

“Big Difference Between Conservation and Preservation”

TUCSON, Ariz., April 8, 2004 — Representatives from Safari Club International, and 15 other wildlife conservation groups, today enjoyed three hours with President George W. Bush on his 1,600-acre ranch in Crawford, Texas. Dressed in jeans and boots, the president arrived in his pickup with his “fishing partner,” Barney, a Scottish terrier.

President Bush greeted the leaders from SCI, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Quail Unlimited, National Rifle Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, BASS, American Sport Fishing Association, Pheasants Forever, Ruffed Grouse Society, Coastal Conservation Association, Boone & Crockett Club, Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation, and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership in a field on the property.

Then, he personally gave an unprecedented tour of his ranch to the leaders of groups that truly would appreciate the hands-on management plan he’d been using since 1997 to improve habitat for both wild animals and 250 head of cattle. The group traveled caravan-style in Chevrolet Suburbans and pick-up trucks all wired to hear President Bush talk as he drove through the beautiful terrain.

The President pointed out native trees by name – including pecan, black walnut, bald cypress, sycamore, cottonwood, mature cedar, and bur oak – and informed the group about how he uses tree planting, selective cutting and controlled burns to nurture native grasses and 16 native tree types. He noted Texas Blue Bells and other wild flowers in bloom, and reminded the group of how important it is to clear small cedar to conserve water.

“Every day is earth day if you are a landowner,” said President Bush, who described the outstanding Bob White quail, deer and wild turkeys that along with many songbirds, have benefited from the science-based management effort which is a priority at his ranch.

The president also underscored that “there’s a big difference between conservationists and preservationists. Conservationists care.”

During a question-and-answer session, the president expressed support for conservation easements and tax breaks for property owners advancing conservation initiatives. He noted the importance of Safari Club International’s efforts to encourage countries in Africa and other continents to be good stewards of land, using science-based resource management to conserve wildlife.

He also talked about the importance of being energy independent, about how a healthy economy allows for a healthy environment, and used cormorant control as one of many examples of how his Administration is encouraging science-based wildlife management overseen by state departments of natural resources.

“President Bush has given more time to conservation-minded groups, than any president since Teddy Roosevelt,” said Merle Shepard, SCI Vice President and Chairman of the SCI Governmental Affairs Committee. “George W. Bush is one of us. He is a hunter, fisherman and conservationist.”

Mike Rogers Jr., an SCI Director-at-Large who also was part of the presidential ranch tour group, added, “The president is both knowledgeable and very articulate about the conservation issues that affect his land and that of other land owners across America. Voters should know that President Bush talks the talk and walks the walk of a true conservationist.”

\ This invited visit from leaders of conservation groups representing tens of millions of Americans who enjoy the outdoors and shooting sports was the second by President Bush in a few months time.

“You won’t find a more genuine champion for wildlife anywhere,” added Shepard. “When President Bush again thanked SCI for keeping his father involved in its hunter advocacy and conservation programs, he showed the strength of his family’s commitment to wildlife and the great outdoors.”

Safari Club International is the leader in protecting the freedom to hunt and in promoting wildlife conservation worldwide. This chapter driven, nonprofit association is a tireless advocate for the world’s 45 million sportsmen and sportswomen, who, through legal hunting, annually drive more than \$1.7 billion in funding to conserve all wild species. For more information, call 520-620-1220 or visit www.scifirstforhunters.org.

The SCI Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that funds and manages worldwide programs dedicated to wildlife conservation, outdoor education, and humanitarian services. For more information on any SCIF program, call 877-877-3265 or visit www.sci-foundation.org. To see recent, notable conservation initiatives advanced by the SCI Foundation and SCI Chapters visit www.safariclubfoundation.org/pr/conservation.htm. These 61 projects alone represent a \$7.5 million wildlife investment.

The record-breaking SCI 32nd Annual Hunters’ Convention hosted more than 17,000 sportsmen from 50 countries. Thanks to over 1,300 top exhibitors helping hunters realize dreams around the globe, and to some 1,100 extraordinary auction items, the Convention raised over \$10 million for SCI, the SCI Foundation and SCI-PAC, the political action committee amplifying SCI advocacy

efforts for hunters. To register to attend SCI's 33rd Annual Hunters' Convention, in Reno Jan. 26-29, 2005, call 888-746-9724 toll-free or visit www.scifirstforhunters.org.

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