



Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund

NFWF CONTACTS

Chris West

Director,
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
chris.west@nfwf.org
303-222-6484

Seth Gallagher

Director,
Grasslands and Mountain West
seth.gallagher@nfwf.org
303-222-6483

Daley Burns

Manager,
Rocky Mountain Regional Programs
daley.burns@nfwf.org
202-595-2440

PARTNERS

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- ConocoPhillips
- Altria
- Bezos Earth Fund

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

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

1133 15th Street, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, D.C., 20005
202-857-0166



Mule deers in Arizona

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, The US Forest Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Altria and ConocoPhillips announced the 2022 round of funding for the Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund. To conserve migration corridors and winter ranges for elk, mule deer and pronghorn, \$2.5 million was awarded to 12 new projects and continuing support for one existing project. The awards announced generated \$7 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$9.5 million.

The projects supported by the 13 grants announced today will enhance and improve habitats on winter ranges, stopover areas and migration corridors used by big game species, on federal, tribal and private lands whose owners volunteer to participate in conservation efforts.

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Greater sage grouse

This program requires that all projects specifically address state and tribal identified priorities to conserve or restore habitat and measurably contribute to the sustainability of local and regional big-game populations. The priorities and strategies of this program include:

- Restoring degraded priority winter range, stopover areas and migration corridors by activities identified through tribal and state plans
- Working cooperatively with tribal nations, 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 bottle necks 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

This slate of projects is expected to contribute to these program goals by:

- Protecting 5,960 acres of private land from fragmentation through conservation easements
- Restoring 6,600 acres of public, private and tribal land through efforts such as invasive weed and conifer removal treatments
- Improving management on 63,500 acres of public, private and tribal working lands through efforts such as grazing and wildlife management plans
- Removing or improving 300 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly specifications, reducing direct mortality and increasing landscape connectivity
- Reconnecting 90 miles of migration corridors for big game species
- Reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions by 75% at the I-80/I-84 interchange in Utah and U.S. Highway 97 in Oregon

Improving Big Game Migration across US-95 in the Panhandle Complex Priority Area (ID)

Grantee: Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Grant Amount:..... \$289,700

Matching Funds:..... \$426,300

Total Project Amount:..... \$716,000

Improve habitat connectivity for big game species in north Idaho's Panhandle Complex Priority Area where a busy two-lane highway (US-95) transects the valley, impeding wildlife movement. Project will improve big game passage success rates across US-95 from an average of 162 to at least 500 crossings per year and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions by repairing and extending 2.8 miles of wildlife funnel fencing along wildlife crossing infrastructure.

Restoring Big Game Winter Range Grassland Habitat on Perrin Ranch by Removing Woody Invasives (AZ)

Grantee: Arizona Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount:..... \$100,000

Matching Funds:..... \$100,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$200,000

Mechanically remove invasive, encroaching juniper and pinyon pine trees from priority big game winter range habitat within the Grand Canyon to Prescott Corridor Complex in Arizona. Project will restore 1,200 acres of habitat and increase connectivity for mule deer, elk and pronghorn.

Protecting Big Game Migration and Winter Range with the Twin Eagle Ranch Conservation Easement (WY)

Grantee: The Conservation Fund, A Nonprofit Corporation

Grant Amount:..... \$250,000

Matching Funds:..... \$3,990,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$2,440,000

Permanently protect priority big game habitat on Twin Eagle Ranch in Sublette County, Wyoming through a conservation easement. Project will prevent a high threat of subdivision, maintain these migration corridors, protect habitat (including known nests) in the Greater Sage-Grouse Designated Core Area, support climate resiliency, and provide the opportunity for a future wildlife crossing.

Using Virtual Fence Technology to Enhance Big Game Habitat through Improved Grazing Management (WA)

Grantee: Conservation Northwest

Grant Amount:..... \$192,100

Matching Funds:..... \$338,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$530,100

Utilize virtual fence technology on a working ranch in the Columbia Plateau Mule Deer Management Zone of Wyoming to improve grazing management which will improve big game habitat and will serve as a model of this technology for future applications in the region. Project will pilot virtual fence technology to control cattle on 47,700 acres in the shrub-steppe habitat of mule deer, sharp-tailed grouse, greater sage-grouse, and pronghorn.

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Pronghorn in Arizona

Reconnecting Big Game Migration Corridors and Winter Range Habitat at the I-80/I-84 Interchange (UT)

Grantee: Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
 Grant Amount:..... \$250,000
 Matching Funds:..... \$800,000
 Total Project Amount:.....\$1,050,000
 Restore big game migration corridors, reconnect critical winter ranges, and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions by installing a wildlife exclusion fence around the I-80/I-84 interchange in northern Utah. Project will install 2.68 miles of fencing to direct animal movement to existing underpasses and bridges, where wildlife can cross safely.

Restoring Big Game Winter Range Grassland Habitat on the Truxton Flat by Removing Woody Invasives (AZ)

Grantee: Arizona Game and Fish Department
 Grant Amount:..... \$100,000
 Matching Funds:..... \$100,000
 Total Project Amount \$200,000
 Restore 800 acres of critical winter range and stopover habitat for mule deer and pronghorn in northern Arizona. Project will mechanically masticate invading woody vegetation from historic browse communities and grasslands that provide winter range for big game species.

Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Migration Corridors Across the Blackfeet Nation (MT)

Grantee: Center for Large Landscape Conservation
 Grant Amount:..... \$171,600
 Matching Funds:..... \$172,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$343,600
 Coordinate with the Blackfeet Conservation District to address habitat connectivity on the Blackfeet Nation through removal and upgrade of fences, reduction of animal-vehicle collisions along key sections of highway, and improvement of habitat through control of invasive species. Project will provide capacity and educational opportunities to improve habitat management and fence line modifications on 26,000 acres of tribal lands.

Restoring Climate-Resilient Habitat for Big Game on Pueblo of Sandia's Bobcat Ranch (NM)

Grantee: Pueblo of Sandia
 Grant Amount:..... \$250,400
 Matching Funds:..... \$250,400
 Total Project Amount:..... \$500,800
 Increase climate-resilient habitat for big game in the Sangre de Cristo mountain range on Bobcat Ranch, a ranch owned and operated by the Pueblo of Sandia Tribe. Project will restore a 247-acre big game migration corridor for the benefit of Rocky Mountain elk and mule deer by implementing forest thinning treatments, prescribed burning, and reseeding of grassland vegetation to link three existing meadows via a migration corridor.

Improving Habitat Connectivity and Increasing Forage Quantity and Quality for Mule Deer (WY)

Grantee: Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount:..... \$280,000
 Matching Funds:..... \$280,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$560,000

Improve cross-jurisdictional migration corridor and winter range habitat in the Platte Valley, Sublette County, Wyoming to benefit mule deer. Project will implement 2,000 acres of invasive species management and modify 27 miles of fence to wildlife friendly standards, there by increasing forage resources and connectivity between seasonal ranges for mule deer and other wildlife.

Increasing Connectivity at the Hallelujah Junction Wildlife Area through Post-Fire Restoration (CA)

Grantee: Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Grant Amount:..... \$165,000
 Matching Funds:..... \$1,410,700
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,575,700

Project Summary: Restore the Hallelujah Junction Wildlife Area, a prioritized winter range habitat for mule deer that was burned and degraded by recent wildfires, through invasive species removal and monitoring with subsequent native plant restoration to incorporate bitterbrush, forbs and native grasses beneficial to big game species. Project will restore 180 acres with post-fire rehabilitation practices.

Protecting Big Game Migration Habitat with the Middle Piney & Lead Creek Conservation Easements (WY)

Grantee: Jackson Hole Land Trust

Grant Amount:..... \$67,800
 Matching Funds:..... \$635,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$702,800

Permanently protect key migration habitat on the Middle Piney and Lead Creek properties to benefit the Sublette County and Wyoming Range mule deer herds and enhance landscape-scale connectivity in the Upper Green River Basin for elk, moose, and pronghorn. Project will place 980 acres of private working lands under permanent conservation easement to address a high risk of residential development.

Chis-chu Stlh-xat-dvn Naa-yvlh-sri (Roosevelt Elk Habitat Restoration) (CA)

Grantee: Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation

Grant Amount:..... \$140,500
 Matching Funds:..... \$144,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$284,500

Increase habitat connectivity and quality for elk in Smith River, Del Norte County, California by restoring prairie and oak woodland habitat on the Nation's Tr'ee-ghii~li Property, continuing ongoing Tribal and Department collaborative elk monitoring efforts, and ultimately connect restored, high quality elk habitat treatments on Tribal land, private timber lands, and Federal land managed by the U.S. Forest Service land. Project will restore or improve more than 3,000 acres of habitat.

CONTINUING SUPPORT

NFWF is also continuing support for a project awarded through this program in 2020 in order to facilitate the movement and increase the survival of migrating mule deer and elk between dispersed summer ranges and their critical BLM winter ranges while improving public safety through the reduction 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:..... \$206,100
 Matching Funds:..... \$206,500
 Total Project Amount:..... \$414,600

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.



Moose in Wyoming