

*Wildlife and Hunting Heritage
Conservation Council*

March 2, 2012

Dan Ashe, Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Trophy Importation (CITES) ad hoc group

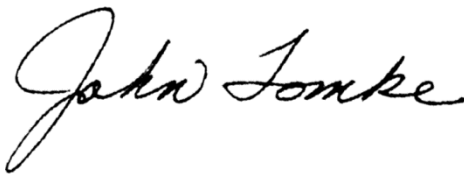
Dear Director Ashe:

At the Council's February 2012 meeting we requested and received presentations from Anna Seidman (Safari Club International) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Office of Law Enforcement on seizures of imported trophies - primarily leopard and elephant trophies shipped from Africa. Ms. Seidman provided valuable insights into the importer's point of view and stated that while the percentage and total number of imported trophies seized is low, the economic consequences of seizures to the importers and wildlife conservation efforts in Africa can be significant. The Service's presentation acknowledged that certain aspects of the CITES permitting processes could be streamlined to potentially decrease invalid permit paperwork stemming from honest mistakes without harming the wildlife conservation benefits afforded by CITES. Deputy Director Greg Siekaniec, the Service's ex officio member of the Council, suggested the Council establish an ad hoc group to help develop such improvements. Mr. Siekaniec offered Service staff from its Office of Law Enforcement and International Affairs to work on the effort.

The Council approved the establishment of this ad hoc group and designated Council member Jeff Crane as the group chair and Anna Seidman as group member. This ad hoc group will focus solely on developing a draft report on possible immediate actions on behalf of the Service and the hunting/importing community and more permanent CITES resolution changes that would serve to streamline and simplify the trophy importation process while still maintaining CITES benefits to listed species. The report from the ad hoc group will be presented to the full Council for its consideration. With the CITES meeting scheduled for March 2013, I understand the need for quick action to develop recommended changes to the Convention. Joshua Winchell, Council Coordinator, will be ready to provide support for the ad hoc team as necessary.

Lastly, thank you for your attendance at our February Council meeting. I know you have many competing interests for your time, and your presence and engagement was noted and appreciated by the Council. And, as always, I appreciate the Service's willingness to work with the Council to help ensure a future for wildlife, both foreign and domestic.

Sincerely,



John Tomke, Chair
Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council

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