

RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT



A FUNDING VISION FOR COLORADO

RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT

Recovering America's Wildlife Act is a watershed opportunity to fundamentally advance the course of wildlife conservation in the United States. Inspired by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources, Recovering America's Wildlife Act would dedicate up to \$1.3 billion of existing federal revenues annually to implement State Wildlife Action Plans.

The Action Plans are comprehensive conservation strategies that identify species of greatest conservation need, link threats to actions, and provide roadmaps to successfully conserve at-risk and common fish and wildlife. Recovering America's Wildlife Act was introduced in July 2019 during the 116th U.S. Congress with broad bipartisan support. Passage of the bill is a critically important step toward permanently securing the full breadth of fish and wildlife resources in the United States for future generations.

ADDRESSING COLORADO'S CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

Colorado is a nationwide leader in the conservation of wildlife. Funding from Recovering America's Wildlife Act will be used for proactive, effective, and partnership-based endeavors that implement Colorado's State Wildlife Action Plan. Colorado would receive an annual allocation of approximately \$27,000,000 through Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

Additionally, 25% non-federal matching funds (approximately \$9,000,000) would be required, bringing the total potential investment in Colorado to approximately \$36,000,000 annually. This represents an opportunity to invest in the conservation of Colorado's species of greatest conservation need and their habitats at a magnitude that has never before been possible.

WE ENVISION INVESTING FUNDING IN FOUR PRIORITY AREAS:

- Managing Colorado's species of greatest conservation need
 - Conserving and restoring Colorado's priority habitats
 - Enhancing conservation on working and urban lands
 - Expanding conservation education and stewardship

MANAGING COLORADO'S SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED

Potential Investment: \$12,000,000 annually

- **Implement Conservation Actions to Sustain and Recover Species**

Restore populations, conduct research, and address threats to sustain species of greatest conservation need. Address critical data gaps and improve population management to eliminate the need to list species under the Endangered Species Act. Accelerate recovery through collaborative projects to benefit listed fish and wildlife species.

- **Expand and Create Multi-species Programs**

Expand and create programs that address common threats and improve management for suites of species as an effective means to extend the reach of wildlife conservation work in Colorado.

- **Enhance Disease Surveillance and Response**

Implement disease management, research and surveillance programs to address diseases, such as sylvatic plague, white-nose syndrome and whirling disease, which may affect species of greatest conservation need in Colorado.

- **Develop and Implement Species Research and Monitoring**

Utilize robust research and monitoring programs to inform species management and planning, provide early warnings for populations that may be declining, and evaluate the effectiveness of conservation programs.



Black-footed ferret © T. Gurzick, CPW



Greenback cutthroat trout © K. Rogers, CPW



Boreal toad © R. Wertsbaugh, CPW



White-tailed ptarmigan © A. Seglund, CPW

CONSERVING AND RESTORING COLORADO'S PRIORITY HABITATS

Potential Investment: \$15,000,000 annually

▪ Identify Priority Habitats for Conservation

Develop and use mapping techniques to identify habitats and specific areas that present opportunities to strategically implement practices to reduce fragmentation, enhance ecosystem functions and conserve species of greatest conservation need.

▪ Preserve and Enhance Diverse Terrestrial and Aquatic Habitats

Collaborate with government, private, and non-governmental entities to fund landscape-scale habitat protection and restoration. Pursue partnerships and agreements to enhance in-stream flows, protect reservoir levels, and influence water management activities.

▪ Implement Climate Resilience and Adaptation Programs

Evaluate the projected exposure of species and habitats to climate change, the sensitivity to expected changes, and the adaptive capacity to respond to changes. Manage species and habitats to protect ecosystem functions.

▪ Manage and Prevent Invasive Animals and Plants

Conduct surveillance and manage invasive species to prevent and reduce impacts to terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Apply restoration techniques to habitats affected by invasive species.



ENHANCING CONSERVATION ON WORKING AND URBAN LANDS

Potential Investment: \$6,000,000 annually

- **Develop and Enhance Landowner Assistance Programs**

Develop financial and other assistance programs to incentivize voluntary conservation on private lands. Provide technical assistance to landowners interested in implementing conservation actions to benefit species of greatest conservation need and their habitats.

- **Develop Opportunities to Achieve Conservation while Addressing Regulatory Concerns**

Address the concerns of landowners and industry by working cooperatively to identify innovative tools to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts and to encourage effective conservation. Implement and develop tools that provide regulatory predictability.

- **Expand Conservation Planning Tools and Best Management Practices**

Work with industries and local governments to proactively address the impacts of development on species of greatest conservation need and habitats. Expand existing conservation planning tools and develop effective and achievable management recommendations.

- **Consider Wildlife and Habitat in Land Management Planning**

Cooperate with federal, state, and local governments and other partners to ensure the needs of species of greatest conservation need and their habitats are addressed in land management planning processes.



EXPANDING CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP

Potential Investment: \$3,000,000 annually

- **Build an Outdoor Stewardship Ethic**

Foster awareness and experiences that build an ethic of stewardship and responsibility in the public to care for natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation infrastructure. Coordinate with the Colorado Outdoor Partnership and other stakeholders to advance this effort.

- **Educate, Inform and Engage Citizens in Support of Conservation**

Expand the availability of training and curriculum tools to educators and conservation partners. Advance public awareness of the significance and benefits of conservation efforts for species of greatest conservation need and their habitats.

- **Address the Impacts of Recreation on Wildlife and Habitats**

Work with land management partners to proactively manage visitors and maintain infrastructure to provide positive outdoor recreation experiences while limiting resource impacts. Utilize best practices when developing new trails or other outdoor infrastructure.

- **Enhance Volunteer and Citizen Science Capacity**

Increase capacity of outdoor recreation providers, stewardship organizations and agencies to engage volunteers, employ youth and young adults, and enhance other types of support for on-the-ground, action-oriented stewardship and citizen science activities.



Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission

Resolution – 19-01

Reaffirming Support for the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources

WHEREAS, the States are principally responsible for the management of fish and wildlife within their borders, including on federal lands and waters, and

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson and Wallop-Breaux Acts that established a fund financed by hunters, recreational shooters, fishermen and boaters and their industries to support conservation and science-based management of game and sport fish species, and

WHEREAS, this system of funding from the contributions of hunters and anglers has supported the development of the most effective wildlife management system in the world, recovering many of our most treasured game and sport fish species, and

WHEREAS, despite the success of those funds, states still lack a robust, dedicated and sustainable funding mechanism that enables the management and conservation of all species of birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates that are within their public trust responsibilities, and

WHEREAS, the need to protect and enhance the many species of native wildlife which are not ordinarily pursued for sport, fur or food has been clearly established by conservationists of this nation, and

WHEREAS, it is in the national interest of the United States to retain for present and future generations the opportunity to observe, understand and appreciate a wide variety of wildlife, and to prevent wildlife from declining to the point of requiring Federal protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), and

WHEREAS, the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife has created a State Wildlife Action Plan which was approved in 2015 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and

WHEREAS, the Wildlife Action Plan prioritizes Species of Greatest Conservation Need and key habitat types that require prescriptive actions to ensure persistence for future generations, and

WHEREAS, states have long recognized the need for more comprehensive fish and wildlife programs to conserve all species; however, adequate funding has remained elusive, and

WHEREAS, the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources, made up of conservation and business leaders, was convened by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to provide recommendations for securing reliable and assured funding to advance the national interest in conserving all species of wildlife, and

WHEREAS, the Blue Ribbon Panel has called for the enactment of federal legislation to provide critically needed \$1.3 billion in dedicated annual funding for the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program to effectively implement State Wildlife Action Plans and conserve thousands of species in greatest need of conservation as identified by State Wildlife Action Plans, and

WHEREAS, the Blue Ribbon Panel further recommended examining how programs and agencies can transform to engage and serve broader constituencies, and

WHEREAS, bi-partisan legislation was recently introduced into the U.S. Congress by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) (Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2019 {H.R. 3742}) calling for an annual dedication of \$1.3 billion in existing federal revenue to state fish and wildlife agencies for proactive conservation and implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans, and

WHEREAS, securing dedicated federal funding is likely to require a non-federal state match similar to that in place for the Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson and Wallop-Breaux Acts, and

WHEREAS, the culmination of these efforts must be to establish a permanent funding mechanism at the national level which will provide financial and technical assistance to the states, and

WHEREAS, this resolution builds upon Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission Resolution #16-02, which was adopted in August 2016, to support implementation of the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations, which were instrumental in launching the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife: a diverse coalition of conservation organizations, industry associations, businesses and scientists that all support permanent, dedicated funding of the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission recognizes and appreciates the valuable contributions of the Blue Ribbon Panel's deliberations, considerations and recommendations to secure long-term, dedicated funding to protect fish and wildlife resources, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission supports the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel in recommending Congress dedicate up to \$1.3 billion annually to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program to diversify funding and management of all wildlife, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission respectfully requests the Colorado Congressional Delegation to support federal legislation that would implement this recommendation.

Adopted _____, 2019

Michelle Zimmerman, Acting Chair