President’s Message—September 2015

Hello Central Ohio SCI Family,

From the whole team I would like to congratulate our Central Ohio SCI Family on another fantastic year for the continuation of efforts in preserving our natural world and the sportsman’s way of life. It goes without saying that this year has been a particularly hard one for sportsman through various current affairs through which we’ve all had to stand firm. For this reason now is a more important time than ever for us to stand united in our resolve to maintain and preserve God’s earth and creatures. As we all know and appreciate, it is sportsmen and women, like you and I who do the most to preserve habitats and animal populations for future generations; and it is for this reason that I would like to personally ask that you help us continue our efforts through your participation in your local and national Safari Club International. United we can take a stand for what is right; creating a world where we can share our love for nature with future generations. Thank you for your continued support, and please stay tuned for all of the exciting things that your Central Ohio Safari Club is promoting in our community and in these great United States of America.

All the best and remember, life is short, let’s go hunting,

Mark Wehinger
This past summer in mid June I traveled to Newfoundland and went on a Spring fly-in black bear hunt with Ironbound Outfitters. This is my second time hunting with Ironbound and I have enjoyed the experience with this outfitter. The accommodations and guides made for a very enjoyable hunt. This specific camp was acquired by Ironbound and had not been hunted for 10 years. There were many sightings of caribou and large moose. I saw several bears throughout the week and on my first night during the hunt we spotted a very large and impressive bear but the circumstances prevented me from getting a shot at him. On the second day of the hunt I harvested a very nice bear with a 20 inch skull. Later on in the week, on the fourth day, I harvested a nice bear with an 18 inch skull. It was a great hunt and would recommend Ironbound Outfitters to anyone interested.
Renee Simovart-Utah Elk Hunt

For the last two and a half years, I’ve had the good fortune of working for AcuSport Corporation, a distributor in the shooting sports industry in Bellefontaine, Ohio. I get to live in the country and still have a corporate job that is 10 minutes from my house, which has allowed for greater work-life balance. Additionally, I get some really great perks! As Director of Supply Planning, I’m not responsible for just one category or a handful of manufacturers like the buyers, but I get to work with all of our manufacturers across all categories. In early September, I was asked to go on an elk hunt in Utah at the end of September to fill a spot for someone who had backed out at the last minute. In three weeks, I updated some of my gear, practiced shooting my .280 REM Ruger M77 rifle at 100, 200 and 300 yards, and hiked a few miles up some hills. Luckily, I had already been running and working out consistently. The day quickly came for me to leave for the hunt and I was so nervous. Everything from hunting without my husband, being a bow hunter instead of a gun hunter, never having checked a firearm, altitude sickness (which I have experienced skiing out west), were pushing me beyond my comfort zone. But I remembered some wise advice I’ve heard in the past: “You only grow when you’re uncomfortable”.

The hunt was with Wild Country Outfitters who manage the Deseret Cooperative Wildlife Management lease program. The Deseret is over 200,000 acres with its highest peak at 8,500 ft elevation and takes up parts of three counties in Utah. They average 90 elk bulls to every 100 cows and don’t shoot anything under seven years old. Our hunt consisted of 10 elk tags and 8 mule deer tags. I was in the company of some of the finest owners and operators of independent retailers in the shooting sports industries. Also in attendance were Mike Schoby of The Sportsman’s Channel’s Peterson’s Hunting Adventures and Mark Keefe, Editor-In-Chief at the NRA.
The only two women in camp had the same name (Renee and Renae), so it was utterly confusing for everyone. We became known as Team Renee, Renee Squared, Renee and Blondie. We were paired together to hunt with Tom Land; the owner of Wild Country Outfitters. Before we even started, I was warned that I would be spoiled after this hunt and nothing will ever compare. After just one minute in the field, I understood. We saw hundreds of elk every day (usually more bulls than cows) and the bugling never stopped. Never. It was an amazing experience. We spent the first two days hiking, spotting big bulls, chasing bulls, and being picky. It also happened to be the peak of the rut with the full moon!

By day three, many hunters had tagged out, so Team Renee was split up to be guided one-on-one to cover more ground. I was guided by one of Tom’s younger son’s, Austin. We started hiking at 7am. I had my rifle on an old 5 by 5 within 30 minutes that ended up walking into a grove of pines. We saw about 20 bulls that were not shooters, but by 8am we were quickly hiking up a hill to get a bull that was bugling at the top. There was a guide on a far ridge that was talking to Austin by radio to give him locations of elk we couldn’t see. We got within 60 yards of this bull, I was ready to shoot, but he walked behind some brush, then the wrong way and over the top of the hill. Within seconds the spotting guide told us of another nice bull that was on the next hill and Austin started running. I had a hard time keeping up with him trying to avoid tripping over sage brush, roots, and rocks. I was at least 30 yards behind him when he was setting up the tripod for this next bull. I didn’t look up until I had chambered my rifle and saw the elk 140 yards away. He was broadside, took a couple steps, then Austin called him and he stopped. I shot and he immediately fell. I ended up shooting him high because my rifle was on for 200 yards; I meant to shoot lower, but in the heat of the moment that didn’t happen. Luckily it was a spine shot and he went right down. I put a couple more rounds in him and it just happened that fast!

Renee Simovart-Continued
Renee Simovart-Continued

My elk green-scored 310, and was probably the smallest of the 10 bulls taken that week. That proves that the wildlife management program that Wild Country Outfitters is executing is working. Aside from the hunting, I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention that the accommodations and meals were phenomenal!

I consider myself an extremely lucky person that I was even invited on the hunt. I know that there are many hunters who would give anything to have the experience that I had. I did not take anything for granted. Every minute I was hiking (and gasping for air) and listening to the constant bugling, all I could think about was how lucky I was to be there. I am so thankful for good health to be able to endure the hike and the hunt.
Hunt Report-New Zealand with Jeff Fowler

My wife and I have just returned from a New Zealand hunt that was purchased at the Central Ohio fundraiser banquet in 2014. The hunt was generously donated by Chris Bilkey and his wife, Peg from Track and Trail safaris on the south island of New Zealand. I cannot say enough about the quality of trophies as well as the accommodations, company, food, and the attention to detail that these folks provide. As you can see, the trophies were well worth the trip. Chris is a professional and extremely passionate about what he does for a living and takes it very seriously. The Central Ohio Chapter is very fortunate to have the support of people like Chris and Peg Bilkey. Hunting is all about the experience and meeting new friends. Anyone that is serious about New Zealand hunting should take a look at Track and Trail’s website. They are more than happy to help you with your touring wishes as well as your hunt.

Jeff
Hunt Report-Zimbabwe Plains Game with Katie and Beth Wehinger

Outfitter: Pete Fick Safaris - July 2015 - Bulawayo Zimbabwe

Professional Hunters: Peter Wood and Ade Langley

Katie - 7 Animals Taken: Eland, Wildebeest, Zebra, Klipspringer, 3 Impala

Beth – 12 Animals Taken: Eland, 2 Wildebeest, Zebra, Duiker, Steenbok, 2 Impala, Bush Pig, Warthog, Kudu, Baboon

We just got back from a trip to the Bubye Conservancy with our dad (Mike) and Uncle Mark. It was our first time hunting outside of the US and it was amazing. Our hunting camp had beautiful private rooms, excellent food, friendly staff, and the scenery was incredible – we saw elephant, black rhino, hippo, cape buffalo, sable, giraffe and tons of other game!

To get ready for the hunt we both did a lot of target shooting with our rifles (30-06 & 338) to make sure we were confident shooting from different positions and off sticks – which was a first for both of us. Our Professional Hunters were very patient and helpful so we could have a successful hunt – and we sure did! Thank you again Dad, Uncle Mark, Peter, Ade and Pete Fick Safari's for making this the trip of a lifetime. We can’t wait to go back to Africa!

Katie & Beth Wehinger
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