THE ETHICS PROCESS IN SCI

Washington, D.C., Office
SCI and SCIF maintain an office in Washington, D.C. that houses the SCI Governmental Affairs Department and the SCIF Wildlife Conservation Department. Calls are encouraged on the Washington Office’s 800 number: 1-800-711-8315. Both the SCI and SCIF activities in Washington are managed by an on-site Director who in turn reports to the Executive Director in Tucson. The office also serves as SCI’s home on Capitol Hill and hosts many activities. Any chapter that wishes to plan a function at the Washington facility should contact the Washington Office Executive Assistant.

The SCI Hunter’s Code of Ethics
A condition of membership in SCI is ethical behavior. The SCI Bylaws require all members to live by the SCI Hunter’s Code of Ethics, which is printed in the annual SCI Directory:

- To conduct myself in the field so as to make a positive contribution to wildlife and ecosystems.
- To improve my skills as a woodsman and marksman to ensure humane harvesting of wildlife.
- To comply with all game laws, in the spirit of fair chase, and to influence my companions accordingly.
- To accept my responsibility to provide all possible assistance to game law enforcement officers.
- To waste no opportunity to teach young people the full meaning of this code of ethics.
- To reflect in word and behavior only credit upon the fraternity of sportsmen, and to demonstrate abiding respect for game, habitat and property where I am privileged to hunt.

The Bylaws allow any member of SCI to bring an ethics complaint against any other member if he believes that a violation of the Hunter’s Code of Ethics has occurred. The Ethics Committee can open cases on its own if it receives information about hunting ethics violations. Violation of wildlife law is one of the most common reasons for such cases.

Other Ethical Issues
In addition to hunting ethics cases, complaints can be filed for disputes between hunters and outfitters that relate to a contract for a hunt and that involve serious elements of fraud and deceit. The SCI Bylaws and the Ethics Committee’s Rules put limits on the kinds of these cases that can be handled by the Committee. Fraud, deceit and misrepresentation normally require a statement or action that was knowingly false and that someone relied on in making a payment or taking some other action. All cases have to go through a preliminary review and most cases involving hunt contracts are rejected by the Ethics Committee because they do not meet the standard set by the SCI Bylaws. The Ethics

Revised, July 2007
Committee is not allowed to act as a substitute for taking civil litigation to a court of law, and it cannot serve as a collection agent for a hunter or outfitter who has a contract dispute.

**The Ethics Process**
The Washington office serves as liaison and provides administrative and legal support to the SCI Ethics Committee. Calls about the ethics process are encouraged on the Washington Office’s 800 number: 1-800-711-8315. Please be aware that the confidentiality requirements of the SCI Bylaws regarding ethics cases severely restrict the ability of staff to discuss open cases.

Ethics complaints must be in writing, signed and notarized. The complaints are filed with the Washington Office, where they are processed by the Ethics Liaison Officer. The Officer opens a case file and sends the complaint to an investigative team on the SCI Ethics Committee and a preliminary determination is made by the Ethics Committee as to whether this is a case that the Ethics Committee can hear under the Bylaws. If the Committee decides that this is not a proper case, it is returned to the complainant for an opportunity to re-file, with additional material that meets the requirements of the Bylaws.

If the case is accepted, the complaint is sent to the “respondent” (the person against whom the complaint was filed) and he is given an opportunity to file a formal answer.

After the investigative team has compiled information on the case, the Ethics Committee discusses the matter and determines if there was an ethical violation. If no violation is found, the case is dismissed.

If there was an ethical violation, a recommendation for a sanction is made and forwarded to the SCI Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee agrees with the recommendation, the respondent is notified and given 30 days to request a formal hearing. If no hearing is requested, the recommended sanction automatically goes into effect. Otherwise, a hearing is held and the Ethics Committee again deliberates whether an ethical violation has occurred.

After the hearing, the Ethics Committee reviews the case and decides whether or not a violation has occurred. If so, the Committee recommends a sanction. This has to go to the Executive Committee and then to the full Board for approval.

If a sanction is imposed, the Ethics Liaison Officer notifies the relevant Departments and Committees in SCI, and a notice is published in Safari Times, giving a short summary of the ethical violation and description of the sanction. Sanctions are normally suspensions of membership privileges for several years or expulsion from SCI. The Ethics Committee can also put a member on probation, which may include conditions, such as writing an article for publication in Safari Times talking about the importance of obeying wildlife laws.