



WSF Severs Ties with PHASA over Captive Bred Lion Hunting Policy Reversal

Bozeman, Montana – November 26, 2017: The Montana-based Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF), the international leader for the enhancement, conservation and restoration of wild sheep, has severed affiliation and sponsorship support with long-time partner, the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA). This follows PHASA's recent reversal of its 2015 policy condemning the practice of hunting captive-bred lions under controlled conditions.

PHASA reversed this policy with a Constitutional change and a Resolution at the association's Annual General Meeting held in Kwa-Zulu Natal November 22nd, 2017. WSF leadership attended the PHASA meeting and have repeatedly spoken in opposition to hunting captive bred lions (CBL) as the practice has not been scientifically proven to enhance free-ranging populations or otherwise provide conservation benefits to wild lions and is contrary to the principles of fair chase hunting.

WSF recognizes the South African wildlife conservation model, based on privatization of wildlife and regulated hunting, has played an integral and critical role in the country's incredible conservation success. However, WSF condemns the practice of breeding and captive-rearing of predators which cannot sustain themselves naturally and then releasing them for the sole purpose of shooting them under restrictive conditions. WSF also recognizes that while legal by South African law, many within South Africa's hunting and conservation community condemn such practices.

In a letter to PHASA's leadership delivered immediately after PHASA's official announcement of their new policy, WSF President and CEO Gray Thornton stated "While we fully acknowledge that this reversal in PHASA's previous position opposing the hunting of captive bred lions and distancing itself from the CBL industry was conducted democratically, the new position condoning the practice and alignment of PHASA with the CBL industry is inconsistent with WSF's position on this issue and our Foundation's values."

Despite WSF's severance of ties with PHASA the Foundation will continue to support outfitters and professional hunters in South Africa who are committed to conservation through ethical hunting and the sustainable use of the country's incredible wildlife resource.

The Wild Sheep Foundation, formerly the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS,) was founded in 1977 by wild sheep conservationists and enthusiasts. WSF's Mission is to enhance wild sheep populations, promote scientific wildlife management, and educate the public and youth on sustainable use and the conservation benefits of hunting while promoting the interests of the hunter. With a membership of 7,000 worldwide and a Chapter and Affiliate network in North America and Europe, WSF is the premier advocate for wild sheep, other mountain wildlife, their habitat, and their conservation. Since forming in 1977, the Wild Sheep Foundation and its chapters and affiliates have raised and expended more than \$115 million on conservation, education and conservation advocacy programs in North America, Europe and Asia towards its Purpose to "Put and Keep Wild Sheep on the Mountain®". These and other efforts have resulted in a three-fold increase in bighorn sheep populations in North America from their historic 1950-60s lows of ~25,000 to ~85,000 today. WSF, our Chapters and Affiliates and agencies partners are also working together to ensure thinhorn sheep thrive in their northern mountain realms for generations to enjoy.