



# Western Big Game Migration Fund

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## PARTNERS

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- ConocoPhillips

## 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 6,800 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of more than \$10 billion.

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



Pronghorn

## OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced the 2024 round of funding for the Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund. Ten new awards totaling \$3 million will help restore habitat and improve migration corridors across seven western states. The 10 awards leveraged \$8.8 million in matching contributions resulting in a total conservation impact of \$11.8 million.

The western United States is home to some of the largest herds of wild native ungulates in North America. However, the seasonal migrations many of these populations rely on in response to weather conditions and resource availability face significant threats. Habitat fragmentation often limits the availability of high-quality forage and cover, and poor habitat condition limits the health and reproductive success of the herd.

The 10 projects awarded through this slate will conserve critical winter range and migration corridors in Tribally and state-identified focal areas within Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Wyoming. The projects awarded in this slate will: remove or improve 69 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly standards; improve management on 439 acres of rangelands; restore 19,420 acres of public, private and Tribal lands; and place protective easements on 1,934 acres. These outcomes will be accomplished through:

- Restoring degraded priority winter range, stopover areas and migration corridors by removing encroaching trees from sagebrush ecosystems, rehabilitating areas damaged by fire or treating exotic/invasive vegetation to improve the quality and value of these areas to big game and other wildlife
- Working cooperatively with private landowners and state highway departments to achieve permissive fencing measures including potentially modifying, removing, installing or seasonally adapting fencing if proven to impede movement of big game through priority migration corridors
- Conservation easements and management agreements, or other actions to protect bottlenecks within corridors and other areas within priority winter range and stopover areas threatened by fragmentation
- Utilizing other proven actions necessary to improve the habitat quality or restore priority big-game winter range, stopover areas or migration corridors across the West

(continued)

**Managing Woody Invasives to Improve Habitat Quality on Perrin Ranch State Lands Grassland (AZ)**

Grantee: Arizona Elk Society  
 Grant Amount:..... \$130,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$130,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$260,000  
 Improve winter habitat quality for migrant and resident mule deer, elk and pronghorn. Project will restore a minimum of 650 acres of grasslands in Northern Arizona by managing the encroachment of woody invasives.

**Restoring Beaver Creek Watershed to Improve Habitat Connectivity (AZ)**

Grantee: Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District  
 Grant Amount:..... \$489,500  
 Matching Funds:..... \$3,426,500  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$3,916,000  
 Restore wildlife habitat and connectivity, reduce wildfire risk, protect water supplies, communities, infrastructure and improve forest resiliency. Project will restore approximately 3,920 acres by removing invasive woody species from grasslands and former healthy woodlands that will allow native grass, browse and forb species to return.

**Restoring Steven’s Prairie to Enhance Elk Habitat and Establish New Herds (CA)**

Grantee: Yurok Tribe  
 Grant Amount:..... \$181,400  
 Matching Funds:..... \$181,400  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$362,800  
 Enhance meadow habitat for Roosevelt elk, and provide a stopover site both for dispersing elk from saturated populations and for the establishment of new herds on Yurok lands. Project will survey and identify priority habitat in 160 acres, restore 80 acres of degraded prairie through



Roosevelt elk



Mule deer

removal of encroaching trees and invasive plants, establish a 25-acre fuel break along the perimeter of the restored site and place 440 acres under various planning stages to improve management.

**Enhancing Elk Habitat Through Vegetation Treatments in Hay Flats (CO)**

Grantee: U.S. Forest Service  
 Grant Amount:..... \$200,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$536,100  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$736,100  
 Enhance elk habitat through vegetation treatments in mountain shrub and aspen communities within the vicinity of Hay Flats. Project will improve 2.3 acres of fencing, treat 430 acres with mechanical methods to create a mosaic of snowberry regrowth and allow understory species to take hold. Project will treat 220 acres with mastication and hand felling to increase forage, cover and movement opportunities for elk in spring production areas, summer and winter habitat, and movement corridors.

**Modifying Fencing to Improve the Migration Route Across Highway 28 (CO)**

Grantee: The Mule Deer Foundation  
 Grant Amount:..... \$317,900  
 Matching Funds:..... \$420,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$737,900  
 Conserve vital aspen woodlands, sagebrush, and riparian habitat, as well as a migration corridor and pathway for two of Colorado’s largest migratory herds. Project will extend a wildlife funnel fence project on Highway 28 by reconnecting 3 miles of corridor; improving 10 miles of fencing, removing 2 miles of fencing, and increasing the passage success rate to 95 percent. Project will install 20 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing, burn 10,000 acres, place 50,000 acres under conservation easements, improve management on 75,000 acres, restore 20,000 acres and remove invasive plants from 50,000 acres.



Bull elk in Montana

**Protecting Migration Corridors via the Wolf Mountain VII Conservation Easement (CO)**

Grantee: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
 Grant Amount:..... \$100,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$1,977,900  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$2,077,900

Conserve vital aspen woodlands, sagebrush and riparian habitat, as well as a migration corridor and pathway for two of Colorado’s largest migratory herds. Project will permanently protect approximately 1,630 acres of migration corridors for elk and winter range for mule deer, secure habitat connectivity through the valley bottom and highly developable lands near State Highway 40, protect 5 stream miles and support a host of other wildlife, including greater sage grouse

**Collaborating with Montana Grassland Partnership to Improve Big Game Migration (MT)**

Grantee: Ranchers Stewardship Alliance  
 Grant Amount:..... \$275,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$275,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$550,000

Support, connect and contribute to the partnership of big game migration work being done under the umbrella of the Montana Grassland Partnership as part of the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance (RSA) Conservation Committee. Project will work to improve 9 miles of fencing, remove 9 miles of unneeded fencing, restore 1,000 acres of grassland for added habitat and add a Conservation Director position with RSA to better serve the RSA project area and collaborate within the Montana Grassland Partnership.

**Protecting Migration Habitat via a Fee Title Transfer to the Warm Springs Indian Reservation (OR)**

Grantee: Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation  
 Grant Amount:..... \$200,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$716,400  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$916,400

Protect migration corridors in high use areas in the Metolious winter range. Project will transfer 300-acre acquisition to the Confederated Tribe of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation.

**Treating Invasives to Improve Migration Corridors for Elk and Nesting Habitat for Sage Grouse (OR)**

Grantee: Crook County Soil and Water Conservation District  
 Grant Amount:..... \$190,600  
 Matching Funds:..... \$213,600  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$404,200

Enhance understory conditions in sagebrush habitats, which will improve conditions for a host of species including sagebrush obligates, and improve migration and seasonal habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Project will restore 415 acres of migration habitat for elk and mule deer as well as seasonal habitat for sage grouse through the removal of woody invasives.

**Restoring Big Game Migration Corridors for Bates Hole, Dubois and Platte Valley Mule Deer Herds (WY)**

Grantee: Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
 Grant Amount:..... \$961,300  
 Matching Funds:..... \$961,300  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,922,600

Improve forage resources and connectivity between seasonal ranges for mule deer and a wide variety of other wildlife. Project will implement 13,530 acres of invasive weed treatments, modify 46 miles of fences and restore 150 acres of habitat.