

SCI/SCIF Position Statement on CWD- EC draft

July 30, 2002

Prepared by the CWD task force. This document is an internal working document that has not been reviewed or accepted by the executive board. As such, the document is subject to considerable change in content and format.

Summary of Positions:

- CWD is a major conservation and hunting issue
- Hunters have an interest and a responsibility to address the issue
- Solutions must be based on good science
- Solutions will only work if the various interests cooperate
- Federal funding is needed to facilitate solutions
- Voluntary surveillance of free-ranging and captive populations of cervids is required
- Mandatory surveillance should be instituted wherever CWD is present
- Adequate testing facilities and improvement of testing techniques are keys; funds should come from general public funding sources rather than hunter-generated revenues
- SCI and SCIF will support regulations to control, and eventually eradicate, CWD provided they are based on sound science and prepared with input of all the interested parties

Safari Club International (SCI) and its sister organization Safari Club International Foundation (SCIF) were formed by hunters to represent hunters and their concerns about wildlife issues. SCI protects and advocates the rights of hunters while SCIF is dedicated to the conservation and sound management of wildlife around the world. With 211 chapters and over 43,000 members worldwide, SCI is ~~dedicated to conservation of natural resources and advocacy for hunting.~~ *maintain position with*

Chronic Wasting Disease has emerged as a major conservation issue in North America and has ramifications to hunting and hunting-based businesses throughout the world. The significance of hunting to rural economies in North America is both cultural and economic, and we recognize the threat of this disease to the lifestyles of hunters and landowners.

Hunters have a vested interest in seeing the problem addressed effectively regardless of where it is found and where they hunt. Our members are united in a desire to have decision-makers use the best scientific information currently available to develop strategies to detect and eradicate this disease.

The available scientific knowledge about CWD and related diseases is rapidly advancing but much more information is needed to develop strategies to deal effectively with CWD. Several competing hypotheses on causes and primary transmission routes have been

advanced, and these hypotheses need to be tested and resolved so that consensus on management strategies can be achieved. We believe that decisions concerning appropriate courses of action concerning CWD must be made based on the best science currently available, not in response to social or political issues. Where science is weak or lacking, we support development of processes that assess risk of alternative courses of action. Federal funding should be allocated to the enhancement of existing facilities and construction of new facilities dedicated to improving our understanding of this family of wildlife diseases.

Public, private and governmental sectors must work in a cooperative manner if policy actions are to make way to practical solutions. We recognize that lines of regulatory authority determines who is best able to address various facets of the CWD issue, and will work most effectively to ensure that financial resources are wisely used by preventing redundancy in efforts. SCI is committed to actively supporting efforts to eradicate CWD by working with our partners in conservation.

SCI is supportive of voluntary surveillance of both free-ranging populations and privately held herds of animals throughout North America. We endorse mandatory surveillance of all harvested animals of affected species where the disease is known to occur. Hunters are the stewards of these resources and need to participate in efforts to detect and eradicate this disease. Additional laboratories will be needed to handle the number of samples that need to be tested, and we support efforts to increase the number of facilities while ensuring test results are accurate and reported in a timely manner. Costs for surveillance should come from general public (federal and state) funding sources rather than hunter-generated revenues since the presence of CWD will affect local economies and the general public.

Strong measures requiring active involvement will be needed to effectively address the threat of CWD in North America. SCI supports rule (regulation) development with involvement of affected parties to ensure that policies are sound and that the basis for such measures is understood by those affected. We are supportive of regulations that are based on sound science and developed with public involvement.

SCI and SCIF, with dual and complementary missions of advocacy and conservation, will assist wherever needed to eradicate this threat to the North American tradition of hunting. Our members, chapters, and professional staff are dedicated to achieving this goal and will provide leadership and support to such efforts.