SCI Supports USSA’s Disabled Hunters

Disabled hunter event saw an enthusiastic turnout.

BY BRIGID O’DONOGHUE

Sportsmen have had to defend their rights to hunt and fish in a society that slowly drifting away from that time honored lifestyle.

One such organization working to reverse this disturbing trend is Safari Club International. Not only are they fighting on the front lines, where direct challenges have flared up, but also working diligently to head off potential problems before they ever happen. Another very important, but less visible direction SCI has taken, is in the field of Humanitarian Services.

As the president and founder of United Special Sportsmen Alliance, I’ve been involved in granting dream hunting and fishing adventures for critically ill and dis-
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abled youth across North America. I’ve seen firsthand the devastation caused by the radical activist groups, when they bully wish granting charities into not offering hunting and fishing trips as a dream wish. One of our USSA projects is to set-up annual deer hunting events in every state in the union that has a deer season. Any new project is only as good as those involved in it, and for that reason, USSA chose a worldwide leader in sportsman’s issues, SCI, to help launch this ambitious program.

For the last three years, Illinois Bowhunters Society has hosted a multi-youth USSA hunt at the Sahara Woods Park near Marion, Illinois. I approached Jerry Luciano of SCI Illinois chapter of SCI about the opportunity to help sponsor the event. Since the families are nearly penniless due to sky high medical bills, these generous yearly contributions have helped pay for food, hotel bills and transportation costs for the event.

On Nov. 4, 2005, twelve young people took the field in search for the adventure of their lifetime. Although the weather was less than ideal, great time was in store for all involved. In just three days, ten deer were harvested, including several eight pointers. The camaraderie was outstanding, and everyone was able to get a shot at a deer. True to all hunting experiences, some of those deer are still running around, and should be bigger next year. It is remarkable how an event like Sahara Woods can help strengthen family ties, and introduce new friends.

I would like to thank Mr. Jerry Luciano and SCI Illinois for their generosity and all SCI chapters and individuals who have worked so diligently with USSA in the past, to make this dream wish adventure a reality for these youth.