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# News Release

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## **Salazar, Vilsack Establish New Advisory Council on Wildlife Conservation and Hunting Issues**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack today announced the creation of the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council, an official advisory group under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Salazar made the announcement at a ceremony at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C. in tribute to the great president, hunter and conservationist.

“Theodore Roosevelt understood the vital role that hunting plays in American life, as well as the importance of protecting lands and wildlife to sustain that tradition,” said Secretary Salazar. “The early efforts of America’s hunters and anglers to preserve our nation’s wildlife heritage fueled the modern conservation movement and left us the natural bounty we are now entrusted with protecting. In the spirit of Theodore Roosevelt, we are enlisting the help of hunters and anglers to help us confront the conservation challenges of our time so that our children and grandchildren can have the same opportunities to experience wildlife and the great outdoors that have been passed along, generation to generation.”

“Today’s conservation challenges demand that we all step forward and embrace the important work necessary to maintain and conserve the wildlife habitat and water resources that are so important to America’s hunting and angling heritage,” said Secretary Vilsack. “The Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council represents an opportunity to expand our partnership with conservation organizations that will improve the health and management of America’s public and private lands.”

The new federal advisory Council will help to promote and preserve America’s hunting heritage for future generations. The Council will also provide a forum for sports men and women to advise the Federal government on policies related to wildlife and habitat conservation endeavors that (a) benefit recreational hunting; (b) benefit wildlife resources; and (c) encourage partnership among the public, the sporting conservation community, the shooting and hunting sports industry, wildlife conservation organizations, the States, Native American tribes, and the Federal government.

Salazar noted that the revenue generated from hunting licenses, duck stamps and excise taxes on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment provides billions of dollars to purchase and maintain habitat for wildlife across the nation. Revenues also provide the principal source of funding for state wildlife agency conservation work.

The new Council replaces and improves upon the previously existing Sporting Conservation Council by expanding membership to include the archery, hunting and shooting sports industries, as well as including broader representation from the nation's major hunting organizations. The WHHCC's charter also more clearly defines its responsibilities in supporting the public, the sporting conservation community, the shooting and hunting sports industry, wildlife conservation organizations, and the state and federal governments.

"Hunters are some of our nation's most influential conservationists, and through their license and equipment purchases, they are foremost funders of state fish and wildlife agencies' programs to restore and safeguard wildlife and their habitats," said Ron Regan, Acting Director of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. "The Association looks forward to serving on the new Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council and helping to ensure that the next generations of sportsmen and women enjoy the benefits of our great outdoors." The AFWA executive director will serve as an ex officio member of the council representing state wildlife agencies.

The five federal agencies playing a key role in supporting and maintaining America's hunting heritage – the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Farm Service Agency – will appoint organizational members to the Council to provide additional support, guidance and coordination.

As the lead federal agency responsible for wildlife and habitat management – in addition to its long history of working collaboratively with the hunting community – the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide coordination and administrative support for the Council. The Service has a proven record of experience in providing oversight and support for the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council – a similar FACA committee that provides recommendations and oversight to the Secretary of the Interior on fishing and boating issues.

Two notices will be published in the *Federal Register* on Friday, February 5, 2010 concerning the Council: one announcing the termination of the Sporting Conservation Council (SCC) and the other announcing its replacement by the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (WHHCC) and seeking nominations for the new WHHCC.

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects America's natural resources and heritage, honors our cultures and tribal communities, and supplies the energy to power our future. Through its many agencies, USDA works to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the 193 million acres in the National forests and grasslands and leads efforts to help America's private land owners and managers conserve their soil and water.

A podcast of today's announcement will be available at the URL below later today  
<http://doi.gov/news/podcasts/>

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