

**Statement of The Nature Conservancy
Fiscal Year 2011 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriation
Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives
March 28, 2011**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to present The Nature Conservancy's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2012 appropriations. My name is Thomas J. Cassidy, Jr. and I am Director of Federal Land Programs. The Nature Conservancy is an international, non-profit conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. Our mission is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

This is an unusual budget year and a challenging fiscal environment. The Conservancy recognizes that there is a need for fiscal austerity. However, we do not believe that conservation programs should suffer from disproportionate and extreme reductions, as did important wildlife and land conservation programs in the House passed H.R. 1. Our budget recommendations this year do not exceed the President's budget request except for a few instances in which we recommend FY10 funding levels. Moreover, as a science based and business oriented organization, we believe strongly that the budget levels we support represent a prudent investment in our country's future that will reduce risks and ultimately save money based on the tangible benefits natural resources provide each year to the American people. We look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee, as you address the ongoing needs for conservation investments to sustain our nation's heritage of natural resources that are also important to the economic vitality of communities across this country.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The Conservancy is an enthusiastic supporter of the President's request to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the mix of programs it funds. We are especially interested in the proposed competitive state-side program and would like to acknowledge the version of this proposed last year by Ranking Member Moran. We are hopeful that increased funding for LWCF can be the catalyst for the kind of cooperative and community based conservation called for in the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

This year, the Conservancy is specifically supporting 29 biologically rich land acquisition projects totaling \$75.13 million. Priorities include continuing phased acquisitions of projects at OR's Hell's Canyon NRA, Montana Legacy Project, AZ's Shield Ranch, SC's Cape Romain NWR and the Silvio O. Conte NFWR. We are also pleased to support the Administration's proposals for investing in conservation easements on the working ranches of the KS's Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area and MT's Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area. Both of these projects exemplify landscape scale conservation through the cost effective means of conservation easements.

Forest Legacy. We support \$150 million for this program, and are specifically supporting 9 projects totaling \$26.485 million. We hope this year to complete the phased acquisition of KY's Big Rivers Corridor, the #1 ranked project, ID's Boundary Connections project and the phased acquisitions of NY's Follensby Pond, TX' Longleaf Ridge and TN's Northern Cumberlands.

Endangered Species. The Conservancy enthusiastically supports the President's request of \$100 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF). The Conservancy and its partners have used the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Recovery Land Acquisition Programs to secure key habitat for numerous threatened, endangered and at-risk species and, thus, to help avoid conflicts over ESA issues. It has been an important catalyst for several local government led Habitat Conservation Plans that facilitate urban development and streamline permitting of essential transportation and energy infrastructure. In one part of Riverside County CA alone, a single HCP has facilitated development of transportation infrastructure that alleviates congestion and creates jobs in this rapidly growing area. The plan facilitates development on over 700,000 acres through acquisition of 153,000 acres in new conservation lands. In recent years, CESCF funds have also been used to provide permanent habitat protection through conservation easement on high-priority private lands, such as in Northern Idaho's Kootenai Valley, providing a critical link between higher elevation public lands of the Selkirk Mountains and Montana's Blackfoot Valley. We also support continued funding for the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program, recovery funds for the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program, and fish hatchery needs associated with the recovery plans in this region.

Climate Change. Fish, wildlife, and their habitats are and will continue to be profoundly impacted by climate change, regardless of our successes in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. If we are to get out ahead of such change to avoid disastrous losses in critical habitat and the species that depend on that habitat, we must develop the place-based science to make informed, cost-effective management investments. The Conservancy appreciates the President's commitment to respond to the global climate challenge, and this Committee's sustained leadership in supporting cooperative, science-based programs to respond to the global climate challenge help ensure resilient land and seascapes. In particular, we welcome this Committee's commitment to both the USGS-led Climate Science Centers and DOI's Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. The investments to date have catalyzed a critical program of work that will require continuing support as our knowledge and understanding of adaptation needs grow.

Wildland Fire Management. We appreciate the Committee's continued attention to proactive management to reduce fuels and protect communities from damaging fire. We support the long-overdue step of creating a separate budget for Hazardous Fuels Reduction in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and in the Wildland. We also support continued use of the FLAME Account to ensure there is adequate funding for high-cost wildfire seasons.

Integrated Resource Restoration. The Conservancy supports the President's FY12 proposal for the U.S. Forest Service's Integrated Resource Restoration budget and notes the significant improvements over the FY11 proposal. We strongly support full funding

of \$40 million for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program. We also support creation of the Restoration and Management of Ecosystems line item with \$659 million by combining a variety of programs that were formerly separate functions, including Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management, Forest Products, Hazardous Fuels Reduction in Wildlands, and post-fire Rehabilitation and Restoration. Separate funding for these and other activities led to inefficient, uncoordinated activities in wildlife, fisheries, timber, water source improvement, fuels reduction, and post-fire rehabilitation that did not necessarily contribute to restoration goals. This new budget will enhance the Forest Service's ability to provide and measure important natural services, such as clean and abundant water, renewable energy from biomass, restored wildlife and fish habitat, and reduced risk of damaging wildfire in overgrown forests.

Forest Health Management. America's forests are threatened by a growing number of non-native pests and diseases. The Conservancy appreciates the Committee's leadership in consistently providing funding above the President's request. The Forest Health Management program should receive an increase to the FY10 level of \$138 million to effectively address economically and ecologically damaging pests, including the Asian Longhorned Beetle, Emerald Ash Borer, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Sudden Oak Death, thousand-canker disease (threatening walnut trees), and the goldspotted oak borer.

Forest Service Research Program. We support the President's request for the Forest Service Research program to maintain funding of research to improve detection and control methods for the Emerald Ash Borer, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, goldspotted oak borer, and other non-native forest pests and diseases.

State Wildlife Grants. The Conservancy endorses the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition's support of the President's request. Strong federal investments are essential to ensure strategic actions are undertaken by state and federal agencies and the conservation community to conserve wildlife populations and their habitats. We also strongly support the proposed \$20 million competitive grant program as a subset of the program.

National Wildlife Refuge Fund. The Conservancy shares the Chairman's concern that the Administration's request eliminates the discretionary funding of this important program that offsets the loss of tax revenues to counties due to the refuge system. We recommend funding this program at the FY10 enacted level.

Migratory Bird and Partnership Programs. The Committee has consistently provided vitally important investments for a number of migratory bird programs. Such investments are essential to reverse declines in bird populations through direct conservation action, monitoring and science. We urge the Committee to fund the President's request for such established and successful programs as the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and the Joint Ventures, and the Migratory Bird Management Program. We support the President's request for the FWS Coastal Program and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and request \$10 million for the National Fish Habitat Initiative.

International Programs. There are large unmet needs for international conservation. When well-managed, conservation contributes much too human welfare in the developing countries and globally. Recognizing that the current fiscal situation requires a

measure of austerity, we support the President's request for the FWS' Multinational Species Conservation Funds, the international wildlife trade programs, Wildlife Without Borders and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. Each of those programs face substantial cuts from the FY10 enacted levels. We also support a line item and funding for the U.S. Forest Service's International Programs at its FY10 enacted level of \$9.818 million.

Bureau of Land Management Climate Change, Ecoregional Assessments & Resource Management. The Conservancy supports the Administration's recommended funding for BLM's Climate Change Adaptation Initiative. This will enable completion of ecoregional assessments, a key information tool for the agency to respond to the growing challenges of climate change and energy development. We also recommend robust funding for BLM resource management and transportation planning activities. These funds are needed to complete ongoing planning efforts and to initiate new planning efforts in key places, without which the agency cannot make informed mitigation and siting decisions for traditional and renewable energy proposals and take the management actions necessary to improve priority wildlife and aquatic habitats, ensure water quality, control invasive species and manage off-road vehicle use. BLM should also be encouraged to use existing data sets when available so that funding can be focused on critical data needs instead of creating duplicitous data sets.

USGS – Water Resources. We support increased funding levels for the National Streamflow Information Program and the Cooperative Water Program, including work on water availability studies and work to implement a national water use and assessment program. As climate change, drought and population growth increase the demands on water resources, it is critical to invest in the integration of state and federal water resource data and to better understand water needs of human communities and the environment.

Environmental Protection Agency. EPA's programs make important contributions to the nation's conservation agenda. National estuary, wetland, and watershed programs protect vital water resources that are essential to community health and economic prosperity. Targeted geographic programs support scientific research, planning and cost effective actions to improve water quality and restore aquatic ecosystems. Targeted grant programs provide funding for states and localities to proactively protect their water supplies through traditional infrastructure improvements and through innovative green infrastructure protection strategies that are more cost-effective in the long run. We support the President's request for EPA's Water Ecosystem Programs and Geographic Programs, including the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, as well as the estuary and wetlands programs, and the Sustainable Community/Ecosystem research. We also support the President's request for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Categorical Grants for Non-Point Source and Pollution Control, with the added recommendation that the Agency allocate a significant portion of these funds to State and local projects that achieve habitat protection and restoration in aquatic ecosystems.

Thank you for the opportunity to present The Nature Conservancy's recommendations for the FY 2012 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

**Testimony of John F. Turner, former President and CEO,
The Conservation Fund
before the
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives**

April 15, 2011

Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Moran and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of full funding of the FY 2012 budget request for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) and several other land acquisition programs. From 1993 to 2001, I served as President and CEO of The Conservation Fund (TCF) and I am testifying on its behalf. Prior to my work at TCF, I served as the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the Administration of President George H.W. Bush. For President George W. Bush, I also had the honor to lead U.S. environmental policy at the State Department as Assistant Secretary for Oceans, Environment and International Scientific Affairs at the U. S. State Department. A wildlife ecologist by training, I reside in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where my family operates the Triangle X Guest Ranch.

The Conservation Fund (TCF) is a national, non-profit conservation organization dedicated to conserving America's land and water legacy for future generations. Established in 1985, TCF works with landowners, federal, state and local agencies, and other partners to conserve our nation's important lands, for people, wildlife and communities. As a member of the LWCF Coalition, TCF supports the Coalition's funding goals outlined in testimony presented separately to the Subcommittee. To date, TCF has helped our partners to conserve nearly seven million acres, including some of Wyoming and Idaho's most important natural and historical treasures.

These accomplishments are due, in large measure, to the leadership of this Subcommittee over many years to appropriate funds to federal agencies to acquire lands for future generations. Mr. Chairman, I wish to congratulate you on your appointment to head this Subcommittee and commend you for your public service to advance our nation's great conservation legacy.

As a lifelong westerner, I plan to highlight some benefits of the LWCF and Forest Legacy Projects in eastern Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, as well as in Texas and the Southeast. While these projects show the tremendous diversity of benefits of land acquisition for the public, they have one thing in common – each of these projects is driven by landowners. Many farmers and ranchers have significant financial equity in their land. By enabling a farmer or rancher to sell a conservation easement or fee title, federal land conservation funding provides ranchers and other landowners with funds to stay in business, reinvest in their agricultural operations or meet other financial goals. This is especially true in our work with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on the Upper Snake/South Fork Snake River in Idaho.

Upper Snake/South Fork Snake River ACEC -- \$6.0 m. I grew up fishing on the Snake River, both in Wyoming and the Henry's Fork and South Fork in eastern Idaho. These are also favorite fishing stretches for my fly fishing partner, former Vice President, Dick Cheney. As you

are well aware, river recreation is part of the life blood of the west and the economic well being of many of our communities. Thanks to your support for the BLM's land acquisition program, the public can enjoy some of the nation's best fishing on the Upper Snake/South Fork, just downstream from my home town. We support full funding of the President's FY 2012 budget request of \$6.0 million to enable the BLM to purchase conservation easements from local farmers and ranchers, on a willing seller basis, to conserve high value Snake River properties. Through the purchase of these easements, the BLM can protect the South Fork of the Snake River's outstanding water quality, cold-water fishery, scenic beauty and recreational fishing opportunities, while keeping these working agricultural lands on the county tax rolls.

Through our family rafting business on the Snake River and our visitors to our guest ranch, I know first hand that the Upper Snake/South Fork's recreational opportunities generate significant economic benefits to the regional economy. From a biological perspective, the South Fork's riparian habitat features extensive cottonwood galleries that provide habitat for a rich diversity of wildlife species.

North Platte River Special Recreation Management Area, Wyoming -- \$1.0 m. Located near Casper, the North Platte River features some of the best fishing in the country and supports the highest pounds of trout per mile of any stream in Wyoming. Full funding of the BLM's FY 2012 \$1.0 m. budget request will enable the BLM to acquire a portion of a 380-acre tract from TCF. If approved, these funds will help conserve river frontage, provide local residents and visitors with over one mile of fishing access along the North Platte, promote water quality and benefit local small businesses. According to a recent study, the average group of visitors contributes \$500 per day to the local economy, with the majority of visitors coming to Casper to fish.

Because most of the land along the Gray Reef stretch is privately-owned, the public currently has very limited access to this world-class fishing resource. With an increase in annual visitor use from 30,000 to over 150,000, Congressional approval of LWCF funding would help meet the growing demand for access and conserve this vitally important fishing resource. This project builds on the successful completion of two other undertakings and will strengthen a partnership with local landowners, fishing organizations, the BLM and the State to conserve this resource.

Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming -- \$15.0 m. Mr. Chairman, I have spent a major portion of my life in and around the Tetons. Along with millions of other Americans, I marvel at their unsurpassed natural splendor. I would like to personally invite you, and other members of the Subcommittee, to come visit Grand Teton National Park this summer to see and enjoy this spectacular region. To conserve these important resources, I support full funding of the President's FY 2012 LWCF request of \$15.027 million for Grand Teton. TCF is working closely with local landowners to enable the National Park Service to acquire the Snake River Ranch III property, one of the park's top land acquisition priorities. It is located strategically at the southern entrance to the park at Granite Creek. Over three million people visit the park for its stunning views, abundant wildlife and recreational opportunities. Protecting the Snake River Ranch, one of the last few remaining inholdings in the park, would help complete the significant public investment made in expanding the park for the benefit of the nation. We also believe that the acquisition of the Wyoming State School Lands would provide significant public benefits to the nation, and to the people of Wyoming. The park and its scenic grandeur contribute

significantly to our guest ranch business and the region's tourist economy, providing tens of thousands of jobs in the surrounding area.

Devils Tower National Monument, Forest Legacy Project -- \$2.0 m. Designated as the nation's first National Monument in 1906 by President Theodore Roosevelt, Devils Tower dominates the surrounding landscape. However, the Monument itself is quite small and is surrounded by private forestlands. To conserve land at the base of the Monument, TCF is working with the State of Wyoming and a local ranch family to help achieve the family's longstanding goal of permanently conserving their ranch. Through the Forest Legacy Program, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has requested \$2.0 million in the FY 2012 President's budget to provide a grant to the State of Wyoming to acquire a conservation easement. If approved, this funding would leverage additional state and private donations to conserve the viewshed looking towards the nation's first national monument and preserve a centennial ranch in one of Wyoming's most iconic valleys.

Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area, Montana -- \$8.0 m. As a former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), I have a deep appreciation and benefits of the FWS's land acquisition program for wildlife, water quality and wildlife-based outdoor recreation. TCF is working in close partnership with the FWS, The Nature Conservancy and local ranchers to acquire conservation easements along the Rocky Mountain Front, a spectacular range that runs from just north of Helena to Glacier National Park. Through this voluntary conservation project, LWCF helps local ranchers expand and strengthen their ranching operations while conserving vital wildlife habitat for grizzly bear, and a range of other important species. TCF and its partners are raising tens of millions of private philanthropic dollars to further advance this effort for ranching families and wildlife and to leverage limited federal funding.

Neches River National Wildlife Refuge, Texas -- \$11.0 m. In 2006, the FWS established the Neches River NWR to protect habitat for migratory birds of the Central Flyway and bottomland hardwood forests for their diverse biological values, water quality benefits and wetlands functions, as well as to provide for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities. I respectfully request the Subcommittee's support for full funding of the \$11 million FY 2012 budget request for the Neches River NWR. The refuge boundary includes 25,000 acres of river bottomlands and upland pine/hardwood ecosystems, along with 38 miles of Neches River frontage. At the request of the FWS, TCF acquired a 6,715-acre tract, formerly owned by a timberland investment company that features eight miles of Neches River frontage, dense bottomland hardwood forest, and numerous oxbows and ponds. The FWS has an approved appraisal of the property and TCF has raised significant private funds to provide excellent leverage for the requested federal funds.

Rocky Fork/Cherokee National Forest, Tennessee -- \$5 million. As our nation commemorates the centennial of the Weeks Act of 1911, I would like to highlight several high priority USFS projects in the Southeast. For several years, the USFS has identified the Rocky Fork project as its top land acquisition priority in the country and has included \$5 million in its FY 2012 budget request to Congress. In 2008, TCF acquired the Rocky Fork property which is situated along the Tennessee-North Carolina border near Johnson City and Asheville. Named after the creek that flows from the property, Rocky Fork features exceptional water quality with

over 16 miles of Blue Ribbon trout streams that support native brook trout. To date, the Subcommittee has provided over \$19.4 million in federal appropriations. Coupled with \$9 million in state and private funding (in hand), along with other pending funding requests, the USFS can complete this approximately \$40 million project with FY 2011 funds (\$6 million) and full funding of the FY 2012 request (\$5.0 m.). Completing the project this year will protect water quality and quantity in the Nolichucky River watershed, ensure continued public access for fishing, hiking, hunting and other activities and preserve important habitat for black bear, turkey, deer and grouse. With bipartisan support from the Interior subcommittee, Tennessee and North Carolina congressional delegations and a partnership with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, we can complete this project this year.

North Carolina Threatened Treasures/National Forest System -- \$3.576 m.

The 753-acre Backbone Ridge project is located near the Blue Ridge Parkway, Grandfather Mountain State Park and surrounded on three sides by the Pisgah National Forest adjoining the Forest for almost ten miles. The property will provide a gateway for hiking in a network of protected federal and state lands. At a total acquisition cost of \$9 million, Backbone Ridge is a keystone property located only four miles from Blowing Rock and directly within the viewshed of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The USFS is seeking \$4.5 million over several years to acquire a portion of the property, while the State of North Carolina seeks to acquire the balance as a state forest. Protecting the property would conserve 57,000 feet of streams and 585 acres of riparian buffers. TCF is working with the Trust for Public Land, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy and Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy to secure funding for Backbone Ridge and several important projects proposed for these funds.

Priority Land Acquisition Programs. In addition to these federal LWCF projects, we wish to highlight several other priority funding programs and encourage the Subcommittee to give consideration to fully funding the President's FY 2012 budget request for:

- NPS state LWCF grant program -- \$200 m.
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants -- \$50 million
- USDA-Forest Service Community Forest program -- \$5 m.
- Section 6 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund -- \$100 m.

Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act Reauthorization. We appreciate the Subcommittee's support last year of a one year extension of the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA), to complement the LWCF program. FLTFA gives BLM and the other federal land management agencies an important funding tool that uses a "land for land" approach. FLTFA enables the agencies acquire critically important tracts of land from private willing sellers for fish and wildlife conservation, cultural and historic preservation and outdoor recreation in the West, through the disposal of non-strategic BLM lands which in turn benefits local economies. TCF and other organizations are currently working with the House Natural Resource Committee to extend the FLTFA program this year, when it expires in July 2011.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and for your favorable consideration of the LWCF program which will leave a legacy to future generations, conserve America's unsurpassed natural heritage and support the economies of many communities across our great land.

TESTIMONY OF JEFF TRANDAHL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION
BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES REGARDING
**FY 2012 BUDGET FOR THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE
SERVICE, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND FOREST SERVICE**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding FY 2012 funding for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (Foundation). **The Foundation's FY 2012 appropriations request will be matched dollar for dollar with non-federal funds to conserve fish, wildlife and their habitats through local partnerships.** We believe that the Foundation is a sound investment in a time of constrained budgets because of our proven track record and statutory requirement to leverage federal funding with private contributions to maximize conservation benefit. We appreciate the Subcommittee's past support and respectfully request your approval of funding at the following levels:

- **\$ 8.537 million through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Resource Management General Administration appropriation;**
- **\$ 3 million through the Bureau of Land Management's Management of Lands and Resources appropriation; and**
- **\$ 3 million through the Forest Service's National Forest System appropriation.**

Since its inception, the Foundation has leveraged nearly \$530 million in federal funds into \$1.8 billion in on-the-ground and in-the-water conservation with less than 5% aggregate overhead to the federal government and fewer than 100 staff nationwide.

The Foundation was established by Congress in 1984 to foster public-private partnerships to conserve fish, wildlife and their habitats. The Foundation is required by law to match each federally-appropriated dollar with a minimum of one non-federal dollar. We consistently exceed this requirement by leveraging federal funds at a 3:1 average ratio while building consensus and emphasizing accountability, measurable results, and sustainable conservation outcomes.

Last summer, the Foundation was able to immediately respond to the Gulf disaster through our existing partnerships and grantee network. We provided assistance to our federal agency partners and began fundraising for projects to safeguard the populations of species most at risk from the Gulf oil spill. Through philanthropic contributions by BP and WalMart, the Foundation provided nearly \$10 million in non-federal funds for projects to reduce the losses and bolster populations of migratory birds and sea turtles in the Gulf region. In addition, as an in-kind donation, the Foundation worked with FedEx to transfer 25,000 sea turtle eggs and their nests from Gulf beaches to the east coast of Florida. The Foundation will announce an additional \$10 million of Gulf projects in April 2011 that focus on migratory birds, sea turtles, oysters, and other marine species and their habitats.

With your support, FY 2012 funds will support our long-standing partnerships and new initiatives with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Forest Service (FS). Several of our priority initiatives for FY 2012 are described below.

Fish Habitat Restoration

In cooperation with FWS, BLM, and FS, the Foundation provides community-based grants to assist rural communities, farmers, ranchers and other private landowners with restoring habitats that are essential for native fish species and their migration corridors. To the extent possible, the Foundation is also partnering with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service on these efforts, and successfully leveraging federal support with corporate contributions for fish habitat conservation on private and public lands. The Foundation is building on our long history in fish habitat restoration to strategically target our partnership efforts toward specific species of concern and this will continue in FY 2012 and beyond. Focal species for the Foundation's grants include: Eastern Brook Trout, Apache trout, Colorado Cutthroat trout, and Coho salmon.

Path of the Pronghorn and Sage Grouse

In 2009, the Foundation and our partners identified the Green River Basin of Wyoming (Basin) as a priority area for coordinated conservation efforts. The Basin supports significant populations of sage grouse, mule deer, pronghorn and elk. These species are threatened by habitat fragmentation, subdivision and fencing of key areas that the antelope move through, mortality along increasingly busy local roads and highways, and potential conflicts with expanding energy production infrastructure on their wintering range. In partnership with FWS, BLM, and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Foundation has focused its grant-making on work to improve fencing so that pronghorn and other animals can migrate more easily, reducing the effects of roads on wildlife, and protecting key parcels where subdivision and development will imperil the entire migration corridor.

Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Long Island Sound

Watershed health plays an important role in fish and wildlife conservation and has been a feature of the Foundation's grantmaking since establishing our partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1998. In the last decade, the Foundation has formed strategic public-private partnerships to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat while improving water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Long Island Sound. Federal partners in the programs include EPA, Department of Interior agencies, Forest Service, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, NOAA, and others. The Foundation leveraged various federal funds for these partnerships but, more importantly, attracted private contributions from corporations and other private foundations. The Foundation's watershed grant programs continued positive results in 2010 with priority project requests far exceeding available funds.

Youth in Natural Resources

The Department of Interior's FY 2012 budget request includes \$2 million, split between FWS and BLM, for the Foundation to establish a competitive grant program for youth conservation job programs. With the movement of Americans to urban areas and more indoor recreational pursuits, America's youth are developing a gap in their knowledge of fish and wildlife and the

need for natural resource conservation. **Through this unique initiative, local organizations will develop employment programs that foster a conservation ethic, expose youth to career opportunities in the conservation community, and ultimately cultivate future generations of wildlife professionals.**

The Foundation will work with FWS and BLM to develop a public-private partnership by leveraging the Federal funding with at least an equal amount of privately financed contributions. Funds will be awarded to Refuges, Fish Hatcheries, Friends groups, BLM field offices, Youth Conservation Corps, non-governmental organizations and others who seek to develop innovative conservation employment opportunities for youth. Wildlife habitat conservation education will be an integral aspect of this grant program and the Foundation will partner with the Department of the Interior's National Conservation Training Center to develop learning goals, curricula, and other training material that can be integrated into job programs.

Conclusion

NFWF has a 27-year history with the Department of Interior and has been successful in bringing together public and private partners to build strategic partnerships to address the most significant threats to fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. The Foundation has partnerships with 14 federal agencies and more than 50 corporations and private foundations. We have a successful model of coordinating and leveraging federal funds and attracting support from the private sector to form public-private partnerships for fish and wildlife conservation.

We are working directly with the federal agencies and our other partners to maximize results and produce sustainable conservation outcomes. To that end, the Foundation is incorporating monitoring and evaluation into our programs to measure progress, promote adaptive management, demonstrate results, and continuously learn from project investments. We look forward to building on our partnerships with FWS, BLM and FS in FY 2012 and appreciate the Subcommittee's continued support of these collaborative efforts.

Background on National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

As of FY 2010, the Foundation has awarded over 11,000 grants to national and community-based organizations through successful partnerships with the Department of Interior Agencies, USDA's Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and others. This collaborative model brings together multiple federal agencies with state, tribal and local governments and private organizations to implement coordinated conservation strategies in all 50 states.

The Foundation's grant-making involves a thorough internal and external review process. Peer reviews involve federal and state agencies, affected industry, non-profit organizations, and academics. Grants are also reviewed by the Foundation's issue experts, as well as evaluation staff, before being recommended to the Board of Directors for approval. In addition, according to our Congressional Charter, the Foundation provides a 30-day notification to the Members of Congress for the congressional district and state in which a grant will be funded, prior to making a funding decision. Mr. Chairman, we greatly appreciate your continued support and hope the Subcommittee will approve funding for the Foundation in FY 2012.



Partnership for the National Trails System

222 S. Hamilton #13 Madison, WI 53703 Phone: (608) 249-7870
www.nationaltrailspartnership.org Fax: (608) 257-3513

GARY WERNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
STATEMENT TO THE

April 15, 2011

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT & RELATED AGENCIES

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee:

The Partnership for the National Trails System appreciates your support over the past 17 years, through operations funding and dedicated Challenge Cost Share funds, for the national scenic and historic trails administered by the National Park Service. We also appreciate your increased allocation of funds to support the trails administered and managed by the Forest Service and for the trails in the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System. To continue the progress that you have fostered, the Partnership requests that you provide **annual operations funding for each of the 30 national scenic and historic trails** for Fiscal Year 2012 through these appropriations:

- **National Park Service: \$16.45 million** for administration of 23 trails and for coordination of the long-distance trails program by the Washington office. **Construction: \$346,000** for the **Ice Age Trail** and **\$200,000** for the **Pacific Crest Trail**.
- **USDA Forest Service: \$8.7 million** to administer 6 trails and **\$1.2 million** to manage parts of 16 trails administered by the NPS or BLM. **\$1 million** for **Iditarod Trail** construction
- **Bureau of Land Management: to coordinate its National Trails System Program: \$250,000;** to administer these trails: **Iditarod Trail: \$700,000**, the **Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail: \$230,000**, the **Old Spanish Trail: \$350,000** and to manage portions of 10 trails administered by the Park Service or the Forest Service: **\$4 million; \$3,140,000** for operating five National Historic Trail interpretive centers; **Construction: \$300,000** for the **Pacific Crest Trail**.
- We ask that you appropriate **\$4.5 million** for the **National Park Service Challenge Cost Share Program** and continue to direct one-third (\$1,500,000) for national scenic and historic trails or create a separate **\$1.5 million National Trails System Challenge Cost Share Program**.
- We ask that you add **\$500,000** to the **Bureau of Land Management's Challenge Cost Share Program** and allocate it for the national scenic and historic trails it administers or manages.

We ask that you appropriate from the **Land and Water Conservation Fund** for land acquisition:

- to the **Forest Service: \$6.65 million** for the **Pacific Crest Trail**, **\$1.7 million** for the **Florida Trail**; **\$3.442 million** for the **Old Spanish Trail**; **\$9.2 million** for the **Appalachian Trail**, **\$1.5 million** for the **North Country Trail**, and **\$1.4175 million** for the **Nez Perce Trail**;
- to the **Bureau of Land Management: \$3.5 million** for the **Oregon Trail** in Oregon, **\$7.5 million** for the **Pacific Crest Trail** in Oregon, and **\$1 million** for the **Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express Trails** in Wyoming;
- to the **Park Service: \$5.2 million** to grant to the **State of Wisconsin** to match state funds for the **Ice Age Trail** and **\$2 million** to grant to 7 states for the **North Country Trail**; **\$2.1 million** for the **New England Trail**, **\$2.005 million** for the **Appalachian Trail**, **\$2 million** for the **Oregon Trail** – City of Rocks Reserve, and **\$1.17 million** for **San Antonio Missions National Historic Park** -- **El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail**.

We also ask that you appropriate from the **Forest Service Forest Legacy program \$8.730 million** to protect High Peaks in Maine along the **Appalachian Trail**.

National Park Service

The **\$16.45 million** we request for **Park Service operations** includes increases for some of the trails to continue the progress and new initiatives made possible by the additional funding Congress provided over the past seven years. We support the Administration's requested funding for the new **Star Spangled Banner** and **Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trails** and we request **\$400,000** for the Park Service to implement planning and administration for the **New England National Scenic Trail**.

We request an increase of **\$626,000** to expand Park Service efforts to protect cultural landscapes at more than 200 sites along the **Santa Fe Trail**, to develop GIS mapping, and to fund public educational outreach programs of the Santa Fe Trail Association. An increase of **\$763,000** for the **Trail of Tears** will enable the Park Service to work with the Trail of Tears Association to develop a GIS to map the Trail's historical and cultural heritage sites to protect them and to develop interpretation of them for visitors. We support the Administration's requested increases of \$282,000 for the **Juan Bautista de Anza** and \$147,000 for the **Ala Kahakai Trails**. We request a further increase to **\$400,000** for the **Ala Kahakai Trail** to enable the Park Service to work with E Mau Na Ala Hele, the Ala Kahakai Trail Association, and other community organizations to care for resources on the land and with the University of Hawaii to conduct archaeological and cultural landscape studies along this trail.

We support the Administration's requested funding of **\$1,708,000** for the **Appalachian Trail** to expand the highly successful "Trail to Every Classroom" program of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The **\$1,483,000** we request for the **4,200 mile North Country Trail** will enable the Park Service to provide greater support for the regional GIS mapping, trail building, trail management, and training of volunteers led by the North Country Trail Association. This funding will also enable the Park Service to move the administrative office for the North Country Trail to Michigan for more efficient and effective collaboration with the North Country Trail Association. The **\$1,399,000** we request for the **Ice Age Trail** includes a **\$550,000** increase to enable the Park Service to develop and begin to implement an Interpretive Plan, to complete trail route planning, and to support stewardship by Ice Age Trail Alliance staff and volunteers of lands acquired for the trail.

Construction: We request that you appropriate for trail construction projects **\$346,000** for the **Ice Age Trail** and **\$200,000** for the **Pacific Crest Trail** in the national parks crossed by the trail.

Challenge Cost Share programs are one of the most effective and efficient ways for Federal agencies to accomplish a wide array of projects for public benefit while also sustaining partnerships involving countless private citizens in doing public service work. The Partnership's member organizations applaud the Administration's decision to restore these highly effective programs of the **Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish and Wildlife Service**. We request that you **fund all of them** and appropriate **\$4.5 million in Challenge Cost Share** funding to the **Park Service** for FY12 as a wise investment of public money that will generate public benefits many times greater than its sum. We ask you to **continue to direct one-third of the \$4.5 million** for the **national scenic and historic trails** to continue the steady progress toward making these trails fully available for public enjoyment. We suggest, as an alternative to the annual allocating of funds from the Regular Challenge Cost Share program, that you create a separate **National Trails System Challenge Cost Share** program with **\$1.5 million** funding.

We support the Administration's requested **\$947,000** for the **Connect Trails to Parks** project to enhance the public's understanding of the National Trails System and its relationship to the National Park System.

USDA - Forest Service

As you have done for several years, we ask that you provide additional operations funding to the **Forest Service** for administering five national scenic trails and one national historic trail, and managing parts of 16 other trails. We ask you to appropriate **\$8.7 million** as a separate budgetary item specifically for the

Arizona, Continental Divide, Florida, Pacific Crest, and Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trails and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail within the over-all appropriation for **Capital Improvements and Maintenance for Trails**. Full-time managers have been assigned for each of these trails by the Forest Service. Recognizing the on-the-ground management responsibility the Forest Service has for **838 miles** of the Appalachian Trail, more than **650 miles** of the North Country Trail, and sections of the Ice Age, Anza, Caminos Real de Tierra Adentro and de Tejas, Lewis & Clark, California, Iditarod, Mormon Pioneer, Old Spanish, Oregon, Overmountain Victory, Pony Express, Trail of Tears and Santa Fe Trails, we ask you to appropriate **\$1.2 million specifically for these trails**.

Work continues, supported by funds you provided over the past ten years, to close several major gaps in the **Florida Trail**. In 2010 Florida Trail Association volunteers maintained 1,322 miles and completed 8 major construction and restoration projects along the Trail. The Partnership's request of **\$8.7 million** above includes **\$2.5 million** to enable the Forest Service and FTA to continue this maintenance, to control invasive species, do ecosystem restoration, and otherwise manage **4,625 acres** of new Florida Trail land.

The Partnership's request of **\$8.7 million** above also includes **\$2.3 million** for the **Pacific Crest Trail**, **\$2 million** for the **Continental Divide Trail**, **\$1 million** for the **Pacific Northwest Trail**, **\$640,000** for the **Nez Perce Trail**, and **\$239,000** for the **Arizona Trail**. We also request **\$1 million** of **additional funding** for construction of sections of the **Iditarod Trail**.

Bureau of Land Management

While the **Bureau of Land Management** has administrative authority only for the **Iditarod, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, and the Old Spanish National Historic Trails**, it has on-the-ground management responsibility for **641 miles** of five scenic trails and **3,115 miles** of eight historic trails administered by the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service. The bureau recognized the significance of these trails by including them in the **National Landscape Conservation System** and, for the first time, in FY02, by providing funding for each of them. The Partnership applauds these decisions of the Bureau and encourages its staff to budget specific funding for each of these trails.

We support the Administration's increase of **\$15 million** in **base funding** for the **National Landscape Conservation System** and ask that you appropriate as **new permanent base funding \$250,000 for National Trails System Program Coordination**, **\$700,000 for the Iditarod Trail**, **\$230,000 for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail**, **\$350,000 for the Old Spanish Trail**, and **\$4,000,000** for management of the portions of the ten other trails under the care of the Bureau of Land Management. We request **\$300,000** for maintenance of the **Pacific Crest Trail**; and **\$3,140,000** to operate **five historic trails interpretive centers**.

We ask you to **fund** the Bureau's **Challenge Cost Share** program and to add **\$500,000** directed for projects for the National Trails System as you have done for many years with the Park Service's Challenge Cost Share program.

To promote greater management transparency and accountability for the National Trails and the whole **National Landscape Conservation System**, we urge you to request expenditure and accomplishment reports for each of the NLCS Units for FY11 and to direct the Bureau to include unit-level allocations by **major sub-activities** for each of the scenic and historic trails, and wild and scenic rivers -- as the Bureau has done for the monuments and conservation areas -- within a **new activity account** for the National Landscape Conservation System in FY12. Existing accounts for Wilderness Areas and Wilderness Study Areas should also be included in this new National Landscape Conservation System activity account. The Bureau's lack of a unified budget account for National Trails prevents the agency from efficiently planning, implementing, reporting, and taking advantage of cost-saving and leveraging partnerships and volunteer contributions for every activity related to these national resources.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Partnership applauds and supports the Administration's intention to provide **full funding of \$900 million for the Land & Water Conservation Fund**. We request that you provide robust and consistent funding to keep on a trajectory to achieve annual full funding for the LWCF and that you make the specific appropriations for **national scenic and historic trails** detailed at the beginning of this statement and below.

FOREST SERVICE: The **\$6.65 million** we request for the **Pacific Crest Trail** will continue to support the acquisition underway by the **Forest Service Lands Team** and the **Park Service National Trail Land Resources Program Center**, protecting 12 miles of PCT in Washington and taking 34 miles off of roads in southern California. The **\$1.7 million** requested for the **Florida Trail** will continue another successful collaboration between these two agencies to protect 30 tracts and 3.4 miles of the Trail along the Suwanee River. We request **\$3.442 million** to protect a stretch of the **Old Spanish Trail** in the Carson National Forest, **\$9.2 million** to protect sections of the **Appalachian Trail** in the Cherokee and Pisgah National Forests and **\$1.5 million** to buy land for the **North Country Trail** in the Hiawatha and Ottawa National Forests. We also request **\$1.4175 million** to acquire land in Hell's Canyon of the Snake River in Oregon to protect sites along the **Nez Perce Trail**.

BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT: We request **\$6 million** for the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument and **\$1.5 million** for Porcupine Mountain that will preserve sections of the **Pacific Crest Trail** in Oregon, **\$3.5 million** to purchase land along the Big Sandy River in Oregon for the **Oregon Trail**, **\$1 million** to protect sections of the **Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express Trails** along the Platte River in Wyoming.

PARK SERVICE: The National Trails System Act encourages states to assist in the conservation of the resources and development of the national scenic and historic trails. Since FY2000 **Wisconsin** has matched \$13.6 million Federal LWCF funding with \$27.7 million to help protect 67 miles of the **Ice Age National Scenic Trail** by purchasing 51 parcels totaling 7727 acres. Another 40 parcels are under negotiation, appraisal or option to purchase. The requested **\$5.2 Million** Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to **Wisconsin** will continue this very successful Federal/State/local partnership for protecting land for the **Ice Age Trail**. We request **\$2 million** to provide similar grants to the seven states along its route to close gaps in the **North Country Trail**, **\$2.1 million** for the **Park Service** to acquire three parcels for the **New England Trail**, and **\$2.005 million** for the **Park Service** to acquire parcels in Pennsylvania and Vermont for the **Appalachian Trail**. We also request **\$2 million** for the City of Rocks Reserve in Idaho to protect an important section of the **Oregon Trail** and **\$1.17 million** for San Antonio Missions National Historic Park along **El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail**.

Private Sector Support for the National Trails System

Public-spirited partnerships between private citizens and public agencies have been a hallmark of the National Trails System since its inception. These partnerships create the enduring strength of the Trails System and the trail communities that sustain it by combining the local, grass-roots energy and responsiveness of volunteers with the responsible continuity of public agencies. **They also provide private financial support for public projects, often resulting in a greater than equal match of funds.**

The private trail organizations' commitment to the success of these trail-sustaining partnerships grows even as Congress' support for the trails has grown. In **2010 the trail organizations fostered 1,115,559 hours** – an **increase of 23%** over 2009 - of documented volunteer labor valued at **\$24,366,484** to help sustain the national scenic and historic trails. The organizations also raised **private sector contributions of \$12,486,240** to benefit the trails.

Testimony of John F. Calvelli
Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, Wildlife Conservation Society
Submitted to House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
April 15, 2011

Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Moran, Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on FY12 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. My name is John F. Calvelli, Executive Vice President of Public Affairs with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), which was founded with the help of Theodore Roosevelt in 1895 with the mission of saving wildlife and wild places worldwide. Today WCS manages the largest network of urban wildlife parks in the United States led by our flagship the Bronx Zoo. WCS fieldwork helps address threats to over 25 percent of Earth's biodiversity in 60 countries around the world, employing more than 4,000 full-time staff including 170 Ph.D. scientists and 100 veterinarians. Our domestic facilities generate \$414 million in economic activity annually, according to a 2008 study.

At the outset, I recognize the Subcommittee's responsibility in addressing the nation's current fiscal climate while balancing priorities embedded in the American tradition of conservation. The pressures on our planet are mounting and conservation is a major antidote to unsustainable pressures on natural resources. The Department of the Interior (DOI) reports that in 2008 more than 400 million people visited national parks, refuges and public lands, generating over 300,000 jobs and \$25 billion in economic activity. Additionally, revenues generated by the DOI continue to exceed its annual appropriation. In FY12, DOI projects revenues from nature-based activities at approximately \$14.1 billion, in contrast to the Administration's FY12 budget request for the entire department of \$12.2 billion. On a global level, by supporting conservation, the U.S. is making a direct contribution to our national security. For example, in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where WCS is the only U.S. based conservation organization at work, environmental degradation, including desertification from unsustainable land use, erosion caused by deforestation, and water contamination, have devastated the region's inhabitants. In March 2009, President Obama's strategic review of Afghanistan identified "sustainable economic development" and "restor[ing] Afghanistan's once vibrant agriculture sector" as major ingredients in American's overall effort to sap the strength of the insurgency. Reversing the environmental trends is a key component to achieving those goals. Investments in foreign assistance particularly in conservation activities comprise a small piece of the federal budget. Yet, this funding has a tremendous impact helping to reduce conflict around scarce resources and preventing costly military interventions. As communities and countries stabilize and grow more prosperous, they become potential trade partners for U.S. goods. In fact, eleven of the fifteen largest importers of American goods are past recipients of U.S. foreign assistance. This testimony will highlight both domestic and international programs at DOI and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) that are shaping the future of conservation.

Department of the Interior-wide Initiatives:

America's Great Outdoors (AGO): WCS is pleased with the Administration's agenda to protect and effectively manage our natural areas by encouraging American citizens, community groups, and all levels of government to share a leadership role in preserving our natural heritage. WCS supports the AGO Initiative's emphasis on landscape-scale conservation promoting landscape connectivity and the protection of wildlife corridors. This connectivity is particularly important for some of the wide-ranging species that are conservation priorities for WCS, such as the

wolverine, Pronghorn antelope, and grizzly bear. Fully-funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), as the FY12 President's Budget requests, would also invest in federal and state land acquisition that could help protect these critical wildlife corridors. WCS applauds DOI's goal of encouraging youth to connect with nature as a key component of the AGO Initiative. The Youth in Natural Resources Initiative includes a \$2 million increase in funding for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to, in part, foster youth education programs in classrooms through public-private partnerships with NGOs and others with a focus on preserving and protecting priority species and their habitats. According to the DOI, federal funding will leverage at least an equal amount of private contributions, with a historical ratio of two to one, or more.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM):

Eco-regional Assessments: As energy development, urban growth and climate change continue to negatively impact wildlife and their habitat, a landscape-scale conservation strategy is needed. Unfortunately, BLM land use policies historically have been driven by local considerations with decisions made at the Field Office level. WCS is keenly interested in BLM's planned efforts to assess the regional impacts on wildlife in high priority energy development areas such as the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) and along the Path of the Pronghorn in Wyoming. WCS has a long history of working to ensure a balance of both wildlife protection for migratory birds, caribou and musk oxen in key areas of the NPR-A. Our goal is to help the oil and gas industry minimize potential impacts to wildlife as they begin to pursue development in Arctic Alaska. WCS recommends a permanent prohibition on leasing in the "Special Areas" of Teshekpuk Lake, Utukok River Uplands, and the Colville River. At the same time, Special Areas should remain open for managed subsistence hunting by Native Alaskans. WCS conservationists also seek to address disturbances to wildlife migration patterns, such as the Path of the Pronghorn, as energy development degrades and fragments wintering habitat across the Upper Green River Valley in western Wyoming. Proactive and strategic regional assessments by the BLM are critical to supporting the agency in properly managing these ecosystems. Through the Healthy Landscapes program, these assessments will improve understanding of the existing condition of BLM landscapes at a broader level. WCS believes this is an important strategy to address major stressors on wildlife and recommends continued significant funding for landscape-scale habitat conservation through the Healthy Landscapes initiative. WCS is also encouraged by the new Wild Lands Policy, which aims to ensure that all BLM lands with wilderness characteristics have been accurately inventoried. Additionally, WCS appreciates the opportunity to weigh in with other public stakeholders on the designation of Wild Lands.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

USFWS State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program (SWG): The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program gives states and tribes funding to develop and implement comprehensive conservation plans to protect declining wildlife and habitats before protection under the Endangered Species Act is necessary. This important program is supported by more than 6,200 organizations that have formed a national bipartisan coalition called Teaming with Wildlife of which WCS is a steering committee member. WCS recommends Congress at least maintain funding at \$95 million in FY12 for State Wildlife Grants to implement State Wildlife Action Plans. In helping to leverage these funds, WCS continues its highly successful Climate Adaptation Fund grants program with support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The Fund provides grants to

non-profit conservation organizations and state wildlife agencies working to ensure the ability of wildlife to adapt to a changing climate through applied, on-the-ground projects that demonstrate effective conservation actions. Since 2006 this WCS-administered fund has awarded 81 grants for \$7.2 million to a wide variety of stakeholder groups that impact wildlife conservation in 46 states, including funding the State of Idaho's work to protect wildlife corridors. WCS is doing its part to leverage federal funding for this program by providing private funding opportunities. At the same time, a greater need remains. In addition to the domestic investments by DOI, WCS supports the department's international programs that have a broad global impact. The remainder of my testimony will focus on international investments at DOI and USDA.

Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF): The U.S. has a legacy of leading international wildlife conservation efforts and the MSCF program exemplifies this by being the only dedicated source for global species conservation by any government donor. The MSCF has been catalytic in paving the way for long-term investments in a particular landscape. It contributed to the discovery of over 1.2 million animals in Southern Sudan, including 8,000 African elephants. This discovery has triggered the creation of Boma National Park in the world's youngest nation -- one that has survived human conflict and decades of war. The MSCF has made similar investments throughout its existence since 1990. The world celebrated the Year of the Tiger in 2010 while the remaining 3,000 wild tigers continued to battle dire circumstances. The Rhino-Tiger Fund is trying to reverse the decline of the tiger that is threatened by loss of prey, habitat loss, climate change, poaching for the illegal trade in tiger parts, and disease. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is doing its part in showcasing the United States as a leader in tiger conservation as evidenced at the International Tiger Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia which was the first-ever Heads of State summit dedicated to a single species. This signals strong commitment from the international community to saving the last remaining iconic species, an aspect exemplified by the MSCF program which has had a history of making strategic investments. From 2005 - 2009, a little more than \$45 million in grants for rhinos, tigers, elephants, great apes and turtles to 256 national and international groups leveraged more than \$75 million in additional support. As for doing our part, WCS's Bronx Zoo Congo Gorilla Forest exhibit, which opened in 1999, has attracted visitors to allocate a portion of their admission fee -- a total of more than \$10.6 million -- directly to field conservation projects in Central Africa's Congo Basin. WCS remains committed to find similar ways to support this U.S. government investment despite times of financial crisis. We support the FY10 enacted levels (\$11.5 million) for this program in FY12 while seeking an additional \$1 million to address the plight of tigers.

Wildlife Without Borders Global and Regional Programs: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administered Wildlife Without Borders (WWB) programs are a great investment in addressing cross-cutting threats to ecosystems and wildlife such as disease outbreaks in amphibians, providing solutions to protein-source crisis for food-scarce rural communities through addressing bushmeat issues etc. WWB is making lasting impacts through capacity building, technical support and training, local community education and citizen science. From 2005-2009, the WWB program across Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Russian Far East awarded over \$12 million and leveraged an additional \$22 million dollars in direct conservation assistance. In recent years, this program has established a Critically Endangered Species Conservation Fund, which has begun investing in modest level support to the most dire species in need such as Andean cats and Ethiopian wolves. Other noteworthy efforts supported by this

program include the Bushmeat-free Eastern Africa Network (BEAN) and MENTOR Fellowship Program which has supported wildlife professionals from eastern African nations to gain skills to address conservation challenges such as bushmeat. WCS recommends that the overall funding for the Wildlife Without Borders Global and Regional Programs receive \$8.4 million in FY12.

U.S. Forest Service, International Program

The Forest Service International Program is an essential U.S. agency in combating the flow of illegal timber into the global marketplace. Illegal logging impacts to several U.S. forestry industries translates to approximately \$1 billion in losses annually as American business are undersold by the cheaper illegal supply. Not only is illegal logging damaging to the environment, but it is also undercutting the U.S. forest products industry. Legally and sustainably harvested U.S. timber cannot compete with cheap illegal wood, and it is costing American jobs. FSIP is the one of the most important entities representing the U.S. forest products industry in international trade agreements, and its unmatched expertise is required by the Department of State and the U.S. Trade Representatives. Besides being uniquely positioned to promote forest conservation around the globe by drawing on the agency's diverse workforce of scientists, resource managers, international specialists and conservation biologists, FSIP has increasingly leveraged modest funding from Congress to make a big impact for the U.S. taxpayer. For every federal dollar invested in FSIP, four additional dollars is leveraged in matching funds and other contributions from partners. In recent years, FS IP has helped researchers in the Russian Far East to monitor the populations of Amur leopards and Siberian tigers by ensuring a healthy and abundant prey base or food source for the big cats. The FY12 President's Budget request eliminates the line-item for this vital program. Restoring support for this program at a minimum at FY10 enacted levels of \$9.8 million is needed to sustain and enhance these important activities.

U.S. National Park Service, International Program

In 1961, the U.S. government initiated its first international conservation program with the creation of the Office of International Affairs (OIA). Since then, this office has facilitated technical assistance and exchange projects with counterpart agencies globally building on the legacy of American leadership in national parks management. Thanks to this program, NPS is working on collaborative areas of trans-frontier concern, including at the Beringia Shared Heritage Initiative (U.S. - Russia), and Big Bend/Rio-Bravo (U.S. - Mexico). The international work conducted by NPS is not only about helping other countries protect their parks and heritage. It is about bringing home best practices and learning from international engagement that could benefit the American national park system. WCS recommends \$1 million for this office in FY12 and encourages a strategic conversation with stakeholders that would draw on common objectives of parks and protected area management particularly in trans-frontier collaborative initiatives.

In conclusion, I appreciate the opportunity to share WCS's perspectives and make a case for increased investment in conservation in the FY12 Interior, EPA and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. Conservation of public lands is an American tradition and, as far back as 1909, Theodore Roosevelt recognized that the management of our natural resources requires coordination between all nations. Continued investment in conservation will improve our economic and national security while reaffirming our global position as a conservation leader. Thank you.

Desiree Sorenson-Groves
Vice President, Government Affairs, National Wildlife Refuge Association
1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036

TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES
CONCERNING FISCAL YEAR 2012 APPROPRIATIONS
April 1, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) and its membership comprised of current and former refuge professionals, Friends organization affiliates and concerned citizens, thank you for your strong support for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS). The meaningful funding increases from FY 2008 – FY 2010 allowed the System to emerge from the years of declining budgets that followed the 2003 Refuge Centennial. Unfortunately, the President's FY 2012 budget request of flat funding from FY 2010 represents a \$23 million cut when factoring in the amount the Refuge System needs annually to maintain existing management capabilities and will result in a dramatic reduction in what refuges will be able to do on the ground.

The NWRA appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on the fiscal year 2012 Interior Appropriations bill and we respectfully request the Subcommittee support the following funding allocations for programs in the NWRS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS):

- **\$511 million for the operations and maintenance (O&M) accounts of the NWRS;**
- **\$27 million for Refuge Revenue Sharing;**
- **\$900 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), including \$140 million for the NWRS;**
- **\$20.2 million for Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) in the FWS;**
- **\$20 million for Inventory and Monitoring for refuges;**
- **\$37 million for the NWRS construction account for large scale restoration projects, visitors centers and energy efficiency projects;**
- **\$80 million for NWRS Visitors Services;**
- **\$39 million for Refuge Law Enforcement**
- **\$5 million for the management of the new Pacific Marine Monuments;**
- **\$65 million for the FWS' Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program;**
- **\$95 million for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program;**
- **\$50 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund;**
- **\$6.5 million for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Fund;**
- **\$8.4 million for Wildlife Without Borders;**
- **\$8.5 million for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in the FWS' Resource Management General Administration appropriation.**

National Wildlife Refuge Funding – O&M and Construction

The NWRA chairs the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), a diverse coalition of 21 sporting, conservation, and scientific organizations representing over 14 million Americans that works to support the Refuge System's ability to accomplish its mission. After years of flat budgets, Congress in recent years has demonstrated a commitment to fund our national wildlife refuges, and the increases from FY 2008 – FY 2010 allowed for the suspension of workforce downsizing plans that outlined an eventual 20% reduction in overall staffing levels. Even so, CARE estimates that the Refuge System needs at least \$900 million in annual funding to properly administer its 150 million acres and remains committed to aiming for this goal.

NWRA respectfully requests that you provide **\$511 million in FY 2012 for Refuge System Operations and Maintenance (O&M)**. We estimate the refuges need *at least* \$526 million to maintain management capabilities from FY 2010; our request represents a sacrifice as we deal with our nation's fiscal crisis.

This \$511 million request for refuge O&M includes \$8 million for inflationary costs, which, due to the freeze on federal salaries, is less than the annual adjustment of *at least* \$15 million for inflation the System ordinarily needs just to maintain management capabilities, including rent, utilities, salaries, concrete, gas and steel – everything a refuge needs to function. In fact, the \$15 million needed for FY 2011 added to the \$8 million needed for FY 2012 combines to a real need of *at least* \$23 million to cover inflation since FY 2010, for a total "status quo" budget of \$526 million for FY 2012. Our request of \$511 million is a reasonable amount for the Service to maintain most management capabilities for next year. Without providing adequate funding for these fixed costs, refuges will simply be unable to maintain current programs and public services, and the backlog will grow.

Refuges have almost \$1 billion worth of construction needs, including the replacement of deteriorating structures that are becoming more expensive to maintain. We request flat funding for **the System's construction budget at \$37 million**, including funds for large-scale habitat restoration. Funds for new visitor/administration centers, including those at the Potomac River Refuges near Washington D.C. and the Sherburne NWR outside Minnesota's Twin Cities, will provide a net benefit in efficiencies and in economic impact. Refuges with a broad range of programs create more service industry jobs and more income for local communities.

Supporting Jobs and Leveraging American Volunteerism

Refuges are economic engines in local communities, returning on average \$4 in economic activity for every \$1 appropriated by Congress. Nationwide this equates to over \$2 billion in annual economic impact. Refuges are job creators; more than 30,000 jobs – largely in the private sector – are attributed to refuge-related activities. Ecosystem restoration activities deliver the biggest pay-off, where \$1 million invested creates 30 jobs, while \$1 million invested in recreation creates 22 jobs. Refuges provide significant bang for the buck, despite receiving the least amount per acre of all land management agencies. Refuges are managed with \$3.36 per acre while the National Forest Service and National Park Service receive \$32.25 and \$37.11 per acre, respectively.

Refuges are also vital places for the American people to connect with nature and volunteer. Currently, refuge Friends and volunteers do approximately 20% of all work on refuges, the equivalent of 648 full time employees. We request **\$80 million for Visitors Services for the NWRS**. The Administration's proposed \$2.3 million cut to Visitors Services represents a cut to the

programs that oversee volunteers and thereby a marked decline in the work volunteers are able to contribute, leaving that work essentially undone.

Using Science to Guide Adaptive Management

The FWS and the Refuge System are developing landscape level strategies to address habitat changes due to shifting land use, increasing human population, the spread of invasive species and changing climates. But the need is urgent and time is of the essence – especially with species on the verge of collapse in locations such as Alaska and Hawaii. We strongly support the FWS initiative to establish Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) to bring the best science to bear to help local, state and federal agencies make the most educated management decisions. We recommend an allocation of **\$20.2 million to fund LCCs** in FY12, building upon the initial LCC investments in FY 2010.

NWRA further recommends an allocation of **\$20 million for the System's Inventory and Monitoring program**. As the Gulf oil spill showed, basic inventories of our natural assets are crucial if the American people are to recoup costs in the event of manmade disasters.

Commitment to Refuge Communities – Refuge Revenue Sharing

The Refuge System uses the net income derived from use permits, timber harvests, and so on to make payments to local counties or communities to offset lost tax revenue, and relies on Congressional appropriations to the Refuge Revenue Sharing program to compensate for the shortfall between revenues and obligations. Due to declining revenue and lack of appropriations, the Service has been paying less than 50% of its tax-offset obligations since 2001. This has a measurable impact on local communities that is felt even more starkly in difficult economic times - and it creates severe strain in relations between the federal units and their local community, threatening the goodwill and partnerships that are keystones of successful conservation. NWRA requests **\$27 million for the Refuge Revenue Sharing Program**, which, in recognition of the President's proposal to zero out funding, is still only half of what is needed. The NWRA also calls for a review of the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act of 1935 as amended, and consideration of conversion to a Payment-in-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program to be consistent with the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service and to provide Refuge communities with more equitable payments.

Partnerships and Strategic Growth

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is a powerful tool for working with private landowners to collaboratively conserve refuge landscapes. The program consistently leverages federal dollars for conservation, generating between \$4-\$10 in conservation return for every \$1 appropriated, and has been key to the success of many iconic landscape conservation projects. In the past two years, the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative used \$454,000 in habitat restoration and enhancement to leverage an additional \$1.4 million from private partners! But the Partners program saw its purchasing power erode between 8-24% in 2010 due to rising diesel fuel and seed costs. If funded at its authorized level of \$75 million, the program would net at least \$300 million worth of additional conservation. NWRA requests an **FY 12 appropriation of \$65 million for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program**, a \$5 million increase to maintain capabilities.

NWRA also calls upon Congress to **fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at its authorized level of \$900 million**, with 75% devoted across agencies to investments in iconic landscapes. Created in 1965 and authorized at \$900 million per year (*more than \$3 billion in*

today's dollars), the LWCF is our most important land acquisition tool. With more than 8 million acres still unprotected within existing designated refuge boundaries, and the need to establish key wildlife corridors and connections between protected areas, the LWCF is more important than ever. In 2011, NWRA recommends that Congress approve LWCF funding to support projects such as:

- **Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge (UT)** – \$1.4 million;
- **Blackwater NWR (MD)** – \$1.5 million;
- **Cache River NWR (AR)** – \$4.25 million;
- **Connecticut River - Silvio O. Conte NFWR (NH, VT, MA, CT)** – \$6.5 million;
- **Everglades Headwaters NWR (FL)** – \$10 million;
- **Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area (KS)** – \$5 million;
- **Nestucca Bay NWR (OR)** – \$2 million;
- **Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area (MT)** – \$8 million;
- **Rhode Island NWR Complex (RI)** – \$3.28 million;
- **Southeast Louisiana Refuge Complex (LA)** – \$500,000;
- **Stillwater NWR (NV)** – \$3 million to acquire water rights.

There are several additional extremely worthy refuge land acquisitions advocated for by refuge “Friends” organizations and refuge partners and we have provided the Subcommittee with those requests in a separate document.

The NWRA also urges the Subcommittee to appropriate \$95 million for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program to implement State Wildlife Action Plans; \$50 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund; \$6.5 million for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and \$8.5 million for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

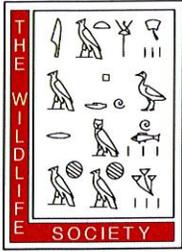
Returning to FY 2008 Funding Levels

Some in Congress have recommended returning to FY 2008 funding levels; we must caution that this would have *immediate and severe* impacts to our national wildlife refuges. With the System already 44% underfunded, proposals to return the agency to FY 2008 levels would result in an estimated 20% cut to current funding and would have dramatic ramifications including:

- Elimination of hundreds of staff positions, significantly reducing the System’s ability to restore habitats, control invasive species, maintain roads, and respond to illegal activities;
- Decline in the quality and quantity of visitor services programs, forcing an estimated 54 visitor centers to close and preventing 11 more under construction from opening at all;
- Reduction of volunteer efforts, as cuts to staff who oversee volunteers will result in a decline in the work volunteers are able to contribute;
- Reduction of hunting programs on an estimated 48 refuges and reduction of fishing programs on an estimated 45 refuges;
- A halt on progress of the System’s inventory and monitoring program, likely reducing it to a skeletal operation. The need for this program was made clear by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, which forced FWS staff to hastily catalog Gulf Coast refuge assets in order to prove damages and recoup costs from responsible parties. Now the only refuges nationwide with a comprehensive inventory of species and water quality are those that were in the path of oil.

In conclusion, the NWRA believes the National Wildlife Refuge System can meet its important conservation objectives only with strong and consistent funding leveraged by the valuable work of

refuge volunteers. We extend our appreciation to the Subcommittee for its ongoing commitment to our National Wildlife Refuge System.



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

5410 Grosvenor Lane • Bethesda, MD 20814-2144
Tel: (301) 897-9770 • Fax: (301) 530-2471
E-mail: tws@wildlife.org

April 1, 2011

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Wildlife Society appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on the FY 2012 budget for the Department of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 and is a non-profit scientific and educational association representing over 10,000 professional wildlife biologists and managers, dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to represent and serve the professional community of scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, and others who work actively to study, manage, and conserve wildlife and its habitats worldwide.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The **State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program** is the only federal program that supports states in preventing wildlife from becoming endangered. It is also the primary program supporting implementation of comprehensive wildlife conservation strategies, known as State Wildlife Action Plans, which detail conservation actions needed on the ground in every state to keep common species common. Funding assistance for these state wildlife agencies is one of the highest priority needs for wildlife in order to prevent further declines in at-risk wildlife populations in every state. These grants also provide key funding to federally-recognized tribal governments for wildlife management and conservation. **We recommend Congress appropriate \$95 million for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants in FY 2012. We also ask that Congress support a reduction in the non-federal match requirement from 50 percent to 30 percent,** relieving some of the onus of providing adequate matching funding from severely cashed-strapped states.

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) is a diverse coalition of 22 wildlife, sporting, conservation, and scientific organizations representing over 14 million members and supporters. A comprehensive analysis by CARE determined the **National Wildlife Refuge System** needs \$900 million in annual operations funding to properly administer its nearly 150 million acres, educational programs, habitat restoration projects, and much more. Many years of stagnant budgets have increased the Operations and Maintenance backlog; refuge visitors often show up to find visitor centers closed, hiking trails in disrepair, and habitat restoration programs eliminated. Invasive plant species are taking over on refuges, requiring \$25 million per year to treat just one-third of its acreage, and illegal activities such as poaching are on the rise, requiring an additional 209 officers (\$31.4 million) to meet law enforcement needs. **We recommend that Congress provide \$511 million in FY 2012 for the Operations and Maintenance of the National Wildlife Refuge System.**

The **North American Wetlands Conservation Act** is a cooperative, non-regulatory, incentive-based program that has shown unprecedented success in restoring wetlands, waterfowl, and other migratory bird populations. This program has remained drastically underfunded despite its demonstrated effectiveness. **We recommend a small increase over the FY 2010 funding level of \$47.6 million, to bring the funding to \$50 million in FY 2012.**

The **Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grants Program** supports partnership programs to conserve birds in the U.S., Latin America and the Caribbean, where approximately 5 billion birds representing 341 species spend their winters, including some of the most endangered birds in North America. **The Wildlife Society recommends Congress fund the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act at its full authorization level of \$6.5 million in FY 2012.**

The Wildlife Society supports adequate funding levels for all subactivities within the **Endangered Species Program**. Endangered species recovery efforts can ultimately lead to delisting, resulting in significant benefits to species through state management efforts. Currently, all subactivities within the program are understaffed while the costs for management of listed species continue to rapidly escalate. **We recommend Congress match the President's request for the Endangered Species Program and provide \$182.7 million in funding in FY2012.**

The voluntary **Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program** provides financial and technical assistance to landowners to restore degraded habitat on their property. With over two-thirds of our nation's lands held as private property, and up to 90 percent of some habitats lost, private lands play a key role in preserving our ecosystem. We urge Congress to provide **\$62.19 million in support of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program** in order to allow landowners to help contribute to land and wildlife preservation.

Through its **international programs**, FWS works with many partners and countries in the implementation of international treaties, conventions, and projects for the conservation of wildlife species and their habitats. International trade, import, and transportation of wildlife species can have a huge impact on America's security, economy, and environment. Careful regulation of imports and implementation of international policies is an important task. We ask Congress to support FWS in protecting our economy, our environment, and our national security by providing a necessary **\$12.9 million in support of FWS International Affairs.**

Bureau of Land Management

BLM lands support over 3,000 species of wildlife, more than 300 federally proposed or listed species, and more than 1,300 sensitive plant species. However, the BLM currently has only one biologist per 591,000 acres of land and estimated costs for recovery of threatened and endangered species on BLM lands continue to rise. In addition, the **Wildlife and Fisheries Management (WFM) and the Threatened and Endangered Species Management (TESM)** programs have been forced to pay for the compliance activities of BLM's energy, grazing, and other non-wildlife related programs, eroding both their ability to conduct proactive conservation activities and their efforts to recover listed species. This diversion of funding must be stopped. Given the significant underfunding of the BLM's wildlife programs, combined with the tremendous expansion of energy development across the BLM landscape, we recommend

Congress appropriate **\$40 million for BLM Wildlife Management**. This will allow BLM to maintain and restore wildlife and habitat by monitoring habitat conditions, conducting inventories of wildlife resources, and developing cooperative management plans.

Increased funding is also needed for the **Threatened and Endangered Species Management Program**, to allow BLM to meet its responsibilities in endangered species recovery plans. BLM's March 2001 Report to Congress called for a doubling of the Threatened and Endangered Species budget to \$48 million and an additional 70 staff positions over 5 years. This goal has yet to be met. In light of this, **we strongly encourage Congress to increase overall funding for BLM's endangered species program to \$33 million in FY 2012.**

The Wildlife Society appreciates the commitment of BLM to addressing the problems associated with **Wild Horse and Burro Management**. The president has requested an increase of \$12 million to allow BLM to implement a new strategy for WHB management and act on recommendations provided in late 2010 by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). The Wildlife Society is concerned about BLM's emphasis on fertility control and its proposals to reduce the number of feral horses round-ups held in FY 2012. Horses are already above Appropriate Management Levels (set by BLM) in most areas, so the proposal to reduce the numbers of horses removed from the range is ill-conceived at best.

Given that horses and burros have been maintained above the Appropriate Management Level for many years, we believe that additional funding should be requested to correct the habitat damage that has occurred due to overpopulation of these animals. **The requested \$75.7 million should be provided to BLM if they continue removing excess horses from the range at a reasonable rate and focus additional resources on habitat restoration.**

U.S. Geological Survey

The basic, objective, and interdisciplinary scientific research that is supported by the USGS is necessary for understanding the complex environmental issues facing our nation today. This science will play an essential role in the decision-making processes of natural resource managers as we adapt to climate change, and it will help protect our water supply and conserve endangered species. More investment is needed to strengthen USGS partnerships, improve monitoring, produce high-quality geospatial data, and deliver the best science to address critical environmental and societal challenges. **The Wildlife Society supports funding of at least \$1.2 billion for USGS in FY 2012.**

The **Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units (CFWRUs)** conduct research on renewable natural resource questions, participate in the education of graduate students, provide technical assistance and consultation on natural resource issues, and provide continuing education for natural resource professionals. In FY 2001, Congress fully funded the CFWRUs, allowing unit productivity to rise to record levels. Since then, budgetary shortfalls have caused an erosion of available funds, resulting in a current staffing vacancy of nearly one quarter of the professional workforce. In order to fill current vacancies, restore seriously eroded operational funds for each CFWRU, and enhance national program coordination, **the FY 2012 budget for the CFWRUs should be increased to \$22 million.** This would restore necessary capacity in the CFWRU program and allow it to meet the nation's research and training needs.

The Wildlife Society appreciates the FY 2010 funding of \$15.1 million for the **National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center**. This center will play a pivotal role in addressing the impacts of climate change on fish and wildlife by providing essential scientific support. In order for this role to be fully realized, funding must increase. **The Wildlife Society recommends that Congress fund the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center at \$25 million in FY 2012.**

U.S. Forest Service

Our national forests and grasslands are essential to the conservation of our nation's wildlife and habitat, and are home to about 425 threatened and endangered, and another 3,250 at-risk species. In FY 2011, the Forest Service combined several programs and budgets, including Vegetation and Watershed Management, Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management, and Forest Products into a single Integrated Resource Restoration activity budget. We are concerned with this merger because it makes accountability to stakeholders and Congress more difficult. However, with these reservations noted, we urge Congress to **support the request of \$854.242 million for the Integrated Resource Restoration program in FY 2012.**

Integral to management of our natural resources is a deep understanding of the biological and geological forces that shape the land and its wildlife and plant communities. The research being done by the USFS is at the forefront of science, and essential to improving the health of our nation's forests and grasslands. Furthermore, it will play a key role in developing strategies for mitigating the effects of climate change. We urge Congress to provide **\$312 million in FY 2012 for Forest and Rangelands** to support this high-quality research.

White Nose Syndrome (A Crosscutting Program)

Finally, we ask Congress to provide additional funding to fight White Nose Syndrome (WNS) in bats. The current loss of bat populations from WNS represents one of the most precipitous wildlife declines in the past century in North America, and will likely have significant ecological and economic consequences throughout the United States. Experts have recommended that \$45 million will be needed over the next 5 years to study and combat WNS.

Federal agencies play a critical role in WNS response. The Fish and Wildlife Service is the lead agency, coordinating the nationwide effort to combat the disease and granting federal monies to state wildlife agencies to assist in their WNS response. The U.S. Geological Survey is conducting research vital to understanding this previously unknown disease. The National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Forest Service are involved on their lands in monitoring and surveying bat populations, implementing decontamination measures with visitors, managing and closing caves, improving bat habitat, educating the public about WNS, and other activities. The Department of Defense monitors, surveys, and implements conservation measures for bat populations on its lands as well. **We request a total funding level of \$11.1 million for WNS research, monitoring, and response among these agencies in FY 2012.**

Thank you for considering the recommendations of wildlife professionals. Please contact Laura Bies, Director of Government Affairs at (301) 897-9770 x 308 if you require further information or have any additional questions.

TESTIMONY OF MARY BETH BEETHAM
DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS, DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES
APRIL 1, 2011

Mister Chairman, Ranking Member and Members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs for Defenders of Wildlife. Founded in 1947, Defenders has more than one million members and supporters and is dedicated to the conservation of wild animals and plants in their natural communities.

Even in the face of dire fiscal realities, Defenders continues to believe that investments in the protection of wildlife and habitat are a wise choice for our nation. To protect wildlife, its habitat must be protected, in turn, conserving healthy natural systems that provide clean air and water, food, medicines, and other products we need to live healthy lives. Federal programs that protect imperiled species, migratory birds, wildlife refuges, forests, parks, wilderness, and other lands essential to wildlife all are helping to ultimately ensure the health and well-being of the American people. The devastating Deepwater Horizon spill offered an unfortunate but valuable lesson in the importance of a healthy and thriving Gulf Coast system for the people and communities dependent upon it.

Defenders is strongly opposed to the massive cuts for conservation programs and the array of damaging policy provisions included in H.R. 1, the Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011. We urge restoration of funding for crucial conservation programs and believe that harmful policy provisions have no place in any appropriations bill.

We are pleased with several high priority initiatives in the president's FY 2012 budget, including: 1) the continued emphasis on landscape level conservation and management efforts intended to build resilience to broad scale ecological stressors that are harming wildlife and habitat, such as invasive species, wildfire, drought, and climate change – the most daunting conservation challenge of our time and 2) the proposal to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund that includes a new joint effort by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to identify inter-departmental priorities for land acquisition. We also are very supportive of the administration's effort to prioritize the development of renewable energy as part of a strategy to address climate change, produce jobs, and transition to a clean energy economy. The President's budget states that various initiatives to conduct scientific assessments, plan, and manage at the landscape level across agencies will be coordinated under Cooperative Landscape Conservation and will help to support mission critical operating programs of the various agencies, something we believe is of the utmost importance if these initiatives are to realize their full potential. Moreover, the impacts of significant undertakings, such as the expansion of renewable energy development on federal lands, must be adequately considered in the context of landscape level conservation with proper siting, management, and mitigation of these projects to avoid significant impacts on wildlife and other sensitive resources.

We urge the subcommittee to do as much as possible to protect the accounts of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), our nation's premier wildlife conservation agency. We strongly support the following modest increases:

- To continue progress in building resilience to landscape level ecological stressors, the administration's request for a total of \$37.5 million for Cooperative Landscape Conservation and

Adaptive Science Capacity that will complete establishment of the 18 Landscape Conservation Cooperatives that will be led by FWS out of a total of 21. These funds also will be used to meet additional scientific information needs such as inventory and monitoring and species risk, vulnerability, population, and habitat assessments. In continuing this initiative, effective coordination of landscape level and scientific efforts across agencies and departments and with partners and stakeholders is absolutely crucial.

- To address the needs of our nation's most vulnerable plants and animals, a total of \$195.8 million for Endangered Species operating accounts, \$13.2 million over the request, allocated as follows: \$12.6 million for Candidate Conservation, the FY 10 level, \$1.2 million over the request; \$24.6 million for Listing, equal to the request; \$90.3 million for Recovery, \$6.6 million over the request; and \$68.3 million for Consultation, \$5.4 million over the request. In particular, increases are needed in the Recovery and Consultation programs to implement conservation actions on the ground and to address more than 1,000 consultations related to renewable energy development, and a backlog of more than 1,100 pesticide re-registration and other water quality criteria consultations. We are extremely disappointed that funding was eliminated for the Wolf Livestock Loss Demonstration program that assists livestock producers coexisting with wolves and for White Nose Syndrome that has decimated more than one million bats in the last several years, and we ask that both be restored. We support the request for a legislative sub-cap on petitions conditional on FWS making progress with listing priority species.
- To maintain the National Wildlife Refuge System, a total of \$511 million, a modest increase of approximately \$8 million over the request, as recommended by the diverse coalition of 21 organizations in the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement. The increase is focused only on maintaining current management capability – such as keeping fuel in trucks and paying for rising utilities, building rent and other costs – normally at least \$15 million but reduced for FY 2012 consistent with the federal employee salary freeze. Flat budgets or cuts in FY 2012 and the coming years would trigger a return to a massive downsizing plan that would lead to elimination of biological, education, hunting and fishing programs and to other devastating impacts.
- To minimize harm to the mission critical Office of Law Enforcement, a total of \$67.8 million, \$5.2 million over the request but only \$2 million over the FY 2010 level, focused on additional special agents and port inspectors. We are strongly opposed to the decrease in the request for funding that had specifically been added by Congress in the FY 2010 bill to boost numbers of special agents – the special agent force is still 23 percent below the authorized number of 261 and even 16 percent below its previous high water mark.
- To support the Migratory Bird Management program, a total of \$56.5 million, \$2 million over the request to address crucial needs including development of information on golden eagle populations which recently have been discovered to be vulnerable to impacts from wind turbines. Defenders also supports the \$2 million increase in Conservation Planning Assistance under Habitat Conservation that the request says will be used to coordinate and expedite renewable energy project review and development while minimizing impacts on fish and wildlife.
- To support the Environmental Contaminants program, \$16 million, \$2.2 million over the request. The program's budget has been basically flat since 2001, yet resources are needed to assist the ESA Consultation program in its backlogged pesticide and water quality consultations and also to support readiness and response capabilities for oil spills or the release of other hazardous substances.
- To sustain the International Affairs program, a total of \$16.9 million, \$3.9 million over the request. Defenders is disappointed that the request included a nearly 10 percent decrease in this very modest program. Funding is needed to support at-risk wildlife in crucial regions through

Wildlife Without Borders regional programs; for the Critically Endangered Animals Conservation Fund and Amphibians in Decline program; for the growing permitting, research and monitoring workload for species subject to trade, and for other crucial priorities.

- For critical grant programs, \$95 million for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, same as the request; \$100 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund, same as the request; \$6.5 million for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, \$1.5 million over the request; and \$13.5 million for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, \$3.75 million over the request.

The multiple-use lands of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (FS) are increasingly crucial to the conservation of wildlife and habitat in the United States, yet their resources are not adequate to meet significant challenges. A top priority for Defenders is ensuring that any renewable energy development on our multiple-use lands proceeds in a balanced way that ensures no net loss to wildlife populations and a net benefit to the status of threatened and endangered species. We are extremely disappointed that the comprehensive review on siting and coordination of renewable energy projects by the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service that was directed by the FY 2010 conference report has yet to be submitted. We urge continued strong oversight to ensure that any energy development is done in an environmentally sensitive fashion. And given the large land ownerships of the two agencies, it is imperative that both participate fully in landscape level conservation and management efforts underway.

For the Forest Service, the budget proposes two new consolidated budget line items, Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR), as was proposed for FY 2011, and Land Management Planning, Assessments, and Monitoring. While Defenders supports the stated goals of these consolidations to move to a restoration and resiliency based approach to forest management and to better link planning, assessment and monitoring to advance adaptive management, we remain highly concerned about the adequacy of science-based management objectives and clear standards for conservation, in particular, given previous Forest Service accountability issues, the merging of Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management into IRR, and the proposed new National Forest Management Act planning regulations that eliminate longstanding wildlife viability standards. Defenders and other organizations have proposed that, rather than a complete consolidation, a responsible first step would be a program that uses portions of various program budgets until results and accountability can be demonstrated.

We recommend the following funding for BLM and FS programs:

- For crosscutting BLM Cooperative Landscape Conservation, \$29.5 million, \$2.2 million over the request. The increase is needed to help support the continued development of rapid ecoregional assessments that examine ecological conditions within large landscapes to ensure that initiated assessments are completed, that new ones are launched in priority landscapes, and that information contained in assessments is transferred into useful management direction.
- For BLM Wildlife and Fisheries Management, a total of \$53.3 million, \$3 million over the request and for BLM Threatened and Endangered Species Management, a total of \$24.6 million, \$2.9 million over the request. Investments in inventory and monitoring are needed to help avoid and mitigate harmful impacts to golden eagles, bats and other wildlife species from renewable energy development and to ascertain bat presence or absence in approximately 400 caves so that BLM can begin to address any occurrence of White-Nose Syndrome. We also are concerned by reports that plant conservation will be moved from the Wildlife subactivity to Rangeland Management, which we fear will undermine the broader conservation focus of the program.

- For BLM Challenge Cost Share, \$9.5 million, same as the request. This program provides crucial resources for proactive wildlife and habitat conservation projects on the ground and the budget states that concerns raised in a 2009 Inspector General report have been addressed.
- For BLM Resource Management Planning, \$55 million, same as the FY 2010 level and \$9.4 million over the request. We are quite concerned about the requested decrease which we believe will hinder needed plan revisions.
- For BLM's new Renewable Energy subactivity, \$19.7 million, same as the request. Given the major effort to develop renewable energy on BLM lands, the establishment of this new subactivity to better focus resources is a responsible step and we applaud the requested \$3 million increase that will support environmental reviews.
- For FS Land Management Planning, \$50.9 million and for FS Inventory and Monitoring, \$172.5 million. The proposal to consolidate these two line items cuts the total by \$10.8 million even though the FY 2010 levels for both programs are far below the 2003 inflation-adjusted level. Robust funding for planning, supported by inventory and monitoring are crucial to move toward a restoration and sustainability agenda.
- Given the IRR proposal, it is not clear if the separate Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management line item will still exist, however regardless of whether there is a separate or combined line item, Defenders supports a total of at least \$148 million for Wildlife and Fish output measures, just \$5 million over FY 2010 that is still nearly \$16 million below the FY 2001 inflation-adjusted level. With 19 percent fewer botanists and fisheries and wildlife biologists than in 1995, Defenders is greatly troubled about the loss of biological capability in the agency.
- For FS Wildlife and Fish R&D in Forest and Rangeland Research, \$32.5 million, \$4.7 million over the request allocated to the Climate Change and Water Management and Restoration Emerging Research Areas. Given the need for science-based management on National Forest System lands and the importance of wildlife as indicators of forest health, Defenders is extremely disappointed in the 9 percent decrease in the request for Wildlife and Fish R&D.

The U.S. Geological Survey supports the basic science necessary for conservation of fish, wildlife and habitat. To provide adequate science support, we urge the following increases:

- For the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center, \$25.6 million, same as the request. We thank the subcommittee for its past strong support and are pleased with progress being made to establish the regional science centers that will be expanded to include northeast, south central and Pacific Island Centers with the increase.
- For Ecosystems, \$171.3 million, \$4.9 million over the request, that will help to continue filling scientist vacancies in the all-important Cooperative Research Units; for science support for DOI bureaus now in the Climate and Land-Use Change activity, \$9 million, same as the request, that will assist the agencies in making scientifically-based resource management decisions; and for Alternative Energy Studies on Wildlife now under the Energy and Minerals and Environmental Health activity, \$3 million, same as the request, to assess impacts to wildlife from wind energy projects and to help inform siting to ensure minimal harm.

Finally, each day, 6,000 acres of open space in the U.S. is lost to habitat fragmentation and destruction. Once these lands are lost, they can never be recovered. We urge the subcommittee to fulfill the president's request for full-funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies**

**Testimony of Nina Fascione, Executive Director, Bat Conservation International,
regarding funding for a Fiscal Year 2012 national strategy to address
the bat disease White-nose Syndrome**

Good morning, Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Moran, and members of the Subcommittee. My name is Nina Fascione, and I am Executive Director of Bat Conservation International (BCI). Based in Austin, Texas, with a membership of more than 10,000 people from all 50 of the United States, BCI conducts and supports science-based research, education, and conservation to ensure that bats will still be helping to maintain healthy environments and human economies far into the future. I am here today to request \$11.1 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 funding for a national strategy to address White-nose Syndrome (WNS), a disease decimating North American bats. Numerous Federal agencies are involved in WNS response: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and the Department of Defense.

WNS poses the gravest threat ever faced by bats of the United States. Since its discovery in 2006, the disease has killed well over one million bats. It is named for a previously unknown, cold-loving white fungus found on the faces and wings of infected bats that is believed to cause the disease. WNS-infected bats awaken frequently during hibernation, burning the fat reserves they need to survive the winter. They often emerge early from hibernation, before the return of warm weather and insects, only to freeze or starve to death. The disease or its associated fungus has spread to 17 states and three Canadian provinces in the five years since WNS was first observed in a cave near Albany, New York. The northeastern United States has borne the brunt of WNS so far, but the disease or its fungus has spread as far south as North Carolina and Tennessee and as far west as Oklahoma.

Biologists consider the WNS die-off to be North America's most precipitous wildlife decline in the past century. The disease strikes hibernating bats – those that sleep through the winter in caves and mines – and has affected every hibernating bat species in its geographic path. Of the nation's 46 bat species, 25 hibernate, and all of these hibernating species are considered at risk of the disease. WNS or the fungus currently affects nine species, including endangered Indiana and gray bats, which could well be even closer to extinction as a result. Some WNS-infected sites experience mortality rates of almost 100%. Losses are so severe that researchers are predicting regional extinctions of the little brown bat – previously one of America's most common mammals – in northeastern states within 16 years.

Bats provide many benefits to humankind. As primary predators of night-flying insects, bats are critical to maintaining the balance of nature. A bat can eat half to all of its body weight in insects per night, consuming vast numbers of pests that damage crops such as corn, cotton, and potatoes. A study published on April 1, 2011 in the journal *Science* estimates the value of bats to the U.S. agriculture industry ranges from \$3.7 billion to \$53 billion per year. Bats also eat insects that damage forests and spread disease. Some bat species pollinate crops and disperse seeds. Research of bat biology has yielded important chemical products, including a medication

to prevent strokes. Bat droppings in caves support unique ecosystems, including microorganisms that could provide resources for detoxifying industrial wastes and producing safer pesticides and antibiotics.

The loss of bats would have serious ecological and economic consequences. The one million-plus bats killed by WNS would have eaten about 700 tons of insects each year. With the bats gone, these insects are surviving to attack crops and forests. The authors of the *Science* article argue that, as a result of WNS, North American agriculture will begin noting economic losses within four to five years, with especially severe impacts to the Midwest and Great Plains regions. In addition to crop losses, farmers will need to use more pesticides, increasing the financial strain on farming families, raising the price of food for consumers, and releasing more chemicals into our environment. Bats are important predators, so their disappearance could have broad, ripple effects on the environment that we can't yet assess.

The population declines from WNS could well lead to listing more bat species under the Federal Endangered Species Act, as well as state-level statutes, which would cause far-ranging economic costs. The Center for Biological Diversity has petitioned the FWS for listing of the northern long-eared bat and eastern small-footed bat because of WNS and other factors, while BCI and other organizations have requested the FWS to review the status of the little brown bat and to file an emergency listing of the species in the interim. At the state level, Ohio has designated four bat species as species of concern; Wisconsin is in the process of listing three bat species as threatened; and other states, including New York and New Hampshire, are considering designations. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO-06-463R), the average cost for recovery of an endangered species is \$15.9 million. The highest estimate on record is \$125 million to recover the whooping crane. Bat species affected by WNS have broad geographic distributions and complex ecological patterns, which would likely require very high recovery costs. Finally, regulations stemming from listing more bat species would have economic impacts on industries such as mining, defense, energy, forestry, construction, transportation, tourism, and outdoor recreation.

The Federal government recognizes how much is at stake from WNS and, in conjunction with state, local, and tribal agencies, academic institutions, and nonprofits, has mounted an admirable response to the disease. WNS and its associated fungus were unknown to science until discovered in New York, but since then, Federal dollars have enabled researchers at USGS and elsewhere to isolate, identify, and develop a test for the WNS fungus, to map its genome, and answer some basic questions about the nature, transmission, and diagnosis of the disease. The FWS, the lead agency for WNS response, coordinates government and other entities in order to maximize efficient use of resources, prevent redundancy, and facilitate an effective national response. In this role, the agency has funded scientific research and on-the-ground disease surveillance and management, developed recommendations to help prevent disease spread, and created the National Plan for Assisting States, Federal Agencies, and Tribes in Managing White Nose Syndrome in Bats in collaboration with all involved Federal agencies, as well as State and other entities. Land-management agencies have been at the forefront in developing disease-monitoring techniques, gathering bat-survey data, managing resources to increase bat survival, and producing materials to educate the public about WNS. The NPS's Mammoth Cave National Park has developed a site-based response plan that is being used as a model for public lands

throughout the country; USFS is testing ways to improve bat habitat to boost post-disease survival rates; and DoD is refining acoustical bat-monitoring methods. All of these agencies provide technical support to, and collaborate and pool resources with, State, Local, and Tribal agencies as well as academic institutions and non-profits.

Despite this progress, the need for WNS-response funding continues and is, in fact, increasing. As the disease spreads, the number of entities involved and the scale of the response grows. While scientists have learned much about the disease, they cannot yet stop its spread. Critical research topics aimed at finding solutions include the susceptibility of different bat species to WNS, possible biological-control agents, and the disease-producing interface of the fungus, bats, and the cave environment. In FY 2010, FWS awarded \$1.6 million for WNS research through a granting process for which the agency received \$10.5 million in proposals. On-the-ground monitoring and management is required in both previously and newly infected areas. Overall coordination and communication is needed to ensure efficiency and the sharing of information and resources. The westward spread of WNS is sharply increasing the need for a Federal response. Western states have a higher proportion of public land than those in the East. Beyond that, much less is known about western bat populations than eastern ones, and the rugged western terrain makes data-gathering more difficult. To this point, FY 2012 is the first year for which BLM anticipates significant WNS expenses, many of which will go toward surveying approximately 400 western caves and abandoned mines for baseline data on bats.

Concluding from analysis of past WNS spending and disease-spread trends, we urge the Subcommittee to ensure that Federal agencies engaged in the WNS response receive \$11.1 million to address WNS in FY 2012. The cross-agency need is broken down as follows:

FY 2012 WNS Needs

FWS	USGS	NPS	BLM	USFS	DoD	TOTAL
\$5,200,000	\$2,400,000	\$200,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$300,000	\$11,100,000.00

One can compare this to WNS spending from FYs 2007 to 2010 (we do not have reliable expenditure figures for FY 2011):

Estimated expenditures on White-nose Syndrome (Note: BLM did not report WNS expenditures in past years.)

	FWS	USGS	NPS	USFS	DoD	
FY10	3,690,000	345,500	207,000	1,815,000	206,300	6,263,800
FY09	1,790,000	334,000	162,500	890,000	5,000	3,181,500
FY07-08	3,200,000	575,000	162,500	N/A	N/A	3,937,500
	8,680,000	1,254,500	532,000	2,705,000	211,300	13,382,800

The increase for FY 2012 over FY 2010 expenses is \$4,836,200, or 77%. We believe this ask is conservative and in fact will barely keep pace with the disease's spread. From 2007 to 2010, the disease moved from one state to 14, and from five sites to at least 157. From 2009 to 2010 alone, the number of affected states increased by 56%, and the number of infected sites by 78%.

Overall, the number of affected states and sites increased by 50 to 100+% each year. Already this year, WNS has been confirmed in three new states, and confirmed or suspected in 15 new counties. A 77% increase in WNS spending from FY 2010 to FY 2012 is therefore clearly proportionate to the disease's expected expansion by the start of FY 2012.

Congressional support is critical for addressing WNS. Other funding sources are extremely limited. State budgets have been drastically reduced and, especially given the spread of the disease, Federal agencies' existing resources are not sufficient to meet the need. According to the President's FY 2012 budget, there is WNS funding in the FWS's Preventing Extinction initiative and in the USGS's Ecosystems program. The budget does not specify the amount of WNS money in these accounts. We are grateful for these funds, and we urge Congress to supplement them such that the cross-agency total designated for WNS in FY 2012 is \$11.1 million.

Congress is facing a difficult financial climate, so let me point out that money spent on WNS is a wise investment. First, preventing the spread of WNS will spare businesses the regulatory and other impacts of bat die-offs. In 2008 and 2009, the threat of WNS caused officials to cancel the yearly Crawlathon caving event in and around Carter Caves State Resort Park in eastern Kentucky. Normally held during the off-tourist season in a rural area with limited economic opportunities, the event's cancellation cost the park and local businesses revenue losses each year. After the WNS fungus was reported in Missouri in early 2010, officials decided to close the caves at Iowa's Maquoketa Caves State Park in order to protect the caves' bats. Park attendance, which in previous years had averaged around 250,000 visitors per year, dropped in 2010 to approximately 60,000. The loss in park revenues has hurt the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, which had already been suffering from the national economic downturn. Show caves – small businesses that provide jobs and contribute to local economies – could also be hurt by WNS. States with many show caves include Missouri, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and South Dakota. In addition, implementing WNS response generates jobs. The USFS management of forests for bat conservation includes thinning stands of trees. The agency contracts with local businesses to harvest, haul, and process the trees for timber. Finally, conducting WNS research, management, and prevention now will reduce future expenses to the U.S. economy resulting from pest impacts to agriculture and forestry, businesses affected by additional bat listings, and the cost of listed-species recovery. In this case, an ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure.

Unless additional funding is provided in FY 2012, WNS will continue to spread across the country unchecked, killing even more bats than have already died. The consequent ecological and economic impacts will affect all of us as consumers, taxpayers, and residents of a planet that will have been further impoverished of biological diversity. We desperately need designated support for WNS response. I urge Congress to ensure FWS, USGS, NPS, BLM, USFS, and DoD receive a total of \$11.1 million for WNS in FY 2012.

Thank you for the opportunity to share BCI's position on this serious matter, and I respectfully ask you to consider our urgent request.

Doug Headrick, General Manager
San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District
Appearing on behalf of the Santa Ana Sucker Task Force

Chairman Simpson and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Doug Headrick, and I am the General Manager of the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District. I appear before you today as a representative of the Santa Ana Sucker Task Force, a group of thirteen water agencies, flood control districts and cities from Southern California who have banded together in the face of regulatory overreach by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Task Force agencies serve almost three million Southern Californians and cross numerous Congressional districts. Member agencies of the Task Force are: San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, Western Municipal Water District, City of San Bernardino Municipal Water Department, City of Riverside Public Utilities Department, San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, East Valley Water District, City of Redlands, Yucaipa Valley Water District, Bear Valley/Crafton Water Companies, Riverside County Flood Control District, and Big Bear Municipal Water District.

The USFWS, under heavy political and legal pressure by the Center for Biological Diversity, recently set aside their own carefully defined designation of the critical habitat of the Santa Ana Sucker and has now expanded the territory into areas that guarantee dire economic consequences for our communities. Worse, the addition of these new areas is not supported by the known biology of the species. This situation is the subject of my testimony.

Background on the Santa Ana Sucker and the Task Force:

The Santa Ana Sucker is a small fish that lives in the Santa Ana River and has been listed as a Threatened Species under the Endangered Species Act since 2001. The fish has been the subject of much regional concern and has been protected for over ten years by the state of California and local agencies under a Species Management Plan. Members of our Task Force have worked with Fish and Wildlife to study the fish and monitor its progress, and many of us have spent great sums of time and money doing so. We all recognize the important role that we play in protecting the delicate ecosystems of Southern California, and we do so willingly.

In 2005, the USFWS established an area of Critical Habitat for the fish, a process which my agency and many others in the Task Force participated in and remember well. At the time, the Service proposed that a very broad region be included in the designation. Ultimately, they decided not to designate the dry upper Santa Ana River areas as critical habitat, finding that these areas were not, and I quote, “essential to the conservation of the species” and that the enormous costs to the Inland Empire’s economy far outweighed any benefits to the species. Our water agencies have subsequently been successfully conserving the Santa Ana Sucker, and will continue to do so. Our efforts have included working with the California Department of Fish and Game to fund the efforts of the Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team to recover and restore its habitats. In addition, we have clearly and repeatedly expressed to the USFWS our willingness to cooperatively design and protect habitat for the Santa Ana Sucker because we care about the health of the fish.

After the 2005 process concluded, everyone in the region considered the issue to be well-settled. My agency and many others undertook long-term planning for construction of infrastructure and water supply projects which are critical to our region. However, in December 2009, the USFWS announced that they would revise the Critical Habitat. This was done without giving any scientific or economic rationale for doing so. Certainly, nothing in the biological data showed the species to be in decline, and the USFWS has not produced any such data. A legal settlement between the USFWS and the Center for Biological Diversity directed the Service to undertake a review of the Sucker's habitat, but it did not require a habitat expansion. Moreover, the lawsuit settlement did not override existing law.

The Task Force I represent today was organized in early 2010 in response to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's announcement that it would re-visit the Critical Habitat for the Santa Ana Sucker. We were alarmed at the announcement because of the lack of justification by the Service. With the USFWS' announcement of the Final Critical Habitat Designation for the Santa Ana Sucker in December of 2010, our fears were realized because the decision totally disregards the scientific and economic realities which should have been central to the agency's decision based on the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. In short, the Service did not follow its own rules or Federal law.

Problems with the Revised Critical Habitat

Allow me to underscore the fact that none of the areas that USFWS has newly designated currently or have ever supported a population of Santa Ana suckers. The Endangered Species Act requires a very high standard for the designation of unoccupied territory, specifically: that the territory be "essential" for the species' preservation. USFWS' proposed rule ignores that requirement and also ignores its prior determination that these areas were not "essential" to the preservation of the species. By contrast, the California State Water Resources Control Board recently spent considerable time analyzing the needs of the Santa Ana Sucker before granting water rights to my agency and Western Municipal Water District of Riverside County. They found that the diversion of water from the upper reaches of the Santa Ana River, where the fish has never been in evidence, would not interfere with the public trust resource of the suckers. With the recent Critical Habitat expansion, we are worried that the millions of dollars of public money invested in securing this new water supply for the benefit of those we serve are in jeopardy.

Amazingly, the USFWS has included areas of dry riverbed in the habitat for this fish. These stretches of river are periodically wet when Southern California gets a lot of rain, but they are bone dry for an average of nine to eleven months a year. No fish currently live, nor is there any evidence that a sustainable population of Suckers ever lived, in these reaches of the Santa Ana river. Members of the Committee, I am an engineer by training, but I picked up enough biology along the way to know that fish cannot live in dry riverbeds. This represents the USFWS's greatest overreach since there is no evidence that these areas have ever been occupied by Santa Ana suckers, let alone that they are "essential" to the species' preservation.

There are some wet areas of the Santa Ana River that have been added in the revised habitat, however they are subject to flooding and otherwise do not have the proper substrates, water temperatures or other environmental conditions needed for the Santa Ana sucker. Importantly,

these creeks and the dry areas of the upper Santa Ana River are subject to periodic flooding that are an entirely normal part of Southern California's weather cycle. These floods send water and cobble stone down the river to the where the Suckers are located and fulfill its needs. A critical habitat designation is totally irrelevant since these flows are entirely natural. A habitat designation would have no meaningful impact on the volume of water or cobble involved.

Membership of the Santa Ana Sucker Task Force includes cities, water districts and other agencies that provide critical services in the region and are undertaking projects to improve the quality of life for all Southern Californians. Together, we repeatedly presented scientific and economic information to the agency and participated at every available opportunity. Unfortunately, much of this effort was in vain.

Consequences of the USFWS Decision

Members of the Committee, I would not be appearing today if it was not for the enormous water supply and economic consequences that the reopening of the Santa Ana Sucker habitat, just five years after the issue was settled, can have on the communities that I am representing here today. As you no doubt know, water is a huge issue in Southern California. In part, this is because of the impact of repeated droughts. In part, it is because Southern California's growth, 70% of which is simply the natural increase of births over deaths in our families with 2.1 million more people expected to live in the inland area between 2008-2035.

Taking a very broad view of the problem, this decision aggravates the water shortages currently being experienced in the entire state of California and the Southwest region of our nation. Restrictions on drawing water from the Delta have a widespread effect, and one of the most effective methods of compensating for reduced Delta water supplies is the creation of reliable local water supplies.

The expanded Critical Habitat for the Santa Ana Sucker directly opposes our efforts to capture stormwater, recharge our basins and reduce our reliance on imported water. Member agencies of the Task Force want to undertake water recycling projects, desalination efforts and flood control projects which will expand our supplies of local water and recharge our depleted groundwater basins. We know that these projects will save money for our customers and make our communities drought-proof while reducing pressure on the Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta. The Critical Habitat designation will prohibit important projects from going forward. Here, it is important to understand that the dry, ephemeral reaches of the upper Santa Ana River are where those of us concerned about water supplies have worked for years to capture and conserve water that our periodic rainfall would normally send to the Pacific Ocean. For a century, this dry riverbed has been the site of spreading basins where some of our mountain runoff is captured, allowing it to seep into an underground aquifer, equivalent in size to Lake Shasta. If this area becomes habitat, access to this historical local supply of water will be lost.

Meanwhile, several years ago Congress financed the Seven-Oaks Dam on the Santa Ana River to provide downstream protection from what the Army Corps of Engineers called the greatest risk for catastrophic flooding west of the Mississippi River. This opened the possibility of storing some mountain runoff behind the dam, further increasing local water supplies. Together with monies from our local agencies, Congress authorized spending to alter the dam's design for that

purpose. The California State Water Resources Control Board later spent considerable time analyzing the needs of the Sucker and granted rights to this “new” water to our local agencies. They found that capturing this water would not harm the Sucker since it came from areas where the fish has never existed. Also, they found that it would not harm the Sucker since natural water and cobble moving flows below the dam were sufficient to satisfy its needs. Should the habitat expansion be granted, our rights and access to this water would be nullified ... violating Congress’s clear intention.

Loss of the water from these two efforts, plus several others by local agencies working in the normally dry, ephemeral upper reaches of the Santa Ana River added to the Sucker habitat, would mean the loss of up to 125,800 acre feet of water a year to the Inland Empire. If it could be replaced, the 25 year cost would be \$2.87 billion. If local taxpayers could put aside money today to buy this water, using a 3% interest rate that is logical in today’s economy, the cost would be \$1.87 billion. Fish & Wildlife used several tricks to have their economists lower this number, such as using an unrealistic 7% rate. Still, they ended up with a \$694 million present day cost to local taxpayers. All this for the inclusion of a dry habitat zone that has nothing truly to do with helping the fish.

Worse by far however is the fact that it is highly unlikely that the 125,800 acre feet of local water that would be lost could be replaced at any cost. Thus, in March 2011, with California’s snow pack at 165% of normal, the State Water Project estimated that it will only be able to supply its regional water agencies with 70% of their current water allocations. In recent years those shares were 50% in 2010, 40% in 2009, 35% in 2008 and 60% in 2007. If we need more water from the State Water Project, we will very likely not be able to get it.

California law mandates that local water agencies must certify a 20 year supply of water before any major residential, retail, office or industrial project can be built. The San Bernardino and Riverside region, with a current unemployment rate of over 13%, desperately needs economic development. When that law is combined with the restricted flow of water to Southern California because of the Delta Smelt situation and the restriction of the Inland Empire’s local water supply with the Santa Ana Sucker, we come close to having the Endangered Species Act control growth and economic activity in Southern California. Despite that chilling result, and the fact that this issue was repeatedly raised with Fish & Wildlife, their economic analysis of the proposed expansion of the Sucker habitat did not even evaluate this issue. Yet, the impact would run into the billions and billions of dollars.

Next steps for the Task Force:

Right now, our Task Force is undertaking a thorough review of the ruling that the designation should be expanded into areas that will harm our economy, but do nothing for the Santa Ana Sucker. After that review is completed, the Task Force will file a formal notice with the Service outlining the deficiencies in their decision. From the point of that filing, the USFWS will have 60 days to either make changes to the Critical Habitat designation or leave it the same. The Task Force remains hopeful that the agency will consider all of the relevant scientific and economic information during this next phase of the process. In the meantime, I ask that the Committee to please undertake an active role in oversight of the USFWS and its use of the Endangered Species Act as a regulatory tool.

Testimony of Andy Oliver
Coordinator, Multinational Species Coalition
Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Public Witness Hearings
April 15, 2011

Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Moran and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Multinational Species Coalition on the importance of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund and the Wildlife Without Borders program in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Multinational Species Coalition is a broad-based coalition comprised of 32 organizations¹ representing sportsmen, conservationists, zoos, circuses, veterinarians, animal welfare groups and their more than 15 million members. Thank you for your past and consistent support for these programs. In Fiscal Year 2012, we respectfully request your support for funding the Multinational Species Conservation Fund at \$12.5 million and Wildlife Without Borders at \$7.4 million.

Wildlife conservation programs are a modest but essential piece of the United States' engagement with the developing world. Through the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF) programs, the United States supplements the efforts of developing countries that are struggling to balance the needs of their human populations and endemic wildlife. MSCF programs help to sustain wildlife populations, address threats by controlling poaching, reducing human-wildlife conflict, and protecting essential habitat. By working with local communities, they also improve people's livelihoods, contribute to local and regional stability, and support U.S. security interests in impoverished regions.

We request your continued support in Fiscal Year 2012 for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF) and the Wildlife Without Borders (WWB) program. Over the past two decades, these popular and highly effective programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have provided seed money for public-private partnerships that conserve wild tigers, elephants, rhinos, great apes, and marine turtles in their native habitat. The MSCF and WWB have long enjoyed broad bipartisan support and we urge you to continue that support going forward.

The MSCF and the WWB programs address critical conservation and development concerns in countries around the globe. They are an excellent investment for the Federal government, consistently leveraging three or four times as much in matching funds from corporations, conservation groups, and national governments. The MSCF comprises five small funds targeting

¹ The members of the Multinational Species Coalition are the African Wildlife Foundation, American Bird Conservancy, American Veterinary Medical Association, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Bonobo Conservation Initiative, Born Free USA, Chelonian Research Foundation, Conservation International, Defenders of Wildlife, Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International, Fauna & Flora International, Feld Entertainment, Inc., Humane Society of the United States, Humane Society International, International Cheetah Foundation, International Crane Foundation, International Elephant Foundation, International Fund for Animal Welfare, International Rhino Foundation, Jane Goodall Institute, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, Ocean Conservancy, Safari Club International, Sea Turtle Conservancy, Sierra Club, The WILD Foundation, Wildlife Alliance, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Management Institute, and World Wildlife Fund.

African Elephants, Asian Elephants, Great Apes, Marine Turtles as well as Rhinoceros and Tigers combined into one. The Multinational Species Coalition hopes you will consider including the following funding levels for these small, but vital programs:

- African Elephant Conservation Fund \$2.0 million
- Asian Elephant Conservation Fund 2.0 million
- Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund 4.0 million
- Great Apes Conservation Fund 2.5 million
- Marine Turtle Conservation Fund 2.0 million
- Wildlife Without Borders 7.4 million

These funding levels are consistent with FY2010 appropriations for all of the Funds except Rhino-Tiger, for which we request a \$1 million increase to bring it in line with the African and Asian Elephants and Marine Turtles Funds and capitalize on global awareness and commitments made at last year's International Tiger Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia which was the first-ever Heads of State summit dedicated to a single species.

The Multinational Species Conservation Fund serves the dual purpose of protecting wildlife populations and essential habitat while also creating greater security and economic opportunities for local communities. By conserving iconic species, these programs help sustain large areas of habitat, home to a rich diversity of flora and fauna.

TIGERS: The need for the support of these funds has never been greater. For example, tigers are magnificent creatures: big, powerful, and charismatic. Unfortunately, these same qualities make them popular targets, with tiger body parts being in high demand on the global black market. Tiger organs and bones are used in Asian medicines, which are sold to consumers who believe these animal products convey strength, health and virility. Tiger populations have dropped from an estimated 5000-7000 ten years ago to as few as 3,000 in the wild today. Grants are awarded from the Rhino-Tiger Conservation Fund for anti-poaching programs, habitat and ecosystem management, development of nature reserves, wildlife surveys and monitoring, management of human-wildlife conflict, public awareness campaigns and other conservation efforts related to rhino and tiger survival. Thanks to support from the Rhino-Tiger Conservation Fund, tiger populations in the Russian Far East are experiencing a tentative recovery and enhanced enforcement of wildlife crimes is helping Indonesia crack down on the poaching of Sumatra's few remaining tigers.

MSCF support for the first ever nation-wide assessments of tiger populations, distribution and prey in Nepal helped to successfully establish the baseline data on tigers in that country – a significant milestone in tiger conservation. Funding from the Rhino-Tiger Conservation Fund has also helped to develop a tiger conservation database for Nepal and helped to build local capacity in scientific tiger monitoring. Successes such as these have laid the groundwork to help achieve the ambitious goal of doubling the wild tiger population over the coming decade.

RHINOS: Today, fewer than 200 critically endangered Sumatran rhinos are believed to remain on Earth. Following an initial decline in Sumatran rhinos from poaching for horn, which is used in traditional Chinese medicine, the population declined at a rate of 50% in the 1980s and 1990s from deforestation and habitat fragmentation. Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park (BBS) and Way Kambas National Park (WK) in Sumatra, Indonesia, are two of the three major habitats for

Sumatran rhino, and are also two of the highest priority areas for other threatened species, including the Sumatran tiger and the Sumatran elephant. Approximately 50 rhino, 40-50 tigers, and about 500 elephants inhabit BBS. Way Kambas is home to 27-33 Sumatran rhino. With support from the Rhino-Tiger Conservation Fund, international and local partner organizations operate a comprehensive program aimed at protecting and increasing the populations of Sumatran rhinos in Indonesia – the Rhino Protection Units (RPU) are the backbone of this program. The goal of the RPU program is to prevent the extinction of Sumatran rhinos and other threatened species and to protect critical habitats in Sumatra through proactive prevention of poaching and habitat destruction. Thanks to the RPU, there has been no poaching of Sumatran rhinos in Bukit Barisan and Way Kambas National Parks in Sumatra for the past 5 years. The RPUs also protect numerous other threatened and endangered species, including tigers, elephants, tapirs, gibbons, monkeys, leopards and fishing cats in Sumatra and a project in Java focused on saving the Javan rhino.

AFRICAN ELEPHANTS: Support from the African Elephant Conservation Fund helped resolve a growing conflict between a herd of African elephants and local villagers in Malawi. After several villagers were killed by the elephants, the locals retaliated against the elephant herd. A grant from the MSCF helped the government of Malawi and local partners to safely move the herd – 83 elephants in all – to Majete Wildlife Reserve in southern Malawi, protecting both the elephants and the people living nearby.

ASIAN ELEPHANTS: With support from the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund, a mobile environmental education unit has conducted site visits throughout southwestern Cambodia since 2004 to raise awareness of human-elephant conflict and promote habitat protection, watershed management, and sustainable livelihoods. These educational programs complement work in forest protection and anti-poaching, building the long-term community support needed to preserve Cambodia's largest remaining population of wild elephants. In the southwestern province of Koh Kong, 37 elephants were reported killed between May 2001 and December 2002. Human-elephant conflict was also increasing, as expanding human populations encroached on forest habitat. But since 2003, when protection and community outreach efforts began, there have been almost no known poaching incidents or retaliatory killings of elephants, demonstrating the cumulative impacts of habitat and wildlife protection combined with community education and sustainable livelihood programs in preserving populations of wild elephants.

MARINE TURTLES: By the last quarter of the 20th Century, decades of egg collection and accidental capture in fisheries decimated thriving Pacific populations of nesting leatherback turtles that numbered in the tens of thousands only 50 years ago. Today, leatherback nesting is restricted to only a few hundred females in the Eastern Pacific and several thousand in the Western Pacific. For the last several years the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund has supported the efforts of scientists and local residents to protect nesting females in Papua, Indonesia, the species' last stronghold in the region. As the population begins to recover, the participation of local community members will ensure the survival of females and their nests and the project's long-term success.

On Costa Rica's Junquillal Beach, MSCF support has promoted community conservation programs that have transformed local residents from turtle poachers into turtle conservationists. The beach, which is an important nesting site for critically-endangered leatherback turtles, is now monitored nightly by "Baula Boys", who guard the beaches from poaching and run a sea turtle hatchery for high-risk eggs. Due to this project, supported by the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund, the number of poached turtle nests fell from 75% to just 4% in four years.

GREAT APES: The world's rarest great ape, the Cross River gorilla, lives in one of the most biologically and culturally rich places on Earth, along the border of Nigeria and Cameroon. Scientists believed only 100 remained in isolated hilltop areas, but DNA samples showed that gorillas still dispersed between the hilltops. As a result, Cameroon and Nigeria came together to protect the gorillas. Cameroon created a new national park, Takamanda, and today there are more than 300 Cross River Gorillas in the region. Local communities have formed Gorilla Guardians and are now exploring ecotourism as a source of income in a region that has been ravaged by conflict and instability. While other international donors have recently made commitments in this region, it was the initial investment from the MSCF that catalyzed action.

MSCF grants made it possible for the Karisoke Research Center to continue protecting the mountain gorillas that live on the Virunga volcanic range located on the border between Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda. Karisoke staff follow daily almost one third of the 700 remaining mountain gorillas. A 2010 census found that this highly endangered subspecies has achieved a remarkable increase of 17.4 percent since the previous count in 2003, with the greatest increase in areas monitored by Research Center. This is the only great ape population to have increased in recent decades.

Great Ape Conservation Fund has also supported programs in both Rwanda and the DRC to improve the health of communities near gorilla habitat by upgrading rural clinics, increasing access to clean water, reducing intestinal parasite infestations, and supporting small animal husbandry. This reduces the likelihood of people transmitting parasites and other diseases to the gorillas and reduces people's need to seek water and game in the forest.

WILDLIFE WITHOUT BORDERS: Administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Department of International Conservation, the Wildlife without Borders (WWB) programs are able to address some of the world's most pressing challenges to wildlife and conservationists. Faced with emerging disease threats that pass between animals and people, extractive industry practices, and pressures from local communities for nature to provide for their livelihoods, this program allows for greater investment in addressing these cross-cutting threats to ecosystems and wildlife. WWB is making lasting impacts through capacity building, technical support and training, local community education and citizen science. From 2005-2009, the WWB program across Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Russian Far East awarded over \$12 million and leveraged an additional \$22 million dollars in direct conservation assistance. In recent years, this program has established a Critically Endangered Species Conservation Fund, which has begun to support to on the ground conservation programs for species in great need such as Andean cats and Ethiopian wolves. The program has also supported the Bushmeat-free Eastern Africa Network (BEAN) and MENTOR Fellowship Program to train wildlife professionals from eastern African nations in addressing species decline due to a growing and unsustainable bushmeat trade.

We hope you will consider the proven success and very positive impact of these programs in relation to their modest cost and the broad-based and enthusiastic support among constituents, who place a high value on the protection of these iconic wildlife species. We urge the Committee to fund these programs at the levels outlined above. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today and for your consideration. We look forward to working with you. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.