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NEWS RELEASE

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WHITE HOUSE WILDLIFE CONFERENCE SET

Washington, DC: The date and location for potentially the most important meeting for the future of wildlife conservation and hunting has been set. The White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy will be held October 1 – 3 in Reno, Nevada. Mandated by the *Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation* executive order signed by President Bush in August 2007, the goal of the conference is to establish a 10-year plan to improve wildlife conservation and boost hunting opportunity on public lands. Participants at the conference will include a wide range of stakeholders including grassroots hunter conservationists, representatives from national and local conservation organizations, local sportsmen's clubs, a bipartisan group of members of Congress, Governors, as well as state and federal officials.

“This conference elevates the challenges facing hunters to the highest level in Washington - the President of the United States,” noted Jeff Crane, President of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and a member of the Sporting Conservation Council, the federal advisory committee that guides administrative policy on issues important to the hunting and conservation community. “It has been 100 years since a President convened a group of dedicated conservationists who set in motion a wildlife plan that has become the most successful in the world. With this conference, today's political, conservation and outdoor industry leaders and everyday sportsmen and women have that same opportunity to strengthen and update the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation for the 21st century.”

The conference will set the stage for a wildlife conservation and hunting heritage plan that will perpetuate outdoor traditions for future generations of sportsmen no matter who is in the White House or controlling Congress. Members of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners – an affiliation of organizations that

work together on issues facing hunting and conservation – sent a letter to President Bush in August outlining their vision for the conference:

“Our collective vision is that the Conference outcomes will serve as guiding principles for current and future generations of sportsmen and sportswomen. This past year, “white papers” were developed that detail the predominant challenges for wildlife in the next century. Technical and policy sessions with resource professionals nationwide have been completed. We are pleased to report that the upcoming Conference Action Plan was created in a strong bipartisan manner with a diverse coalition from the conservation and sporting community, ensuring a jointly owned product that will provide strategic policy guidance for future Administrations.”

There are eight primary areas that will frame the core issues for the October conference: the perpetuation and strengthening of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation; management of wildlife and habitat at the state, tribal and federal levels; ensuring dependable funding for wildlife conservation; perpetuating hunter traditions through education, recruitment, and retention; maintaining access to public and private lands; coordinating oil and gas development and wildlife conservation; and the impacts of climate change on wildlife.

“We have worked very hard to be inclusive in our policy discussions in an effort to ensure that our recommendations are viable, realistic, bipartisan and will truly make a difference to wildlife and hunting,” commented Dave Nomsen, Vice President of Government Affairs with Pheasants Forever and Chairman of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners. “We look forward to sharing our vision with the participants at the White House Conference and trust that the final action plan will meet the needs of wildlife and all those who are working in the field to protect important wildlife habitat and recruit new hunters.”

The white papers are in final editing stages and should be released by the end of the month. Information about the White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy including links to the complete AWCP letter to the President, the original Executive Order and the draft white papers can be found at: www.wildlifepartners.org.

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The American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) is a network of more than forty organizations that work together to conserve wildlife and wildlife habitat as well as to preserve the traditions of hunting and trapping. The partnership is a loose affiliation with partner organizations retaining their autonomy and respecting each other’s differences.