction with people, I would describe these animals as truly wild. They roam the entire ranch, existing on natural native prairie grasses, and can weigh up to 3,000 pounds and stand as high as seven feet at the hump.

The primary reason for the "Roundup" was to count, tag and inoculate the calves. The bulls were avoided as they are usually very cantankerous, and well left alone in their small groupings, although when one took umbrage at us being there and charged – we got out of



his way! Our role in a UTV was to direct any of the "buffs" trying to break from the herd back into the throng.

We were accompanied by Terry Ides, of "Ides Guides" located at Park Falls, Wisconsin. Terry has exclusive hunting rights for the "Tatanka" which roam the ranch. The "Roundup" went well, driving the buffs into waiting pens at the ranch headquarters. It was wildly exciting, and very cold, 22 degrees.

The actual hunt took place on February 7, 2022. Gary and my son Ed from Washington State were with me on the hunt. We had expected deep snow, sub-zero temps, and blustering wind on the Dakota prairie. What we got, however, was no snow and mild 57-degree daytime weather. No complaints, although that weather gave us little slack time to get the bison to the butcher shop once he was down.

We started from the ranch at about 9 a.m. I was carrying my Browning A-Bolt .375 H&H, with Hornady 300-grain DGX Bonded ammo. Terry had a shooting stick which I used. Shortly after leaving the ranch, we came across a herd of about 75 cows, with three large bulls grazing nearby. After glassing the bulls, Terry determined that we would take the largest as he also carried excellent headgear, with some brooming on both sides. By now, of course, the trio was heading to a far distant part of the ranch and losing no time in getting there.

My first shot was a little high, with Terry reminding me that a round in the hump usually doesn't slow a 2,000-plus-pound animal down too much.

A couple of times we would get parallel to the running trio but couldn't get set for a killing shot. Frequently all we had would have been a "Texas heart shot" and that wasn't going to happen. I think that we covered a lot of those 20,000 acres before we got close enough to finish the hunt with a heart shot. Upon approaching the Bison, you really become impressed at how BIG a 2,175-pound animal really is! (That's a lot of meat!)

After many pictures and much joking about how really hard it would be to "drag" him out, Ron drove back to the ranch, reappearing with a flatbed truck equipped with hoist arms – making the job relatively easy. More pictures and a trip to Mobridge and the meat market for the bison, after which we celebrated a great wild west experience of a by-gone era.

**Hunt Report:**

# North Dakota Bison by Bow

by Randy Mayes

Having been a lifelong bow hunter, the thought of pursuing some of the largest game out there has always intrigued me. Bow hunting anything is always enjoyable and typically more challenging but the "big boys" like cape buffalo, brown bear, elephant, and bison, are always a bit more of a challenge having to do with equipment and shot placement more so than most others.

It is not all about how heavy of a draw weight you can pull. Having bow hunted all of the above big game, I have done quite a bit of research on what it takes to penetrate these brutes. One book that I have relied heavily on is "Can't Lose Bowhunting" by Jeremy Johnson. Jeremy is a student of the great Dr. Ed Ashby who probably has documented more detailed information on bowhunting large big game animals than anyone on the face of the earth. He himself has taken around 1,000 big game animals with a recurved bow and has documented many more big game bow kills from others.

I recommend this book to all bow hunters but especially if you hunt

anything bigger than deer. Even if you just hunt deer, the information is useful. One of the basic concepts discussed in the book is using an arrow with a total weight, including broadhead of 650 grains or more. Other factors discussed are "Extreme Forward of Center," meaning about 20% or more, and of course broadhead construction. Dr. Ashby's broadhead design incorporates, two-blade, cut on contact, single bevel construction. I am of course simplifying the book but without digging deep into the details, these are just some of the highlights.

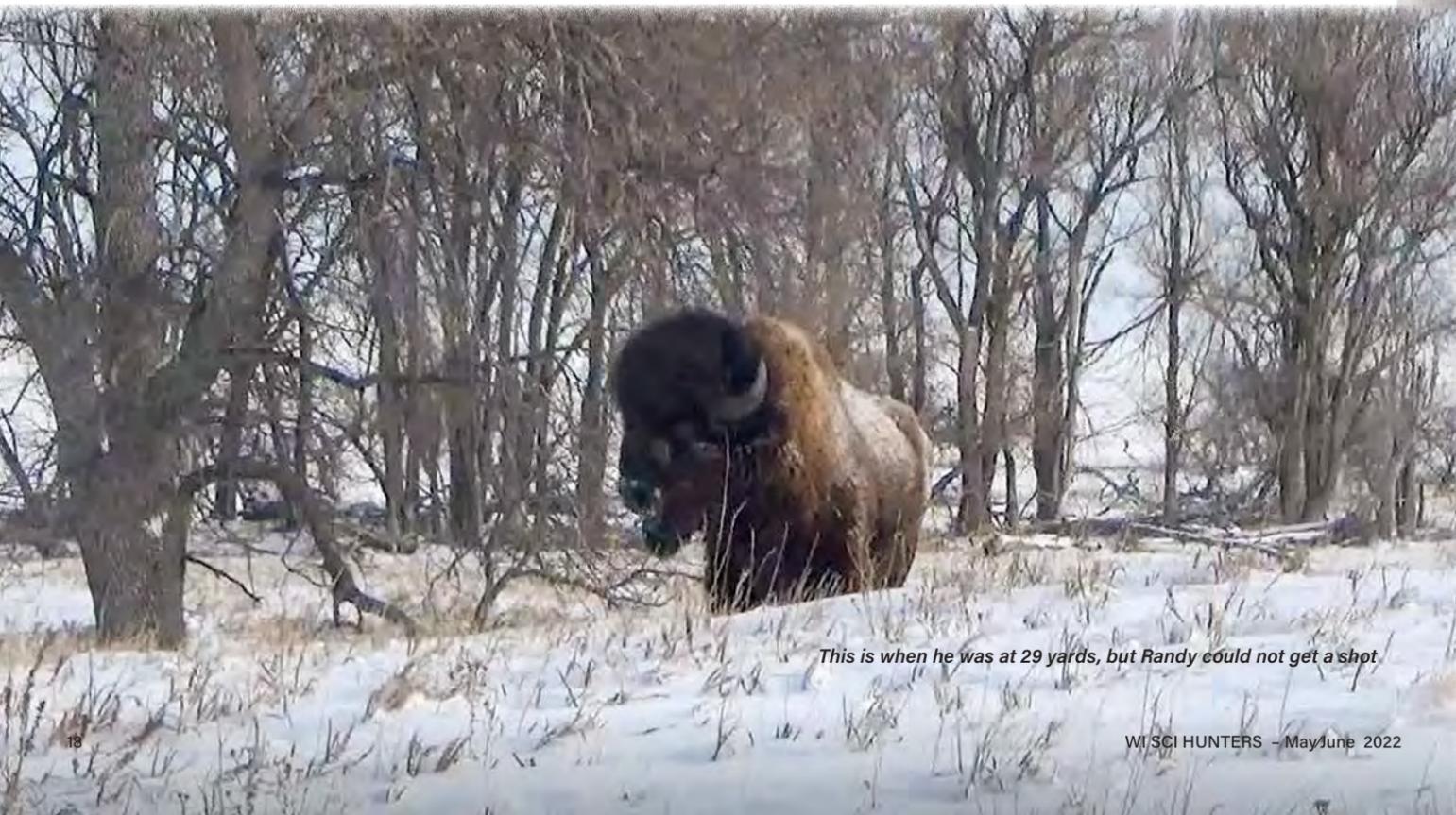
This hunt took place about 40 miles southeast of Bismarck, ND. The outfitter was Rolling Plains Adventures. My good friends Todd Schill and his son Jeremy also hunted bison on this trip. We have hunted ducks with this outfitter a few times. We've always been pleased with their outfit on our previous hunts and they had what appeared to be a good opportunity to do a bison hunt so it was only natural for us to select them for our trip.

Rolling Plains has an area of their own private land for hunting bison which is nearly 10 square miles. The

bulls that we were after were in the 12-15 year old range. Jeremy Doan, whose family owns Rolling Plains Adventures was our guide. He said when the bulls get to be this age, they typically get ornery and more aggressive. A bull which a bow hunter had shot there two weeks prior to our trip, had charged them after putting 4 arrows and a bullet into it. It finally fell pretty close to them after the second bullet.

My hunt started with finding tracks in the snow of what looked to be small group of 3 or 4 bison. After following the tracks for some time, we finally got a glimpse of them. There was one old bull, a young bull, and a couple of cows. The area doesn't have much for trees so cover is limited. Getting up within 80-100 yards of them isn't terribly difficult. Closer than that and you are inside their "comfort zone". With the lack of trees, my first attempt was just crawling through the snow within view as slow as I could in their general direction. At about 65 yards, they started getting a little squirrely and off they went!

One advantage after this stalk was that the old bull decided to do his own



*This is when he was at 29 yards, but Randy could not get a shot*

thing and separated from the others. This was good as there was only one set of eyes to deal with. We just observed him for a while until he calmed down a bit.

On the next stalk, I was very close to "sealing the deal". We were able to get out in front of him as he was wandering our way. We only had the treeless, rolling hills for cover. He came our direction just as planned. He was at 29 yards when he came over the hill. However, he was slightly quartering towards us. It was at that time that he also made eye contact with the two big, brown blobs hunkered down in front of him. He slowly turned to retreat. At that time I came to full draw. He caught my movement and the gig was up.

Again, we just kept an eye on him, let him settle and made another plan. As he appeared to be headed in one direction we again tried to intercept him. We had to huff it a bit and do an awkward version of running through foot-deep snow. It was slightly more awkward for me than a much younger, "just slightly" more in shape Jeremy. There was just one, strategically placed tree which was all we needed. We put it between us and "Tatonka" as we closed the distance to 55 yards. I was hoping for less than 50 yards but we ran out of cover and it was looking like I may have to stretch that out a bit. I was very well practiced out to 70 yards so I was still comfortable at 55. The fact that it was not a small target didn't hurt either!

He was quartering away, the perfect angle, when I came to full draw and settled my pin. I was relieved to see my arrow find it's mark and more relieved to see only about an inch of arrow sticking out as he mule kicked and trotted off. Within 45 seconds and one shot, the 2,000 + pound beast was down!

Walking up to an animal such as this is pretty impressive. I think of how Native Americans used to take these down with stick and string, wooden arrows and stone tips. It must have been quite a rush for them. What is equally if not more impressive is knowing that they processed the whole animal with stone tools. Me?... I was frustrated using a razor sharp, Havalon, replaceable blade knife to cape it out. The use of stone tools crossed my mind a few times as I replaced my blade

often after either getting dull or snapping it off on the 1 1/2" thick hide.

We spent the rest of the day assisting Jeremy and his brother skinning, quartering and capping my bison. Our plan was to split the meat from my bison between Todd, Jeremy and myself. The meat from the two other bison would be given to Rolling Plains for their use. One third of a bison was PLENTY of meat for the three of us!

The next day Todd and his son Jeremy were able to take their bulls with a couple of well-placed shots each. It was quite a scene to see father and son share this unique experience together!

Rolling Plains has a great area to enjoy a bison hunt. They also have a very nice lodge, are very organized and do a good job of making you feel at home. I would personally recommend them if you are considering a bison hunt. Here is their contact info: Phone 701-367-3737, web [www.rollingplains-adventures.com](http://www.rollingplains-adventures.com), and email [info@rollingplainsadventures.com](mailto:info@rollingplainsadventures.com).

*Todd and Jeremy shot these bulls.*



*This was right before Randy shot.*

# HEAR THE TRUTH ABOUT SUPPRESSORS

## HOW THEY WORK

An unsuppressed gunshot is typically around

**165** decibels  
louder than a jet fighter on takeoff

A suppressor can reduce gunshot noise by

**30-35** decibels  
still louder than a motorcycle, chain saw or jack hammer

Any exposure to noise over

**140** decibels  
causes immediate and irreparable hearing loss  
Suppressors reduce noise just below that threshold

FACT

Suppressors were developed by the inventor of the car muffler, Hiram Maxim, to solve noise pollution complaints from his neighbors

## MAKE SHOOTING AND HUNTING SAFER AND MORE ENJOYABLE



Protects against hearing loss



Helps replace the need for ear plugs/muffs



Allows easier communication among shooters and range safety officers, as well as for hunters



Increases accuracy with reduced muzzle report, reduced recoil and decreased muzzle flip



Reduce noise from shooting ranges

## SUPPRESSOR OWNERSHIP IS LEGAL IN 42 STATES LEGAL TO HUNT WITH IN 40 STATES

The number of suppressors registered with ATF has grown by

more than  
**1 MILLION**  
since 2011

In the last five years alone, suppressors owned increased by

**162%**

There are **355%** more suppressors registered in 2017 compared to 2011.

## BUYING A SUPPRESSOR

Wait time for ATF application review:

**8 MONTHS**

National Firearms Act of 1934 requires:

- ✓ Extensive application
- ✓ Background check
- ✓ \$200 ownership transfer tax

## NOT LIKE THE MOVIES

Movies incorrectly suggest suppressed gunfire is around

**70** decibels

**IN REAL LIFE,** suppressors are very rarely used in crimes

Only **15** federal cases involving the use of a suppressor in the commission of a crime from 1995-2005

Less than **0.1%** of homicides and armed robberies in federal court cases

Source: Criminal Use of Firearm Silencers, Paul A. Clark, Western Criminology Review 8(2), 44-57 (2007)



THE FIREARMS INDUSTRY TRADE ASSOCIATION

| NSSF.ORG



## Whitetail Sanctuary Solutions Tip: Food Plot Answers

### What should I be planting to attract and retain trophy bucks?

by Michael Murphy

This is the time of year to prepare for your planting of your hunting property to keep those trophy bucks on your property. What to plant?

For small wildlife food plots (6500 square feet internal plots) these should be placed near bedding areas and then used as an attractant and for stand locations.

I love seed mixes with high protein which is critical for antler development, bone and muscle growth and producing bigger healthier deer.

My favorite five to plant in my small food plots are (with percentage of plot to plant with each seed mix):

- 30% Clover (perennial)—very high protein—also good for doe's milk production which delivers heavier, healthier fawns. This will improve herd genetics/management and is extreme cold tolerant. Use 10-10-10 fertilizer and pot ash after first year of planting. Clover drains the soil of nitrogen.
- 25% Oats (annual)—very high sugar content when it reaches 6-9 inches tall. Deer will seek this out during this time! Grows quickly and almost anywhere and is winter hardy.
- 25% Winter Greens--Brassicas (annual) for late season food source. Grows fast and withstands extreme cold temperatures. Stands tall in snow and is high drought resistant. If you substitute sugar beets, turnips or other root mixes, sprinkle kale/chicory seed lightly over these substitutes. This will keep the deer from eating off the tops before the root develops.
- 10% Chic Magnet—Chicory (perennial)—high protein—44% kale/chicory. Extreme cold tolerant and drought resistant. Use 10-10-10 fertilizer after first year.
- 10% Winter Peas - Austrian (annual)—high sugar and protein. Late season food source and extreme cold tolerant.

In northern climates with heavy snow depths and in larger plots (holding plots)

I suggest planting corn, winter wheat and/or oats. You should rotate crops yearly. Crop for late fall/winter and it will stand-up – not get bent over or buried in snow.

Corn will stand in the heavy snows, thus giving the deer a great and accessible food source. Will probably have to rotate with oats or winter wheat every other year. Oats and winter wheat are scavengers, they are deep rooted, thus they bring nutrients back up to the surface. Corn will drain the soil of nitrogen. It is important to test your soil each year and add fertilizers and other soil conditioners as needed.

### Tips For Planting Corn In Northern Climates

Corn needs 155 Growing Degree Days (GDD). Typically, corn yields decline rapidly when planted beyond mid-May. A risk to early planting is frost damage. Frost damage to plants shorter than 6-inches can reduce yield by 9-15%.

When corn planting is delayed beyond the third week of May switch seed to early hybrids, Relative Maturity (RM). Selected hybrids should reach maturity at least 10 days before the first frost (32 degrees F). This allows grain to dry.

It is important to watch the weather-soil temperatures near 40 degrees or lower because this can affect germination. One to two days prior to planting, make sure soil temperatures are near 50 degrees. You do not want corn seed to



take up cold water. If soil temperatures drop more than two days after planting the risk of chilly injury is greatly reduced. For the germination of the corn seed it needs to take up to 30% of their weight in water and the soil temperature needs to be 50 degrees or warmer.

### Tree Planting Near Plots

At each food plot plant apple trees (plant in pairs with two per location unless it says they are self-pollinating, then one tree is fine). The following apple trees are good for northern most climates Zone 2: Battleford, Norkent, Norland, Parkland, and Prairie Sensation. Also, at each food plot plant a hybrid oak (fast growing and produces acorns in 6-8 years, the life span of this tree is 30 years). In northern most climates use hybrid "bur" oak.

Finally, at each food plot on your property make sure you plant at least a couple red cedars. Trophy bucks love to use them for rubs!

Now this fall/winter hunting season you will not only be improving the health/genetics of the herd; but have the food sources that the deer will be looking for! This will keep those deer on your property!

I would be happy to provide an individualized plan of your property to attract and retain trophy bucks! Happy and safe hunting from your fellow SCI member at whitetailsanctuariesolutions.com.



# Charmaine's Dead Bear Moved

The beautiful full-body mount that SCI Regional Representative Charmaine Wargolet donated to the Outdoor Heritage Education Center's sensory safari fleet has moved this year to the new Touch of the Wild 4 trailer from ToW 2. Here's a photo of one visitor to it at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show where more than 20,000 people went through the exhibit. Thanks to Kaz at Buck Rub Archery for letting us stage the trailer there before moving into the show.



# Wisconsin-Made Rods Tackle Trout

Fish species call for different angling tactics, and few fish command such a diverse repertoire of presentations than trout. To this end, trout anglers have a wide-ranging list of needs, all revolving around a host of unique trout species, strains, and opportunities scattered across the planet. While it's true that most trout live in streams or rivers – anything from tiny, brush-covered spring creeks to the mightiest of flows – they exist in lakes and coastal areas, too. Some eat tiny insects while others eat rodents. Some



performance and angling experiences – including trout anglers who are often as selective as the fish they pursue.

Consider St. Croix's popular Trout Series. Introduced in 2013, the light-line



eat everything in-between, but only at certain times; indeed, trout are known to be highly selective feeders. All these truths combine to make gearing up for trout a unique challenge.

This is why any dedicated trout bum of the Rocky Mountain, Eastern, Great Lakes, Alaska, or High Plains variety – pick one – requires a rack of versatile, high-performance rod options; tools for every conceivable presentation that perform in a variety of trout environments and tasks. The task of finding one-size-fits-one, technique-specific, and situation-specific trout rods can be a real challenge.

Enter handcrafters of the Best Rods on Earth®; for nearly 75 years, St. Croix Rod has existed to provide all anglers with the fishing tools that elevate

centric collection answered the call of passionate anglers demanding rod choices designed with the lengths, powers, and actions that combine to support unique trout presentations with St. Croix performance at a great value. For 2022, St. Croix has improved and expanded its popular Trout Series, making them stronger, lighter, and even more comfortable, while adding new lengths, powers and actions that support an even wider range of Western and Eastern trout techniques, including new three-piece models in the Trout Pack Series.

## Northern Exposure

In the Northwoods of Wisconsin, talented multispecies master, Blake

Tollefson, tackles trout in a variety of stream conditions near his home in Chippewa Falls. "There's literally hundreds of miles of stream accessible to anglers, and much of it is all different," says Tollefson, who targets trout with a veritable kitchen sink of traditional freshwater lures typically utilized for crappies and smallmouth bass. "I'll throw soft plastics, small jerk-baits, and inline spinners like much of the rest," Blake says. "But no matter what lure I'm fishing, it has to fish fast."

Tollefson ranges far and wide, having no problem walking long stretches of a stream only to give up on it entirely. "If one river or creek isn't producing, I'll just load up and head to the next one," says Tollefson, noting that his approach is to wade and walk as quietly and smoothly as possible. "Trout in my neck of the woods are quick to spook, so I try to be as stealthy as possible." Tollefson sneaks up and down the bank with a 6'6", light power, fast action Trout Series spinning rod (TFS66LF2). "The light power is ideal for most trout I encounter, which range from eight to 15 inches or so," he says. "Most of the streams involve pretty close-quarters casting, so the shorter length is good for fishing thick stuff. The multi-piece rods are my preference, as they pack down and are super handy to leave in the truck so I'm always ready."

Inline spinners are a favored, staple lure for many trout anglers, but Tollefson prefers to present small plastics. "Small



paddletails like the Eurotackle B-Vibe have put more trout in the net for me than any other lure," he says. "I like to slow-roll these baits rigged on a 1/32-oz. or 1/16-oz. jig and find it extremely effective in nearly all the streams I fish." He



typically opts for natural-colors like black, white, olive and gold.

Tollefson says lazy or soft hooksets are the most-common cause of lost fish, and that the fast and extra-fast actions of St. Croix's new Trout Series rods facilitate fast, secure hookups. "Quick hooksets are key, and these actions are perfect for that along with steering fish away from trouble spots like boulders and timber, which are fairly common where I fish," he says. "These are crisp, powerful, accurate casting rods, not buggy whip rods. On top of that, I like how balanced and lightweight they are. The handle configurations allow for casting both overhead and underhand when needed to put lures in tight spots."

For rigging, Tollefson is a fan of 4-6-pound micro braid as mainline, both for castability and toughness, paired with 4-6-pound fluorocarbon leaders. "1000-size spinning reels pair nicely with all of the rods in the Trout Series lineup. I prefer lightweight reels that don't kill the great balance and feel of these rods."

#### Driftless Browns and Rainbows

A native of the Upper Midwest's storied Driftless Region, fishing teacher and promoter, Joel Nelson, grew up fishing big-woods and open-pasture muddy-water brown trout that live beneath the thickest hiding spots. "We're after some bad fish that hunker down in root wads and full-sized trees

on the hard outside bends of these streams," says Nelson. "As a kid, we'd frequently hook up with... and typically lose... browns over 24 inches. It was a frustrating experience to say the least."

Now, with kids of his own, Nelson enjoys teaching the trout game to his sons Isaac (age 16) and Micah (age 13), who are learning how to approach and catch these fish that live in their backyard. "It's been fun watching how excited they get when seeing fish at the edge of a pool," Nelson says. "They spooked a lot of fish at first, but they are getting better at it, and that's what trout



fishing is all about. It's still a learning process even for me."

Nelson, who guided for a short stint in Yellowstone National Park, notes how different trout scenarios can be, from stream to stream, and state to state. "That variation in water, species, and forage means a swiss-army-knife-style rod often won't cut it. You need to specialize in order to have consistent success targeting trout in the specific waters where they live."

Joel fishes standard-fare spinners for most of the spring, opting for small hair jigs during the course of the rest of the year. "They're harder to fish than a spinner, but small, 1/16-oz. and 1/32-oz. hair jigs – depending on the current – really yield big results," says Nelson. "I can drift these things down in various parts of the hole, and I often carry two rods with two different sizes, one heavier for the front and faster end, and one lighter for the back and sides."

For his home waters, Nelson loves the 6'6" medium-light power, extra-fast action Trout Seriesspinning rod (TFS66MLXF2). "I can't tell you how happy I was to see this rod settle into the lineup," says Nelson. "Trout rods of old were whippy ultra-lights that served literally zero purpose in the trout game. Pitch a spinner and you'd never feel the bite, even if you could see it. Drift a jig and they spat it before you could send it. That's why dedicated lengths, powers, and actions in this Trout Series are such a big deal. Pick the rod that's made for you and the way you fish."

Power isn't just a preference when it comes to the muddy, spring streams Nelson fishes, it's a priority. "I'd probably go overboard and have them make a medium-heavy power model if they'd let me," says Nelson. "Too many tough memories of big browns that rush out in to the open to grab a bait, then turn and burn to a jam full of oak trees, only to break off as fast as they grabbed it. Medium-light is a great combination of the power and flexibility needed to fling small spinners, especially when spring melts subside and the water slows down."

Nelson says trout anglers can't fully appreciate the actions on these new Trout Series rods without experiencing them personally. "I'm used to instant-gratification hooksets on jigs for walleyes with the extra-fast actions in St. Croix's Legend-X and Legend Xtreme Series rods, and the extra-fast Trout Series models follow in that same vein. I can snap-set to the side as soon as the spinner blade even hiccups, and as long as I reel to follow that set, I'm not missing fish," says Nelson, who also cites the added casting accuracy and control throughout the retrieve that these extra-fast actions deliver. "I throw small jerkbaits, too, and when navigating



anything with trebles around cover, precision is the name of the game."

Even on home waters, Nelson has to put on some miles to find the best locations year in and year out. "I've always been a fan of the two-piece rods that St. Croix puts out for trout," he reports. "They're extremely portable and practical but I don't feel like I'm fishing a two-piece rod. Now St. Croix is offering additional two-piece options in the Trout Series and even three-piece options in the new Trout Pack lineup. The new TFS66MLXF3 means I can fish the

length, power and action that best fits my water with the added convenience of a three-piece design that still fishes like a one-piece rod. I can put it in the soft case and head through heavy brush without worrying about it, or I can just keep it in my truck and it's ready in case I see something that looks trouty."

Wherever your trout waters may be, they'll soon clear from springtime runoff, once again revealing their wonderfully unique anatomy for you to dissect and probe in any way you prefer.

## Trout Treat Retreat

Jason Dinsmore spends most days advancing the conservation cause with members and partners. When he takes time off with family for a winter or spring retreat, he finds time to include hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation. Here are a few photos from about a month ago. If the big smile on

the kneeling young angler looks familiar, that's because Logan Dinsmore was on the cover of SCI HUNTERS magazine last year with different fish but the same big smile that reminds all of us SCI members about the joys of spending time outdoors with family and friends.



# Conservation Achievement Awards

SCI members, friends and partnering organizations were honored in April for their conservation achievements.

SCI Wisconsin Chapter generated positive publicity as one of four major sponsors of the big Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Conservation Achievement Awards at Hotel Mead in Wisconsin Rapids. SCI, Hunting Works for Wisconsin, National Wildlife Federation, and Outdoor Heritage Education Center each year support the prestigious WWF Awards recognizing individuals and organizations and their conservation achievements in Wisconsin.

SCI Life Member Mark LaBarbera is Executive Director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. He helped Awards Committee Co-Chairs Lil Pipping of Sheboygan and Craig Challoner of Omro, plus WWF Business Manager Lindsay Alt of Poynette organize the event.

"Special thanks to HWWF's Nathan Prouty, NWF Great Lakes' Jason Dinsmore, OHEC's Ruth Ann Lee and SCI WI's Charmaine Wargolet," stated LaBarbera in his message to members, honorees and their families attending the awards banquet.

"Thank you for sharing in today's celebration of professional natural

resources management and grassroots conservation success," he said. "On behalf of members, partners, and affiliates of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, we welcome your participation in these Annual Conservation Achievement Awards."

Honorees were nominated by their peers and community members from across Wisconsin. WWF President Pat Quaintance of Bayfield said, "They are an inspiration to anyone who cares about natural resources and healthy habitats for fish and wildlife, as well as outdoor skills training, conservation education, individual rights, access, and passing along our outdoor heritage."

Quaintance, a retired conservation warden and avid angler and houndsman, noted that not everyone knows that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation is a charitable 501(c)3 nonprofit conservation organization that has grown in the last year to include now more than 211 sporting groups and thousands of individual members dedicated to advocating for sound conservation policy. He said people could join or learn more at wiwf.org.

LaBarbera thanked President Quaintance, First Vice President Kevyn Quamme of Dalton, Second Vice

President Connie Polzin of Rhinelander, Treasurer David Verhage of Plover, Secretary Terri Roehrig of Mondovio, Past Presidents & Executive Committee Members Craig Challoner and Bill Tollard of Oshkosh, and Awards Committee Chair & Mistress of Ceremony Lil Pipping as they honored the individuals and organizations being recognized. Special thanks went to volunteer Kyra Seipel for her valuable media technical support as the event was streamed online. SCI Badgerland Chapter member Quamme added thanks also to the friends, families, and members who provided years of support for each of the WWF Conservation Achievement Awards honorees behind the scenes year-after-year.

## Ruth Ann Lee Conservation Educator of the Year

SCI members are very familiar with Ruth Ann's skills and reputation as one of the best outdoor educators in the Midwest. She continues to expand her network, her educational activities, and her impact.

Her work now for the Outdoor Heritage Education Center and Access



Ability Wisconsin demonstrates her continued dedication to education that helps others. Each May, thanks to Ruth Ann, 3,000+ students, teachers and chaperones learn about conservation and outdoor skills at the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo sponsored by SCI's Lake Superior, SE WI Bowhunters, Badgerland and Wisconsin Chapters.

SCI members, teachers and others all across the Midwest are also working with Ruth Ann to schedule educational Sensory Safari trailers. Throughout the year, more than 50,000 people will experience a Touch of the Wild all across Wisconsin through the fleet of education trailers that she coordinates. She and OHEC are willing to help SCI chapters identify educators to send to SCI Foundation's American Wilderness Leadership School.

Her achievements with a team of educators committed to helping other teachers has increased the number of students learning about conservation and the environment. She has helped educators get more students outside while using the environment as a context for learning. While most of us simply see her doing what she loves and inspiring more youth to get outdoors, the professionals in academia would say that she helps to develop environmental literacy in children and adults while increasing academic achievement.

Most of her time training and leading workshops for the professional

development of educators has been behind the scenes, days and nights, weekdays, and weekends.

It seems like only yesterday that Ruth Ann was Director and Educator at MacKenzie Environmental Education Center where she helped tens of thousands of students learn about the outdoors. Her successful administration, supervision, and management of all aspects of the education program for the MacKenzie Environmental Education Center resulted in increased revenue and property use. Directly responsible for the oversight of the management contract between the WWF and WI Department of Natural Resources, she demonstrated that she is not only a great educator but also a great ambassador for outdoor educa-

that she is a valuable ally for SCI and an over-achiever worthy of recognition as WWF's Educator of the Year Conservation Achievement Award.

## Hermitage Conservation Club Conservation Organization of the Year

SCI members who know Josh McDole agree with his nomination of this WWF affiliate and its impressive list of achievements:

- Planted approximately 80 trees.
- Hosted workdays removing invasives.
- Did controlled burns with local fire



tion. We saw her promote education through her networking with WDNR staff at all levels, state and local political leaders, federal government stakeholders, management personnel in other state agencies and administrators and officials from school systems throughout the Wisconsin.

Ruth Ann's volunteer time is also consumed with supporting education. She serves on the School Board in Poynette. She also helped build the education activities of the Friends of the MacKenzie Center. It's clear to see

departments to re-established prairies.

- Classes led by 8 members (Certified Instructors) and 1 Junior Instructor.
- Taught Internet, field day and traditional hunter safety classes.
- Graduated 91 students in 2020 despite COVID and 93 for 2021.
- Expanded 3-D archery course open to the public when accompanied by a member.
- Ran 3-D league with Kiel Fish & Game and recruited new shooters and members.



- Hosted workdays constructing archery stands, planting trees, building wood duck houses.
- Involved families on committees like Hermitage/Forest Conservation Clubs Banquet.
- Created program to recruit area youth into outdoor recreation, starting with shooting sports.
- Launched plan to welcome beginners and offer hands on experience and provide all gear.
- Built enthusiasm and began engaging club members who want to be involved in giving to youth, especially those who may not otherwise have the opportunity.
- Organized youth committee with youth and adult supervision to begin implementing vision of offering multiple hands-on sessions, partnering with other local youth groups
- Participated and donated to Trees for Tomorrow.
- Sponsored Camp Y-Koda mammals presentation for Grant Elementary class.
- Donated and participated in Green Wings Day program.
- Released 125 pheasants with Sheboygan County Conservation Alliance on multiple sites.
- Successfully managed wood duck houses along Sheboygan River.
- Maintained public boat landing on club property.
- Hosted 4-H Club meetings, Camp Y-Koda events, and ecology classes by Sarah DeZwarte.
- Invited guests for firearms sight-in at club range.
- Hosted memorial shoots, family events, ice fishing day and community open house.
- Helped fund Learn to Hunt events.



the DNR Law Enforcement Management Team that nominated Conservation Warden Steven Swiertz for this award because of his outstanding service, work ethic, and performance. Chief Warden Casey Krueger, Deputy Chief Jeremy Peery



and LE Supervisor Michael Katzenberger are some of the professionals recognizing Warden Swiertz's efforts. His wife, daughter and son, plus supervisor Nick Miofsky, joined him at the awards ceremony in April.

As part of the Milwaukee-Ozaukee-Washington Law Enforcement Team in the Southeast Region, Warden Swiertz primarily serves Washington County and is based out of the Pike Lake Unit of Kettle Moraine State Forest. Warden Swiertz is a native of West Bend in Washington County and earned a

bachelor's degree in sociology at UW-Milwaukee.

Since graduating from the Law Enforcement Academy in the Conservation Warden Class of 2017, Swiertz has excelled at serving the public and the community while protecting Wisconsin's Natural Resources. Swiertz began his career with WDNR as a credentialed Park Ranger in 2008. Then in 2017 he was hired as a Conservation Warden and assigned to Milwaukee County. Warden Swiertz transferred to Washington County in 2020, where he is currently assigned. Throughout his career Warden Swiertz has demonstrated exceptional leadership, teamwork, and a passion to serve the citizens of Washington County, and the State of Wisconsin.

While stationed in Milwaukee County, Warden Swiertz established

many great relationships within this large metropolitan area. He worked closely with numerous organizations including Milwaukee Riverkeepers, Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department, Inner City Sportsmen Club, and Milwaukee Public Schools. He continually takes the initiative to mentor new wardens in how to navigate these challenges. Through Warden Swiertz's selfless acts he is instrumental in developing new wardens, which enables them to serve the public

and protect the resources more productively.

In addition to his day-to-day duties, Warden Swiertz is tactical instructor for the DNR, field training officer, and a member of the Underwater Remote Operated Vehicle (UROV) Mission Ready Team. Warden Swiertz takes time out of his normal duties to instruct at the DNR recruit police academy and has helped train numerous new conservation wardens through our field training program. Wardens Swiertz is an excellent trainer and respected throughout the state. Warden Swiertz has embraced recreational property enforcement and works diligently every day to maintain positive relationships with the park staff at Pike Lake State Park in Washington County. Warden Swiertz also recognized the unique challenges metropolitan state properties pose in Milwaukee. In 2021 Warden Swiertz assisted the Milwaukee County wardens learn and patrol the state properties in this area (Lakeshore State Park, Havenwoods State Forest, and the Hank Aaron Trail). In addition, Warden Swiertz was the first to volunteer to assist Milwaukee County Wardens Adam Strehlow and Sam Haferkorn patrol the Milwaukee River during the Bucks Playoff/Championship run. It was a significant workload assisting the Milwaukee Police Department with public safety and crowd control on the Milwaukee River.

In January 2021 Warden Swiertz received a complaint of a dead deer that had been shot with a crossbow at night and found hidden under a tree next to a business. He conducted

several interviews with the reporting party to gather a timeline of the events, obtained a written statement, and collected evidence. He then located and interviewed the suspect and discovered the suspect shot the deer at 9:30 pm while standing in the parking lot of the business he is employed. The suspect then hid the dead deer under a pine tree with plans to return for it later. The suspect was later confronted by his supervisor and other employees, got scared and never returned for the deer. Through Warden Swiertz's follow up and interview he held this person accountable for a criminal deer violation of hunting deer without a license and 20 plus civil forfeitures for illegally harvesting eight deer between 2019 and 2021. This is just one of many examples of how Warden Swiertz takes a "routine" complaint and through his extraordinary investigatory skills can uncover multiple violations/ crimes and hold people accountable for their actions while protecting our natural resources.

For his service, we honor Steven Swiertz as WWF's Conservation Warden of the Year.

### Dan Small Conservation Communicator of the Year

SCI member Dan Small, dean of Wisconsin outdoor communicators, has demonstrated outstanding conservation efforts and

life, Dan is an award-winning journalist who professionally covers conservation and the outdoors. Recently, Wisconsin's tourism industry gave him its prestigious Legacy Award. So, you would think he must be retired. To the contrary, in 2020 and 2021, he



increased his outdoor communication outreach. Last year, with the pandemic changing everyone's lives, Dan Small's comforting presence on TV and radio, and online, and in print, helped them escape to the outdoors.

After decades of hosting *Outdoors Wisconsin* on PBS, Dan increased his outdoor communication activity with online posts, Facebook live-streaming, his column in *Wisconsin Outdoor News*, his annual *Deer Hunt Wisconsin* TV program sponsored by SCI Badgerland, Lake Superior, and Wisconsin chapters, and his weekly *Outdoors Radio* with Dan Small that grew to 22 radio stations last year!

His balanced coverage of timely issues and timeless outdoor pursuits both entertains and informs his many listeners, viewers, readers, and social media followers. He covers all outdoors.

Dan is a trusted voice here and across the country. Whether it's timely interviews with outdoor leaders or fun conversations with unique outdoor personalities, people tune in to Dan's coverage of environmental issues, regulation changes and legislative matters or feature stories about hunters, anglers, birders, trappers, and others. He has a way of conveying the essence of his subjects. He gets to the heart of the matter. He explains the most complex facts in easy-to-understand language that creates a more informed public. He describes outdoor pursuits in a way that helps his audience virtually see, smell, hear, taste, and touch the subject, motivating them to want to follow in his footsteps and experience the outdoor activity or destination for themselves.

Dan also has been recognized by his fellow SCI members, peers locally and nationally for his work and his trusted guidance. It can be seen in the many awards he has received for his writing, photography, social media, TV, and radio programs. His award-winning work has won regional and national honors. Above and beyond his work, Dan was selected by his peers to serve on Boards of Directors of professional organizations like the Outdoor Writers Association of America, who also bestowed top national honors on him, recognizing and appreciating his contributions on so many levels.



As he begins a new year of helping SCI and WWF connect people with nature, WWF honors Dan Small as its Conservation Communicator of the Year.

### Dan Mahoney Land & Water Conservationist of the Year

SCI members in central Wisconsin know about the deterioration of the Little Plover River, a class 1 trout stream that was on the Federation's radar long before the dry-up resulting in a large fish kill in 2005. The five-mile

watershed was one of the Nation's Most Endangered Rivers, like the Boundary Waters and the Colorado River.

When Dan Mahoney became Village of Plover Administrator, he decided to go in a little different direction and hired Hydrologist Jeff Nania to research the watershed. Jeff's report directed attention to the area East of Kennedy Avenue; and the origin of the LPR. Next up was the creation of a Village of Plover Task Force which included village departments, the DNR, the Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Erin & Associates, as well as contributions and input from WWF.



Dan was the point guy who kept everything organized and flowing throughout the process of securing \$2.6 million for a two-year program known as the Little Plover River Habitat Restoration Project. These monies were pieced together from many different government agencies, foundations, and philanthropists. The bureaucratic nature of the applications process required a lot of extra time and effort by Dan. He also provided a lot of field input.

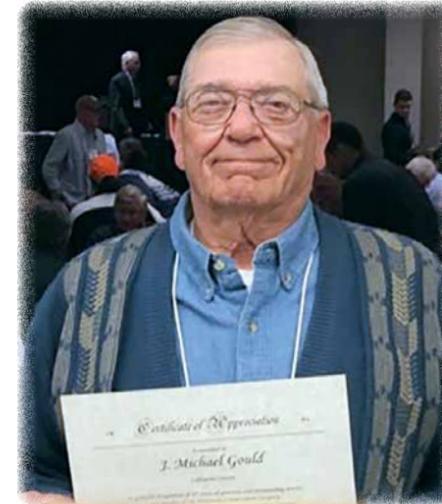
- He maintained close ties to local landowners and citizens and gained their support.
- He arranged a meeting with UWSP specialists from the Water Resources and Forestry Departments.
- UWSP developed student lesson plans for the project.
- Dan worked with local growers & landowners.
- He supported work that took out a high cap well and provided a buffer.
- Dan went on to negotiate a broader conservation area. Some of the ditches dug back in the 1930's were filled and this 60-acre area was scraped; shaped then planted as a prairie to allow rainwater to slowly drain back into the headwaters. This revitalized a fantastic trout nursery.
- Meanwhile, he guided the Village of Plover on water conservation, replacing 40-year-old leaking water couplings and upgrading the water treatment plant to improve efficiency.

His success has created interest from growers and landowners on nearby streams like the 14-Mile, the Isherwood Lateral and the Mill Creek. Nominator Jerry Knuth concluded, "Hats off to Dan Mahoney for a job well-done and worthy of being WWF's Land & Water Conservationist of the Year."

### J. Michael Gould Forestry Conservationist of the Year

Johnny Appleseed, step aside. Mike Gould has planted one million trees!

For many decades, SCI members working with Mike Gould on the Conservation Congress saw how he firmly planted himself as one of the



leading advocates for forest health and the importance of planting trees. As Chair of the affiliated Lafayette County Conservation Alliance and the county's delegate team (with Dave Breunig, Steve Staver, Wayne Stietz) for the Conservation Congress, Mike has deep roots in conservation and is a de facto ambassador for forestry.

In addition to promoting reforestation and best practices, Mike walks the talk, gets dirt under his fingernails, and personally is responsible for planting a million trees of many varieties in his corner of Wisconsin, and beyond.

Mike branched out years ago into the field of mentoring. If you asked him



whether he'll ever stop planting or stop educating others about forestry and other outdoor pursuits, he will tell you that you are barking up the wrong tree. Like SCI's partner OHEC, Mike has continued to be a driving force behind the youth event every year around Earth Day at Blackhawk Memorial Park near Woodford, Wisconsin. There, every fourth or fifth grader is invited to learn outdoor skills that include tree species identification and other forest-related activities. One of the educational stations included Wayne Stietz's portable sawmill and discussion of sustainability and timber management.

Not only has Mike successfully taught thousands of students about forestry throughout his decades of leadership, but he has also mentored hunter education students and new anglers, always including woodsman-ship in his lessons. It goes against his grain to leave any child indoors.

This nomination was strongly supported across Southwestern Wisconsin by SCI members, WWF affiliates, and partners who agree that Mike Gould is worthy of recognition as WWF's Forestry Conservationist of the Year.

## Howard Christianson Hunter Safety Instructor of the Year

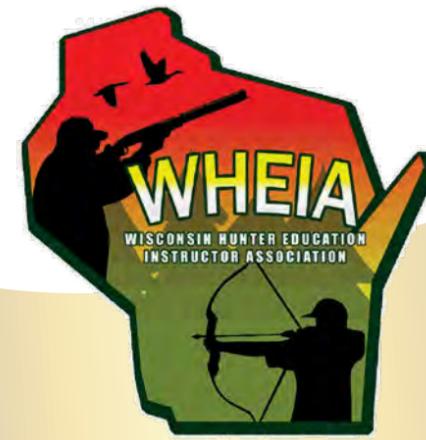
Howie Christianson at age 85 is still going strong. His friend Dennis Johnson said Howie has been an instructor since 1985. In his 36 years of teaching new, safe hunters, he has certified 2,937 students, including SCI chapter members.



During the pandemic, Howie stepped up and instructed at four classes during 2021, including three Internet Field Days, certifying 138 students, and in 2020 he instructed at four classes. Despite COVID restrictions on start dates and class size of 25, he was able to certify 93 students. Howie has already signed up to teach hunter education and safety for 2022.

Howie is a dedicated hunter safety instructor who makes sure that students understand the proper methods for handling firearms and that

following the rules of firearm safety are their number one priority. His outstanding work for hunter education is above what is normally expected. Howie is more than qualified to teach all education subjects, yet he excels at the live-fire range where he is excellent, making sure all the students, youth, and adults, understand the seriousness of handling and using a firearm. He works effectively with youth and all age groups to ensure that they know how to handle a firearm properly and safely and that they go away with a positive



learning experience. In addition, over the years, Howie, with his own funds, purchased rewards which he presented to students at the end of class period. Instructor Ray Anderson summarized it, like this: "Howie is always there when they need him."

Howie's military service from 1955 to 1963 instilled a "lead by example" work ethic. He presents a professional image and comes to class prepared to instruct. He sets an example to the other instructors and students as well.

With respect and patriotic pride, fellow instructors and others support Howard Christianson as WWF Hunters Safety Instructor of the Year.

## Monica Spaeni Conservationist of the Year

SCI member Monica Spaeni is the Founder and President of Access Ability Wisconsin, a charitable non-profit group whose goal is to place free, motorized outdoor wheelchairs in every county of this state for people to use for free. During the last year or so, she has accelerated the meaningful progress and accomplishments in placing wheelchairs, but she has also helped move Wisconsin toward solutions in two additional areas.

Monica has helped guide the DNR and others to remove barriers for people with mobility issues to be able to enjoy natural resources here in Wisconsin. The Open the Outdoors initiative now, thanks to Monica and others, is not only creating greater public awareness but also increasing access to state-owned properties. Her input will result in more funding and opportunities for people with



temporary or permanent mobility challenges.

At a time when COVID-19 leaves people feeling cooped up, she said, "We have a solution that is increasing independence, increasing social interaction, and decreasing depression."

Last year she signed a Memorandum of Agreement with WWF that is already increasing the number of loaner chairs available throughout Wisconsin for people to use year-round for free!

As she told TV host Dan Small during taping of SCI-sponsored "Deer

Hunt Wisconsin" for PBS, Bally (formerly Fox) Sports Wisconsin and Bally Sports North in five states, "The key now is finding partners to host the chairs."

In addition to being only the second woman in 41 years to be honored with the SCI Pathfinder Award, Monica was recognized nationally as a 2019 Purpose Prize winner from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

When she received the AARP honor, she said, "Everybody should be able to





and a significant portion of Central Wisconsin. He has been Wisconsin's strongest conservation Representative throughout his career.

Congressman Kind is an avid hunter and angler and is a strong supporter of the Second Amendment. He introduced and passed the Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act, bringing together a broad coalition of wildlife and sportsmen groups. Congressman Kind has been a champion for America's National Parks, having founded the National Parks Caucus to protect and advocate the Nation's Parks. This bipartisan caucus focuses on preserving our national parks for future generations. Every year He spearheads an appropriations letter to secure funding for our National Parks.

enjoy the benefits of outdoor recreation with their family and friends. Getting into nature improves self-esteem and well-being, fights depression and isolation, and enhances social bonds. But once you have a physical disability, your choices are limited."

Monica continues to lead AAW as it fulfills its mission to enable individuals with various types of mobility issues to get outdoors and off the beaten path by raising money to provide outdoor adaptive equipment such as all-terrain wheelchairs, adaptive kayaks and hand cycles, which are prohibitively expensive for most people to own.

Monica was not a hunter or gun owner before the skiing accident that severed her spine. Now she is an avid hunter and mentor who has risen among the ranks of the Wisconsin Hunter Education Instructors Association (WHEIA).

Congratulations to Monica Spaeni, WWF Conservationist of the Year, and to all of this year's honorees!

## Congressman Ron Kind Conservation Legislator of the Year

Congressman Ron Kind has represented Wisconsin's 3rd Congressional District for 12 terms and is leaving Congress at the end of this term. He represents the length of Western Wisconsin along the Mississippi River



Congressman Kind co-chairs the Upper Mississippi River Caucus, a bipartisan caucus that works in both Houses of Congress to protect the

interests and sustainability of the Mississippi River. He has been the foremost leader in increasing funding for the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill. He continuously advocated for and introduced amendments to the Conservation Stewardship Program within the farm bill conservation title.

Congressman Kind introduced the expansion of the Federal Duck Stamp Act, which was signed into law. This law increases funding for wetland conservation. He helped introduce and pass legislation to clean up PFAs and ensure Wisconsinites have safe, clean drinking water. Additionally, Congressman Kind signed on to a letter requesting funding to address PFAS in President Biden's budget. He also introduced legislation to provide tax incentives for electric cooperatives that invest in biogas technology, included in the Build Back Better Act. Congressman Kind advocated for the Upper Mississippi River in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). This legislation reauthorizes U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to carry out vital water infrastructure projects to protect the Mississippi Watershed for generations.

He served as the Co-chair of the SCI-supported Congressional Sportsman Caucus. He was a founder of the Bipartisan National Refuge Caucus to increase resources to the management and protection of our Natural Refuges. Congressman Kind was a strong supporter of the permanent authorization and increased permanent funding for the Federal Land and Water Conservation fund critical for purchase and improvement of local, state and federal public lands. He also is a supporter of Recovering America's Wildlife Act which is critical for protection and restoration of those fish and wildlife species that are in danger of becoming threatened and endangered. SCI's Dan Trawicki serves on the RAWA Coalition. Congressman Kind also co-signed a bill to remove the gray wolf from the Federal Endangered Species List in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan. He also has been supportive of federal legislation addressing the threat of Climate Change.

It's clear why Congressman Ron Kind deserves the WWF Conservation Legislator of the Year Award.

# Behind Every Good Warden

Steve Swiertz began his acceptance speech with special thanks to his wife for her loving support. His proud son and daughter grinned from ear to ear as they listened to their dad's heartfelt gratitude and humble appreciation while the awards banquet crowd honored their dad.



**THE DIXON VEST,  
Continued from page 11**

around. When it represents something larger than itself it becomes timeless. A good man that lived well and had a deep unadulterated passion for something."

The Dixon Vest represents so much for so many people. A way of life, a love for your friends, a passion for the wild turkey, a life lost too soon. To say "it's just a vest" is to miss the entire point.

Sheldon Lovelace says, "This vest, when we did this, I never dreamed it would have the magnitude of today. I've manufactured a lot of projects in the outdoor industry, and out of all of the products I've done, this is still number one, it means the most."

Toxey Haas, champion of the project, says "It became a life of its own. The legend of owning a Dixon Vest has come to fruition with the limited amount made to honor him and the origins of the company. 1,986 of 'em, numbered. So for me to stand back from a distance and see him be that buzzword associated with an elite, nostalgic piece of turkey gear makes me feel good. And his son and his family get to see that today."

Hunters who own the vest know the value and the sentimentality behind it. Ben Maki owns Dixon Vest #1205, and he wears it out only once a year on a hunt just for himself, when he's not calling for his kids or for clients, when he's out in the woods by himself, allowing a moment to really enjoy the quiet of the morning. That's when his vest makes its journey to the woods.

Sheldon Lovelace and Clay White represent two opposite ends of the spectrum. Sheldon hunts regularly in his Dixon Vest #0479, while Clay has never hunted in his Dixon Vest #0109 in order to maintain its original shape and preserve it for his son.

As for Daniel and Neill Haas, Toxey Haas's sons, they each have a prototype version of the Dixon Vest in which they hunt every single turkey hunt.

Will Dixon, Bob's son, preserves Dixon Vest #0001 for his son, as well. He has plans to build a glass case for the vest in order to display it with other turkey memorabilia from his father and from his own experiences. He wants it to be seen and not just hang in the closet. Will's sister, Braden, gave him her Dixon Vest #0039 for Christmas a few years back, and he now never misses a hunt without that vest.

Bob's birthday is March 22, and Bob had always tried and failed to kill a turkey on his birthday. It would always happen before his birthday or after his birthday, but never on the actual day. Will picked up his dad's challenge a number of years ago, and after years of effort, he was finally able to harvest a turkey on his dad's birthday while wearing the Dixon Vest.

For Will, the vest is a way to hear stories about his father. He says, "Without people telling stories, the memories die. The Dixon Vest is a great way to help his memory and legacy live on and what all he accomplished."

Will continues, "I feel very blessed in the fact that I am a part of something that is so much bigger than I am. It makes me want to add my impact to the legacy that has already been set. Not fill the shoes, but help them keep walking. How do I leave an impact on something I love that much?"

As we work towards building a registry for owners of a Dixon Vest, please email [editorial@mossyoak.com](mailto:editorial@mossyoak.com) with name, vest number, and proof of ownership. Please be on the lookout for Dixon Vest #1957, as Bob's son Will Dixon is on the hunt to own the vest marking the year of his father's birth.

## Washburn County Welcomes Outdoor Enthusiasts

by Mark LaBarbera

If you missed the Governor's Fishing Opener celebration, May 7, you could still enjoy a fun outdoor adventure in northwestern Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum's Canoe & Wooden Boat Show, May 28, awaits you in Spooner.

SCI members can plan to fish local lakes, enjoy area restaurants and lodging there or in Shell Lake, Trego, Hayward, and other nearby cities, before and after the show, which features:

- Canoes and canoe related items of all types, classic and modern.
- Wooden boats of all shapes, sizes, and designs.
- Classic and vintage water and paddling related items of interest.

I stayed at the modern log-style AmeriVu Inn & Suites in Shell Lake with all of its modern conveniences and services, but there are municipal

campgrounds, Best Western hotels, and other lodging available, like Heartwood Resort in Trego.

During the 56th Annual Governor's Fishing Opener organized by Northwest Wisconsin ITBEC Tourism Committee, elected officials, outdoor media, social influencers, and local VIPs celebrated a great outdoor tradition and put a spotlight not only on fishing but on one of America's greatest destinations for nature-based travel. While the Governor and others were enjoying time on the water, I was hosting families at the Touch of the Wild 3 sensory safari trailer. It's one of the five Outdoor Heritage Education Center mobile education units traveling Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota to spark an interest in the outdoors. Visitors young and old discover the sportsmen's positive role in conservation as they are being reminded to spend more time in nature with family and friends.

Media coverage helps spread the word, especially when events like this generated extra publicity because of high level support from dignitaries like the Governor every year.

If you head north for the show May 28 or anytime, when you, your family, and friends are not fishing, check out the Perlick Distillery, local train ride, The Potter's Shed, the Spooner Fish Hatchery, Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary, and other attractions.

As they say at [washburncounty.org](http://washburncounty.org), the official tourism website, "Washburn County is home to nearly 1,000 lakes, hundreds of miles of trails, incredible attractions, and friendly businesses waiting to serve you during your Washburn County vacation. Whether you're looking to find the perfect cozy cabin or need to know where the locals go for Friday Night Fish Fry, we're pretty sure we've got you covered."



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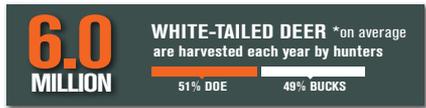
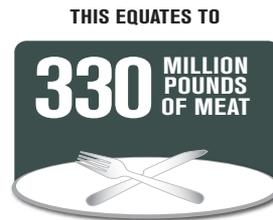


**Whitetail**  
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Address Change? Email  
 Sarah Ingle at [office@sciwi.org](mailto:office@sciwi.org)



WHEN YOU'RE GATHERING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS  
**HERE'S A STORY TO TELL**  
 ONE THAT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT  
 THE THOUGHTFULNESS AND GENEROSITY OF HUNTERS.



**BENEFITS OF GAME MEAT** +  
 LOCAL, FREE-RANGE, ORGANIC, SUSTAINABLE  
 NO HORMONES, LOW CALORIE, HIGH PROTEIN

**TOP 5 STATES FOR VENISON DONATIONS**

- VIRGINIA 405,000 LBS 1
- IOWA 312,000 LBS 2
- MISSOURI 237,000 LBS 3
- TEXAS 214,000 LBS 4
- OHIO 180,000 LBS 5

**VENISON DONATIONS BY REGION**

MIDWEST	NORTHEAST	WEST	SOUTH
46% of total donations	8% of total donations	*1% of total donations	45% of total donations
1,300,000 lbs 5,200,000 meals	200,000 lbs 800,000 meals	28,000 lbs 110,000 meals	1,250,000 lbs 5,000,000 meals
IA - IL - IN - KS - MI - MN - MO - ND - NE - OH - SD - WI	CT - MA - ME - NH - NJ - NY - PA - RI - VT	AK - AZ - CA - CO - HI - ID - MT - NM - NV - OR - UT - WA - WY	AL - AR - DE - FL - GA - KY - LA - MD - MS - NC - OK - SC - TN - TX - VA - WV

\* May be under-reported. limited data sources available for the west

**LEARN MORE ABOUT HUNTING**  
[LETSGOHUNTING.ORG](http://LETSGOHUNTING.ORG)

In addition to white-tailed deer, hunters donate many other types of game meat during hunting seasons. These include: bear, feral pig, rabbit, elk, moose, antelope, pheasant, turkey and waterfowl.

**IMPORTANT GAME - MEAT DONATION ORGANIZATIONS**

