



The Voices of Hunters and Anglers.... Press Conference Participants

Chris Hesla from South Dakota

Chris Hesla is a life long resident of South Dakota. He grew up in the Black Hills and discovered the special places and the special gifts of nature. In 1981 after college, Chris moved to Pierre, the State Capital, and, as he says, “discovered another wonder of mother nature the Missouri River.”

With strong interests in hunting and fishing and being a consumptive conservationist, Chris discovered and became a member of the High Plains Wildlife Association and one of the local South Dakota Wildlife Federation (SDWF) affiliates. He became involved in that club, served as President, and at the same time became involved in SDWF as a Vice-president. In June of 1998, Chris took the full time position of Executive Director of SDWF. SDWF currently is celebrating its 59th year as the largest and most influential of all outdoors and sportsmen organizations in South Dakota. SDWF currently has 17 local affiliates and a membership near 3,500 and maintains a strong emphasis on hook and bullet issues.

“With each day, my commitment grows stronger to protect our natural resources and our precious environment,” Chris says.

Cherie Barton from Idaho

Cherie Barton is a native Idahoan, born and raised in Lewiston and currently resides with her husband in Kuna, Idaho. She was elected President of the Idaho Wildlife Federation at the organization’s annual meeting in October, 2003, having earlier served in that position in an appointed capacity. Cherie has been a professional real estate agent for 25 years and is licensed in four states. She has served two terms as a State Director for the Ada County

Association of Realtors and Idaho Association of Realtors and was a Director for the Ada County Association of Realtors Foundation Board. She is a board member for the Youth Equestrian Center, which is establishing a permanent horse facility for Boise Valley young people.

Cherie's interests include fly fishing, angling (in general), and big game and bird hunting. She also enjoys backpacking, golfing, gardening, music and horseback riding. Cherie says she is "passionate about restoring the wild salmon runs in Idaho."

Josh First from Pennsylvania

Josh First, a resident of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, is President & CEO of Appalachian Land & Conservation Services Co., LLC, a private firm specializing in conservation land development. The firm's mission is to use private markets to achieve tangible conservation and environmental protection results.

Josh has served as interim executive director of the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy (2003-2004), and Pennsylvania Director for The Conservation Fund (2000-2003).

Prior to joining The Conservation Fund, Josh served on the executive staff of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources in the administration of Gov. Tom Ridge, where he held the position of Director of Environmental Education & Information.

From 1990 to 1998, Josh held several team leader and staff positions at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency headquarters in Washington, DC, dealing with international and national agricultural policy and environmental legislation.

Josh is a member of the national board of directors for Republicans for Environmental Protection, and holds affiliations and memberships with many land trusts, conservation organizations, and hunting and fishing groups, including the National Rifle Association, Trout Unlimited, and the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs.

His hobbies are hunting, fishing, canoeing, and other outdoor recreation, especially in Pennsylvania's "Grand Canyon" region. Josh has a passion for sustainable forestry, protection of working landscapes, and the use of private markets to achieve tangible conservation results.