



# Western Big-Game Migration Program

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## PARTNERS

- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service
- ConocoPhillips
- BNSF Railways

## ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 5,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$6.1 billion.

Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

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Mule deer in Colorado

## BACKGROUND

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, ConocoPhillips and BNSF Railways announced the 2020 round of funding for the Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors program. To conserve migration corridors and winter ranges for elk, mule deer and pronghorn, 15 new grants totaling \$3.1 million were awarded. The awards leveraged \$20.3 million in matching contributions from the grantees to generate a total conservation impact of \$23.4 million.

The projects supported by the 15 grants announced today will enhance and improve habitats on winter ranges, stopover areas and migration corridors used by big game species, both on federal lands and private lands whose owners volunteer to participate in conservation efforts. This program requires that all projects specifically address state-identified priorities to conserve or restore habitat and measurably contribute to the sustainability of local and regional big-game populations. Proposed accomplishments include:

- Restoring degraded priority winter range, stopover areas and migration corridors through activities identified through state plans
- Working cooperatively with private landowners and state highway departments to improve fencing, including modifying, removing, installing (if serving to direct big game movement out of harm's way); or seasonally adapting fencing (if proven to impede movement of big game) through priority migration corridors
- Implementing measures such as conservation easements and management agreements or other actions to protect bottlenecks within corridors and other areas within priority winter range or stopover areas threatened by fragmentation
- Using other proven actions necessary to improve the habitat quality or restore priority big-game winter range stopover areas or migration corridors across the West

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Elk and pronghorn on the move in Colorado

### **Reducing Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions along State Highway 13 by Installing Underpass Fencing (CO)**

Grantee: Colorado Department of Transportation

Grant Amount: .....\$480,400

Matching Funds: .....\$1,560,403

Total Project: .....\$2,040,803

Install fencing to guide wildlife to an arch underpass being constructed under State Highway 13 North of Craig, Colorado. Project will reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and maintain connectivity within a priority migratory corridor for mule deer and elk herds.

### **Restoring Wintering Grassland Habitat on the Kaibab Plateau by Removing Invasive Juniper (AZ)**

Grantee: Arizona Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount: .....\$200,000

Matching Funds: .....\$200,000

Total Project: .....\$400,000

Use mechanical and hand-thinning treatments to remove juniper trees that have invaded historical grassland on Bureau of Land Management lands within Coconino County in northern Arizona. Project will restore 1,480 acres of critical winter mule deer habitat.

### **Restoring Wintering Grassland Habitat on the CO Bar Ranch by Removing Invasive Juniper (AZ)**

Grantee: Arizona Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount: .....\$109,000

Matching Funds: .....\$109,870

Total Project: .....\$218,870

Use a rubber tired masticator to remove invasive juniper from historic grassland habitat on the CO Bar Ranch in northern Arizona. Project will restore more than 700 acres of wintering habitat for elk, pronghorn and mule deer.

### **Modifying Netwire Fences in the Taos Plateau to Improve Habitat Connectivity for Ungulates (NM)**

Grantee: New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts

Grant Amount: .....\$153,817

Matching Funds: .....\$213,500

Total Project: .....\$367,317

Improve fencing to wildlife-friendly specifications to provide permeability into historic winter range habitat for pronghorn, elk and mule deer in the Taos Plateau. Project will modify or remove 20 miles of fencing.

### **Employing an Integrated Weeds Management Approach to Restore Big Game Wintering Habitat (MT)**

Grantee: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Grant Amount: .....\$299,958

Matching Funds: .....\$364,424

Total Project: .....\$664,382

Implement an Integrated Weed Management approach to enhance elk, mule deer, and pronghorn habitat on Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. Project will improve forage quantity and quality on more than 260,000 acres of big game winter range.

### **Conserving Habitat Connectivity in Kootenai Forestlands with a Permanent Conservation Easement (MT)**

Grantee: The Trust for Public Land

Grant Amount: .....\$290,000

Matching Funds: .....\$8,470,000

Total Project: .....\$8,760,000

Place a permanent conservation easement on nearly 30,000 acres of critical wildlife habitat, prime fisheries and highly productive timberland near the City of Libby in Lincoln County, Montana. Project will conserve habitat and landscape-scale connections for big game winter range and migration

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Pronghorn grazing in Montana

corridors, public access to outdoor recreation, protect clean drinking water for nearby communities, and sustain local jobs in the timber and outdoor recreation industries.

**Conserving Ungulate Wintering Habitat with a Conservation Easement on Buffalo Horn Ranch (CO)**

Grantee: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
 Grant Amount: .....\$100,000  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$4,050,839  
 Total Project: ..... \$4,150,839  
 Permanently protect more than 12,000 acres of ungulate winter range habitat on the Buffalo Horn Ranch in northwestern Colorado. Project will secure habitat connectivity across public and private lands for wildlife movement and migration.

**Improving Coordination between Idaho Stakeholders to Implement Ungulate Conservation Projects (ID)**

Grantee: The Mule Deer Foundation  
 Grant Amount: .....\$309,661  
 Matching Funds: .....\$544,176  
 Total Project: ..... \$853,837  
 Hire a coordinator to act as liason between the Mule Deer Foundation and the Idaho Migration and Transportation Team to work on wildlife corridor issues where ungulates cross roadways. Project will improve 24 miles of fencing, place 1,800 acres under permanent conservation easement, improve management on 255,000 acres, restore 1,700 acres and significantly decrease wildlife-vehicle collisions.

**Increasing Regional Capacity for Mule Deer Conservation (WA)**

Grantee: Pheasants Forever  
 Grant Amount: .....\$274,596  
 Matching Funds: .....\$414,797  
 Total Project: .....\$689,393  
 Increase organizational capacity by hiring a three-year coordinator in Washington to assist in developing and implementing conservation and restoration projects, promoting Natural Resource Conservation Service programs and building robust regional partnerships. Project will improve habitat quality and migration corridors for ungulates, improve 20 miles of fencing and restore 5,500 acres of habitat.

**Preventing Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions to Improve Migration and Driver Safety on Highway 395 (CA)**

Grantee: Bureau of Land Management - Bishop Field Office  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$70,000  
 Matching Funds: .....\$223,000  
 Total Project: .....\$293,000  
 Benefit habitat for mule deer, enhancing their migratory corridors, winter ranges and summer ranges, and install signage to improve highway safety for motorist traveling through the Mono County, California. Project will improve ten miles of fencing and install highway signage to significantly decrease wildlife-vehicle collisions.

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Elk in Montana

### **Restoring Native Grassland and Sagebrush Habitat to Benefit Ungulates (WY)**

Grantee: Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount: .....\$249,000

Matching Funds: .....\$409,000

Total Project: .....\$658,000

Restore native grassland and sagebrush habitat southwestern Wyoming by treating and removing invasive species to benefit ungulate species. Project will improve 19 miles of fencing and restore more than 3,500 acres of habitat.

### **Reducing Human-Wildlife Conflicts with Ungulates Migrating through Salt Lake and Utah Counties (UT)**

Grantee: Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Grant Amount: .....\$90,275

Matching Funds: .....\$99,925

Total Project: .....\$190,200

Reduce vehicle collisions along State Route 73 by fencing sections of the road and improving habitat conditions within the migration corridor along the west side of Utah Lake that have become infested with cheatgrass. Project will restore 195 acres of habitat and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions by nearly 60 percent.

### **Removing Invasive Pinyon and Juniper to Conserve Mule Deer Winter Range in the Ruby Mountains (NV)**

Grantee: State of Nevada

Grant Amount: .....\$200,000

Matching Funds: .....\$200,000

Total Project: .....\$400,000

Restore winter ground in the Ruby Mountains, south of Elko,

Nevada by treating invasive pinyon and juniper trees with a combination of hand-thinning, mastication, weed abatement and seeding. Project will restore 1,100 acres of habitat for mule deer.

### **Improving Connectivity by Promoting Safe Passage of Ungulates through Dry Piney Wildlife Habitat (WY)**

Grantee: Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Grant Amount: .....\$122,081

Matching Funds: .....\$3,150,000

Total Project: .....\$3,272,081

Secure roadway safety for humans and wild animals by constructing a series of crossings, fencing, and related improvements near Dry Piney Creek on US Highway 189 in southwest Wyoming. Project will construct 29 miles of fencing to guide wildlife to safe crossings and significantly decrease the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions.

### **Decreasing Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions along U.S. Highway 97 to Conserve Mule Deer Populations (OR)**

Grantee: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Grant Amount: .....\$187,069

Matching Funds: .....\$294,148

Total Project: .....\$481,217

Install exclusionary structures to direct mule deer and elk to newly constructed wildlife underpass along U.S. Highway 97 between miles 178 and 183 in central Oregon. Project will improve public safety and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions by installing 10 miles of fencing, reconnecting 75 miles of a migration corridor.