



NFWF

Western Big Game Migration Fund

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PARTNERS

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- ConocoPhillips
- U.S. Forest Service
- Cargill
- Taco Bell
- Native Americans in Philanthropy

ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) works with partners to foster sustainable and impactful conservation solutions so that people and nature thrive together. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest conservation foundation. Since its founding, NFWF has funded more than 23,900 projects that have generated a total conservation impact of \$12 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, ConocoPhillips, Cargill, Taco Bell and Native Americans in Philanthropy announced a new slate of Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund projects. Fourteen grants totaling more than \$13.3 million were awarded to conserve critical winter range and migration corridors for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, moose and other wildlife across the western United States. The 14 awards announced generated \$3.8 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$17.1 million.

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

The 14 projects awarded through this slate will conserve critical winter range and migration corridors in Tribal and state-identified focal areas across Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming. The projects awarded in this slate will remove, install or improve approximately 225 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly standards; improve management on more than 206,000 acres of public, private and tribal lands; and restore approximately 44,000 acres of habitat across priority big-game migration corridors and seasonal ranges. These outcomes will be accomplished through:

- Restoring priority winter range, stopover areas and migration corridors by removing encroaching trees, restoring fire-damaged habitats and treating invasive species to improve habitat for big game and other wildlife
- Improving wildlife movement by working cooperatively with private landowners, nonprofits, Tribes, state and federal agencies, and other partners to remove, modify, install or adapt fencing and other barriers that restrict big-game movement
- Eliminating migration bottlenecks and protecting important habitats through cooperative agreements and other voluntary conservation actions that reduce habitat fragmentation and maintain connectivity
- Implementing science-based actions that improve habitat quality and support the long-term conservation of big-game migration corridors, stopover areas and seasonal habitats across the West



Mule deer

(continued)

Phase II: Removing Woody Invasives for Big-Game Migration and Grasslands Restoration (AZ)

Grantee: Habitat Forever
Grant Amount:..... \$297,700
Matching Funds:..... \$485,000
Total Project Amount:..... \$782,700
Remove encroaching juniper across 1,439 acres of grassland and savanna on the Prescott National Forest in Arizona to improve habitat for pronghorn. Project will increase habitat connectivity, enhance forage and visibility, and support movement across a priority migration corridor.

Improving Big-Game Forage Quality and Prairie Ecosystem Stewardship (CA)

Grantee: Yurok Tribe
Grant Amount:..... \$247,900
Matching Funds:..... \$24,790
Total Project Amount:..... \$ 272,700
Steward prairies by removing invasive plants, seeding native grasses and conducting cultural-broadcast burning in Yurok Ancestral Territory. Project will improve big-game forage conditions by releasing competition with invasive plants, increasing native grass seed load on the landscape to improve competition success, and re-establishing traditional caretaking methods that preserve and enhance prior initial entry restoration actions for elk, deer and black bear habitat.



Bull elk

Strengthening Big-Game Migration and Seasonal Habitat in the Gunnison Basin (CO)

Grantee: Gunnison Conservation District
Grant Amount:..... \$237,200
Matching Funds:..... \$293,600
Total Project Amount:..... \$530,800
Enhance big-game habitat and improve fencing across the Gunnison Basin in Colorado to benefit elk, mule deer, pronghorn and sage-grouse. Project will improve habitat quality, increase wildlife movement across connected landscapes, and enhance forage resources on both public and private lands.

Accelerating Habitat Recovery and Connectivity in the Smoky-Boise Priority Area (ID)

Grantee: The Mule Deer Foundation
Grant Amount:..... \$589,100
Matching Funds:..... \$989,000
Total Project Amount:..... \$1,578,100
Combat invasive annual grasses and improve fences for mule deer, pronghorn and elk in the Smoky-Boise Priority Area of south-central Idaho. Project will use aerial herbicide to restore 6,700 acres of critical big-game habitat and modify 5 miles of fence to wildlife-friendly standards.

Enhancing Big-Game Winter Range on Wildlife Management Areas and Adjacent Lands (MT)

Grantee: Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
Grant Amount:..... \$1,986,600
Matching Funds:..... \$220,900
Total Project Amount:..... \$2,207,500
Enhance grassland and shrubland habitats in mule deer and elk winter range and migration corridors through implementation of woody and herbaceous removal with hand or mechanical methods, use of prescribed fire, noxious weed control and fence modification. Project will improve big-game seasonal habitats across western Montana by increasing forage production through removal of competing conifers, use of prescribed fire and fencing updates on 8,840 acres across 16 sites.

Strengthen Connectivity for Grassland-Dependent Species on Three Affiliated Tribes National Park (ND)

Grantee: Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold
Grant Amount:..... \$1,997,100
Matching Funds:..... N/A
Total Project Amount:..... \$1,997,100
Provide enhanced movement corridors and habitat for elk, pronghorn, mule deer and moose through improved management of the Three Affiliated Tribes Tribal National Park. Project will restore native prairie grassland by removing pinyon-juniper and other invasive plant species on an estimated 500 acres of Tribal lands using prescribed burns and replace 17 miles of existing barbed-wire perimeter fencing with wildlife-friendly fencing.

Landscape-Scale Habitat Restoration and Connectivity for Elk and Pronghorn (NM)

Grantee: Pueblo of Santa Ana

Grant Amount:.....\$1,082,300

Matching Funds:.....N/A

Total Project Amount:.....\$1,082,300

Increase winter range habitat for migratory elk and year-round pronghorn habitat through manual thinning of invasive conifers and scattering slash to promote herbaceous growth and alter grassland structure, improving pronghorn predator detection in Tamaya Kwii Kee Nee Puu, New Mexico. Project will enhance 2,691 acres to boost elk and pronghorn survival by increasing forage and reducing predation.

Implement Western Fish and Wildlife Agency Migration Corridors Action Plans or Wildlife Connectivity Plans (NV)

Grantee: Nevada Department of Wildlife

Grant Amount:.....\$1,700,000

Matching Funds:.....\$189,000

Total Project Amount:.....\$1,889,000

Coordinate with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to support big-game seasonal habitat and migration corridor conservation in priority areas identified in the respective state action plans or wildlife connectivity plans. Project will improve 60 miles of fence through removal, modification, conversion or installation and restore 4,000 acres to improve migration corridor connectivity and increase forage production to sustain and grow populations of native big game.

Restoring Habitat and Enhancing Movement Connectivity at Summit Lake Paiute Tribe Reservation (NV)

Grantee: Summit Lake Paiute Tribe

Grant Amount:.....\$249,900

Matching Funds:.....N/A

Total Project Amount:.....\$249,900

Restore degraded sagebrush-steppe habitat and enhance mesic resources on the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe Reservation to support pronghorn and mule deer within the regional landscape. Project will improve forage availability, habitat function and wildlife permeability through herbicide and native seed application treatments, and targeted fence improvements informed by Tribal monitoring and regional data.

Scaling Virtual Fencing to Improve Wildlife Connectivity in Gilliam County (OR)

Grantee: Sustainable Northwest

Grant Amount:.....\$114,500

Matching Funds:.....\$115,000

Total Project Amount:.....\$229,500

Expand virtual fencing and adaptive grazing systems across eight ranches in Gilliam County to benefit mule deer, pronghorn and elk within priority movement corridors. Project will improve habitat connectivity, increase drought resilience and expand wildlife compatible grazing practices across working lands.

Removing Barriers and Restoring Habitat for Big Game in Central Oregon

Grantee: Crook County Soil and Water Conservation District

Grant Amount:.....\$497,400

Matching Funds:.....\$605,600

Total Project Amount:.....\$1,103,000

Improve big-game habitat and migration corridors in central Oregon by treating 3,000 acres of invasive plants and removing 5 miles of fencing. Project will restore habitat function and increase connectivity for mule deer, elk and pronghorn.

Sagebrush Steppe Restoration in Southern Utah

Grantee: Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Grant Amount:.....\$1,994,900

Matching Funds:.....\$221,800

Total Project Amount:.....\$2,216,700

Restore critical sagebrush-steppe and riparian habitats across southern Utah watersheds using mechanical mastication, lop-and-scatter conifer removal and seeding to benefit mule deer, elk and greater sage-grouse. Project will improve 6,025 acres of winter range and migration corridors, enhance stream water quality by reducing sedimentation and increase landscape resilience against catastrophic wildfires.

Improve Mule Deer Habitat in Wyoming through Collaboration

Grantee: Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount:.....\$1,960,000

Matching Funds:.....\$218,000

Total Project Amount:.....\$2,178,000

Improve migration and winter range habitat within the Baggs, Bates Hole, Dubois, Sublette and Wyoming Range mule deer herds. Project will implement 9,760 acres of invasive weed treatments, modify 66 miles of fences and restore 1,060 acres of public land within big-game migration corridors to improve forage resources and connectivity within crucial seasonal mule deer ranges.

Enhancing Wyoming's Mule Deer Herds Migrations with Targeted Habitat Improvements

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Amount:.....\$405,000

Matching Funds:.....\$405,500

Total Project Amount:.....\$810,500

Implement annual invasive grass treatments, wildlife-friendly fencing and targeted assessments across priority migration corridors in Wyoming, including areas along the I-80 corridor, to benefit mule deer and other big-game species. Project will reduce barriers to movement, improve habitat quality and connectivity, and support long term migration function for mule deer and other wildlife across priority routes.