

NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is dedicated to sustaining, restoring and enhancing the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations.

NFWF will advance its mission through innovative public and private partnerships, and by investing financial resources and intellectual capital into science-based programs designed to address conservation priorities and achieve measurable outcomes.



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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As we look back on a successful year, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Board of Directors, staff, grantee organizations, donors and many federal and corporate funding partners can be very proud of our collective conservation accomplishments.

Throughout 2017, NFWF's innovative public-private partnerships supported numerous science-based conservation grant programs that generated measurable results for wildlife and people.

NFWF funded more than 730 conservation projects across the nation, generating more than \$693 million in conservation impact. The year's strong performance pushed the Foundation's cumulative conservation impact to more than \$4.8 billion since its founding in 1984.



Edwin R. "Rod" Rodriguez, Jr.
and Elizabeth Rodriguez

and marine environments can better support an array of birds, sea turtles, fish, crustaceans and marine mammals.

Communities and businesses also reap the benefits of NFWF conservation investments. Ranchers sustain their livelihoods by conserving the landscapes needed to raise cattle. Farmers make more efficient use of their lands while protecting waterways from pollution. Small businesses, schools and churches better control urban runoff in critical watersheds. And across the country, natural landscapes made stronger and healthier through NFWF grants provide greater resilience to catastrophic wildfires, hurricanes, droughts and floods.

All of us at NFWF look forward to continuing this great work in 2018. We hope you enjoy learning about those efforts through the projects highlighted in this report.

Edwin R. Rodriguez

Edwin R. "Rod" Rodriguez, Jr.
CHAIRMAN, NFWF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NFWF and its many partners complement and support the work of federal and state agencies charged with managing and conserving our nation's incredible natural resources. These same programs also provide vital support to many of the country's conservation organizations, including some of the largest as well as the smallest, so they can do what they do best: Implement on-the-ground conservation.

The benefits of our work can be seen throughout the United States. NFWF projects have opened up miles of habitat so that more pronghorn, elk and mule deer can complete epic migrations across the American West. Fish such as brook trout, cutthroat trout and salmon live in higher-quality streams across the country. Coastal



Snowy egret in
breeding plumage



Pronghorn

NFWF'S RESULTS

NFWF leverages funding from federal agencies to spur private investment in innovative partnerships that restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. The Foundation uses its industry-leading competitive grant program to support conservation efforts focused on species and habitats, water quality and quantity, and engaging people in conservation.

In FY 2017, NFWF awarded \$111.1 million in federal funds, \$277,674 in other public funds and \$33.9 million in private contributions. These investments drew more than \$138 million in matching support from grantees. The Foundation also awarded \$409 million in Impact-Directed Environmental Account funds, including \$390 million from the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, which was created to benefit species and habitats impacted by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.



INTRODUCTION

HOW NFWF WORKS

Since its creation by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has grown to become the nation's largest private conservation grant-maker, supporting more than 16,500 projects and generating a total conservation impact of more than \$4.8 billion.

The Foundation works with both the public and private sectors to protect and restore the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF matches private dollars with public funds and uses science-based conservation and competitive grant programs to direct those resources to projects that produce the greatest measurable results for wildlife.

The Foundation neither advocates nor litigates, but instead focuses on bringing all parties to the table for conservation, from government agencies and corporations to private landowners, nonprofits, ranchers, farmers, volunteers, hunters and anglers.

NFWF is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization led by a Board of Directors approved by the Secretary of the Interior. The Foundation does not rely on membership-based fundraising efforts, allowing its staff of conservation experts, scientists and grant managers to remain sharply focused on the science and practice of conservation. This unique structure also results in remarkably low operational overhead: 96 cents of every dollar support conservation programs.

A transparent and nonpartisan organization, NFWF has earned an unparalleled reputation as a trusted, neutral and effective collaborator that can unite people around the common cause of conserving and enhancing the incredible natural resources of the United States.

The public-private partnerships established and supported by the Foundation have fueled some of the most effective conservation efforts in the history of the United States. Long-term initiatives with major partners such as Walmart and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have conserved and enhanced wildlife populations and habitats across vast landscapes and watersheds in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

The Foundation also plays a leading role in helping wildlife, habitats and communities quickly recover from and be more resilient to natural and man-made disasters, from hurricanes to wildfires and oil spills.

Projects supported by NFWF unfold every day across the United States, on private and public lands, and in rural and urban areas. These projects are carried out by some of the nation's largest conservation organizations, as well as some of its smallest. Every project has a unique story, and every project benefits the nation's natural resources.

This report shares just a few of the remarkable conservation stories of 2017.

REAL RESULTS FOR WILDLIFE

NFWF invests in efforts and organizations that move the needle for conservation and generate real-world benefits for wildlife. With a focus on measurable results, NFWF implements landscape-scale programs such as the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, which has awarded grants to more than 1,200 projects that help communities restore polluted rivers and streams. These projects have reduced annual nitrogen and phosphorous pollution by nearly 25 million pounds, contributing to the recent comeback of the bay and its iconic wildlife. The fund represents a partnership between NFWF and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Altria Group, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Forest Service, CSX, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Striped bass and
blue crab in the
Chesapeake Bay

Red salamander



Prairie warbler



CONSERVING RICH ECOSYSTEMS

Launched in 2017, NFWF's Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program invests in projects to conserve and restore forest and freshwater habitats in the Central Appalachian-Allegheny Plateau landscape, home to a rich and colorful collection of birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. The program awarded \$1.7 million in its first round of grant-making.

FORMER ADVANCE OF ICE SHEET

FOOTPRINT OF NEW CONSERVATION PROGRAM

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

CONSERVING DIVERSITY OF SPECIES

By the end of the last ice age, the polar ice sheet had advanced south of what is now the Great Lakes, killing off species and obliterating habitats along the way. The Appalachian Mountains stopped the ice cold.

It was here, at the Central Appalachian-Allegheny Plateau, that a remarkably diverse assemblage of freshwater fish, mussels and amphibians survived. Many of these ancient and highly specialized animals still dwell there, making the mountains of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland and Virginia a globally important center of freshwater biodiversity.

The high ridges and valleys snaking through these mountains provide year-round homes and migratory stopover points for many colorful creatures, from candy darters and eastern brook trout to golden-winged and cerulean warblers. Some river systems hold more than 40 species of freshwater mussels, fascinating organisms that employ a variety of techniques to trick fish into dispersing their young.

"To sustain the incredible biodiversity of the Central Appalachian region, you need healthy forests and cold, clean freshwater flows."

— Christine Cadigan, American Forest Foundation

forest floor, using neither lungs nor gills to breathe: They simply breathe through their skin.

These amazing creatures face an uncertain future. Urban development, energy exploration, extractive industries, agriculture and other stressors have fragmented and degraded forests. Runoff and the loss of natural filtering systems have impaired the capacity of streams and rivers to sustain aquatic life, while dams and failing culverts have isolated fish and salamander populations.

In 2017, NFWF launched a new, landscape-scale program designed to bring together public and private partners to improve forest and aquatic habitats in this still-vibrant and productive region. The Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program awarded \$1.7 million in its first year, providing landowners, local governments and nonprofits resources to balance the needs of the people and wildlife who call those mountains home.

"To sustain the incredible biodiversity of the Central Appalachian region, you need healthy forests and cold, clean freshwater flows," said Christine Cadigan, director of Northeastern woodland conservation for the American Forest Foundation. "No one agency or nonprofit can operate at the scale needed and across public, corporate and family-land ownership to protect the incredible biodiversity across this region. That's why collaborative programs such as this are so important."

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION, RICHARD KING MELLON FOUNDATION, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, U.S. FOREST SERVICE, USDA'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Texas horned lizard,
an iconic species of the
Pecos River watershed



SCALING UP CONSERVATION

NFWF supports large-scale conservation efforts by organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited, as well as those conducted by state natural resource agencies and Native American tribes. Investments made at this scale pay enormous dividends for a diversity of wildlife and bolster resilience for communities across the country. The new Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative, a partnership with Anadarko Petroleum, Chevron, Noble Energy, Occidental Petroleum, Shell Oil Company, XTO Energy and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, is one of many NFWF programs making investments at a landscape scale.

Eastern indigo snake



REINTRODUCING EASTERN INDIGO SNAKES

Deborah Bur of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission releases an eastern indigo snake at The Nature Conservancy's Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve in Florida. The reintroduction of the species in the Panhandle of Florida followed years of restoration efforts focused on longleaf pine forests.

EASTERN INDIGO'S CURRENT RANGE
● 2017 RELEASE SITE

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

EASTERN INDIGO SNAKES RETURN TO FORESTS

The eastern indigo snake owes its scientific name, *Drymarchon couperi*, to a Greek phrase meaning “lord of the forest.” It’s a fitting description.

These majestic reptiles sport jet-black scales that shine with a blue iridescence. They grow to more than 9 feet in length, making them North America’s longest native snake. Indigos are nonvenomous, posing no threat to people, but they will take on just about any potential prey they run across, including venomous rattlesnakes and copperheads.

Indigos once flourished throughout the longleaf pine forests of Florida, Georgia, Alabama and eastern Mississippi, but their numbers have fallen so low that the species is listed as “threatened” under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

But now, thanks in large part to decades of conservation efforts focused on the longleaf pine ecosystem in Southern states, the eastern indigo seems poised to once again rule the piney woods.

“Reintroducing these snakes could only have happened after years of efforts to restore these areas back to health.”

— David Printiss, The Nature Conservancy

due to habitat loss and fragmentation, the indigo was last observed at the preserve in 1982.

The release of the reptiles, which were raised at Central Florida Zoo's Orianne Center for Indigo Conservation, represents a significant milestone in NFWF's 14-year history of support for longleaf conservation on public and private lands. The Foundation has invested more than \$2.6 million into efforts to restore and enhance longleaf forests in and around the preserve. NFWF also directly supports the 10-year effort to reintroduce eastern indigos to northern Florida.

“You can’t have indigos without first providing a home and plenty of groceries to eat,” David Printiss of the North Florida Program of The Nature Conservancy said. “This is one of the reasons we are so proud of this project; reintroducing these snakes could only have happened after years of efforts to restore these areas back to health.”

NFWF marked another important milestone in 2017, surpassing 1 million acres of longleaf restored, enhanced or protected through its Longleaf Stewardship Fund and related programs. Since 2012, the fund has invested more than \$24.1 million in projects to support the restoration of the longleaf ecosystem throughout the South.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS ALTRIA GROUP, INTERNATIONAL PAPER'S FORESTLAND STEWARDS PARTNERSHIP, SOUTHERN COMPANY, AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION, THE MOORE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, U.S. FOREST SERVICE, USDA'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

WORKING LANDS

Many of the investments made by NFWF support conservation on private lands, including “working lands” such as farms, ranches, energy extraction sites and timber operations. Grants awarded to organizations such as Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust, Saginaw Conservation District and The Longleaf Alliance ensure that the interests of the business and conservation communities remain tightly aligned. The grasslands found on this ranch in Arizona were protected through a conservation easement purchased by The Trust for Public Land and supported by Acres for America, a program launched by NFWF and Walmart in 2005.



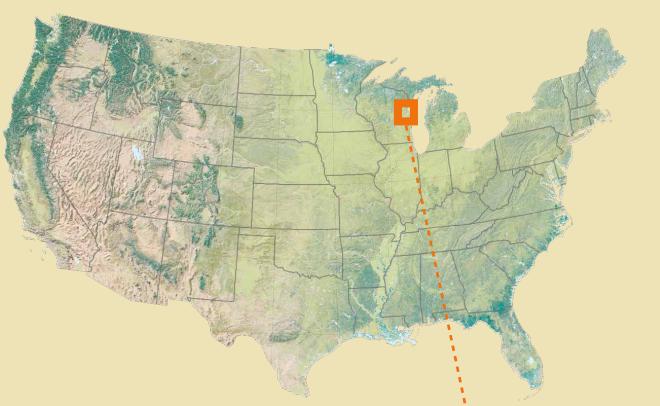
Lake sturgeon
in a river near
the Great Lakes



Sorting tank on the
Menominee River

CONNECTING WATERWAYS FOR LAKE STURGEON

Lake sturgeon must travel up rivers to spawn in relatively shallow, gravelly areas. NFWF supports a project on the Michigan-Wisconsin border to give sturgeon the ability to pass through or around a set of hydroelectric dams. During one stage of the process, selected fish pass upstream via a fish elevator and sorting tank at the dam.



● HYDROELECTRIC
FACILITIES ON THE
MENOMINEE RIVER

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

HELPING ANCIENT FISH SURVIVE IN MODERN TIMES

Few freshwater fish capture the imagination quite like lake sturgeon. These armor-plated giants belong to a family of fish that dates back to the time of the dinosaurs, 135 million years ago. Lake sturgeon can grow up to 9 feet long, and females can live to be 150 years old.

Such ancient fish may seem like the ultimate survivors, but a confluence of modern challenges, including overfishing, poor water quality and barriers to movement, have led to dramatic declines in the abundance of lake sturgeon. Once common throughout the central United States, these fish are now listed as either threatened or endangered by 19 of the 20 states within its original U.S. range.

Efforts to save the species have surged in recent decades, due in large part to public fascination with the fish and innovative new partnerships. One prime example of such collaboration can be found on the Menominee River, which forms part of the Michigan-Wisconsin border. In 2017, the River Alliance of Wisconsin, a private hydroelectric dam operator, and multiple state and federal agencies marked the completion of a project to ensure lake sturgeon could safely pass through or around two large dams.

"By working with a private hydro-operator and state and federal agencies, we've been able to add an additional 20 miles of spawning habitat for these fish."

— Sharon White, River Alliance of Wisconsin

to go to spawn. Before this project, sturgeon could only get a mile upstream. By working with a private hydro-operator and state and federal agencies, we've been able to add an additional 20 miles of spawning habitat for these fish."

The multiphase project, which was partly funded by two NFWF grants totaling \$4.3 million, includes a fish elevator and sorting tank to choose the best adult sturgeon to transport upstream to spawn. Other improvements keep juvenile sturgeon from being sucked into the dam's turbines on their way downstream to Lake Michigan.

This single project is expected to help increase the population of adult sturgeon in the lake by an estimated 600 percent.

NFWF supported the Menominee River project through its Sustain Our Great Lakes program, which is designed to improve the ecological health of the Great Lakes basin. In addition to improving aquatic connectivity, the program also improves shoreline habitats and wetlands, combats invasive species, reduces runoff and restores native vegetation.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS ARCELORMITTAL, NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, U.S. FOREST SERVICE, USDA'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE



PUBLIC ACCESS

NFWF's mission is clear: To sustain, restore and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. Ensuring that these generations enjoy access to the natural resources of the United States remains a key strategy to advancing this mission. By empowering conservation nonprofits, state wildlife management agencies and local communities across the country to conserve natural areas and open them up for public use, NFWF improves the quality of life for all Americans, and for generations to come.



CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

RESTORING THE GULF'S SHOREBIRDS AND SEABIRDS

It's been a tough couple of years for shorebirds and seabirds along the Gulf Coast.

In 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill degraded critical nesting sites, weakening already imperiled populations of birds. Since the spill, development, erosion and hurricanes have continued to chip away at these habitats and batter nesting sites.

But now, thanks to an historic new project in the Sunshine State, the birds are getting a boost.

In fiscal year 2017, NFWF awarded \$11.3 million to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Audubon Florida to fund a four-year project focused on shorebirds and seabirds along Florida's Gulf Coast. The project aims to increase the breeding populations of American oystercatchers, black skimmers, least terns, Wilson's plovers and snowy plovers.

"Shorebirds and seabirds depend on Florida's beautiful beaches and coastal habitats for survival, and they nest in the same areas that are highly sought after for development and tourism," said Janell Brush, avian research biologist at the commission.

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— Janell Brush, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

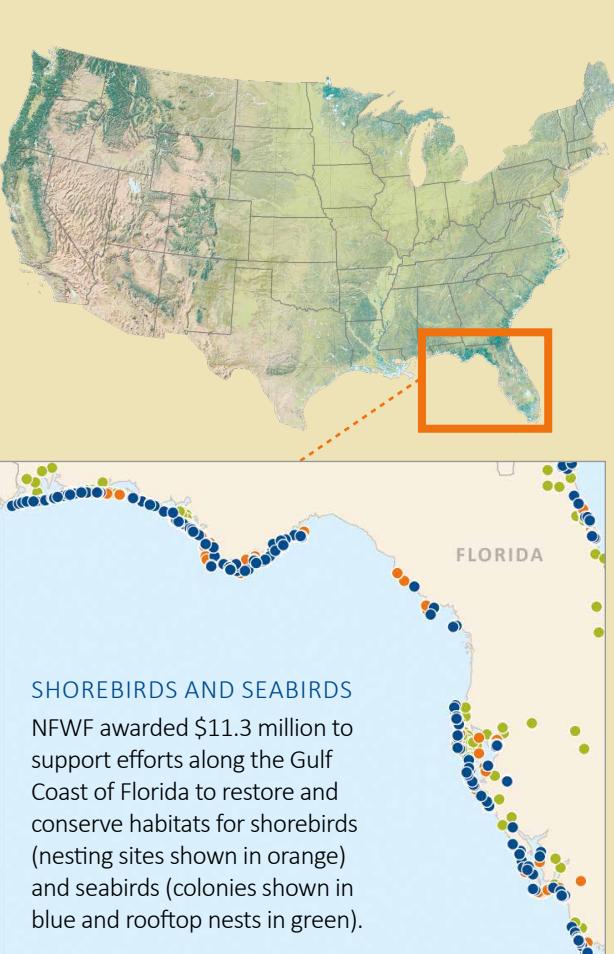
"Depending on the coastal environment makes them extremely vulnerable to storms, disturbances by people and pets, and also to a suite of predators."

NFWF's grant, administered through its Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF), will pay for critical equipment and technologies needed to monitor, manage, protect and conserve breeding populations, as well as to identify and manage the greatest threats. The grant will enable the state and its partners to conduct habitat improvement projects, control predators and human disturbances at nesting sites, and expand the Florida Shorebird Database.

The grant also supports efforts by Audubon Florida and its enormous network of volunteers, including "stewards" who chaperone nesting sites and educate beachgoers to ensure compliance with posted areas.

"Florida hosts millions of tourists each year, and the unique shorebirds and seabirds encountered on the beach are part of the draw to Florida's dynamic coastal systems," said Shea Armstrong, the commission's shorebird partnership coordinator. "Audubon Florida's Beach Steward program is critical for consistently educating people about beach-dependent birds, and how to support the birds in raising their next generation."

Throughout 2017, the GEBF continued to support and guide landscape-scale recovery and restoration projects across the five states directly affected by the oil spill: Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The fund approved nearly \$390 million for conservation and restoration projects in 2017, and the GEBF's total cumulative investments since its creation in 2013 are rapidly approaching \$1 billion.

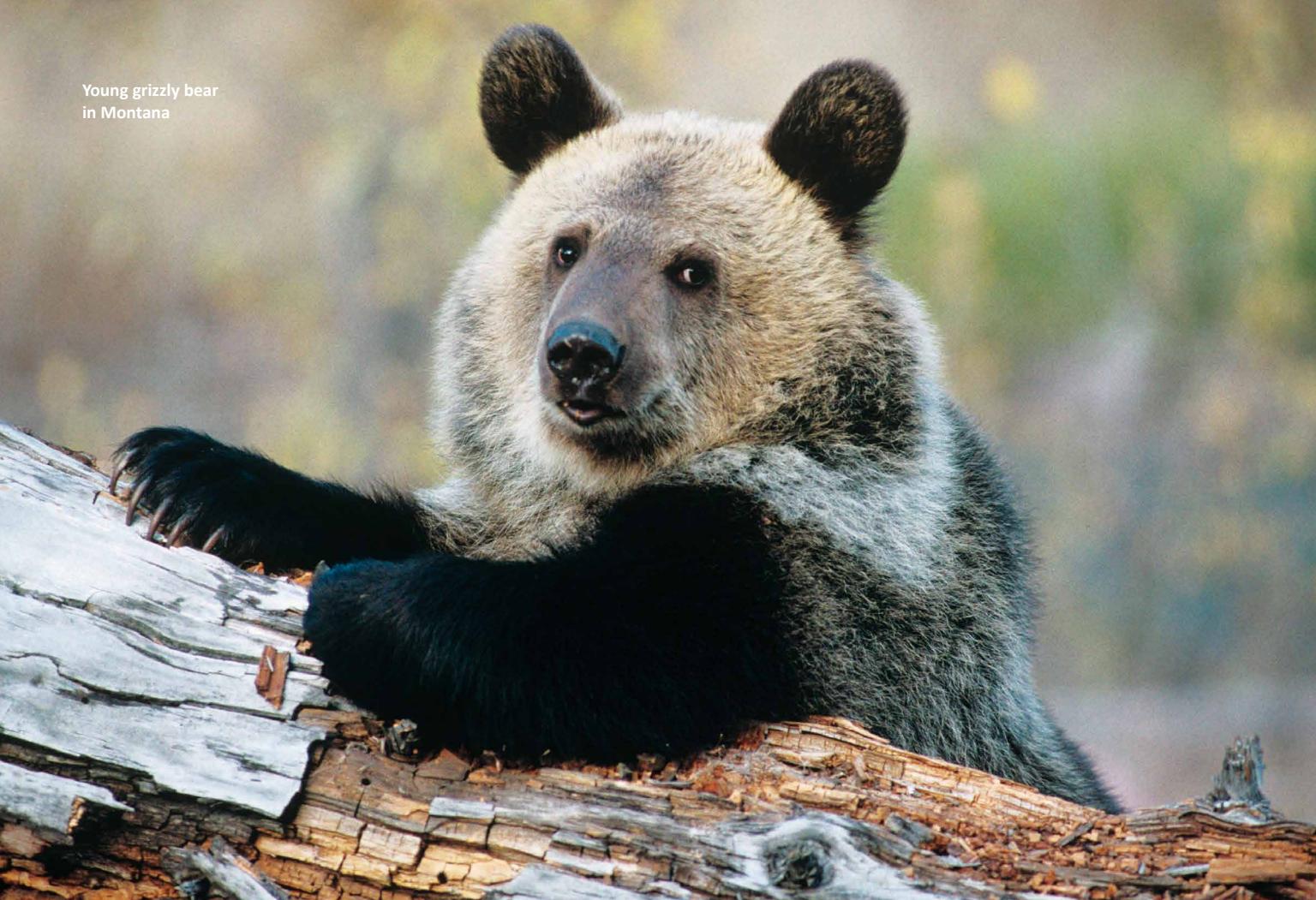




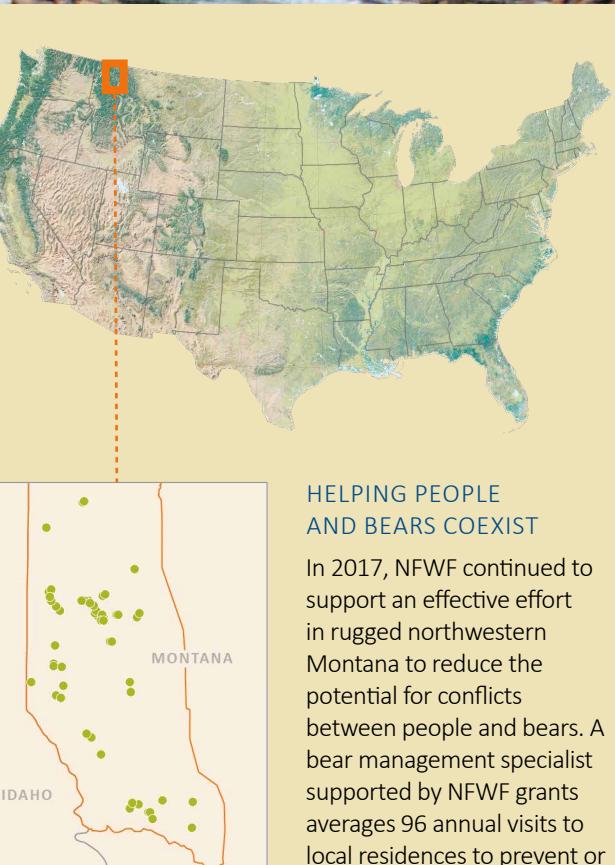
FRESHWATER FLOWS

Demand for freshwater continues to grow across the United States, putting unprecedented pressure on streams already degraded by a host of factors. NFWF supports the critical work of organizations such as Trout Unlimited, The Freshwater Trust, American Rivers and water conservation districts across the West to lease or purchase water rights from willing sellers to keep water in-stream to benefit fish and wildlife. These same organizations work to improve water quality through the restoration of wetlands, rivers and floodplain habitats. Such efforts directly benefit many imperiled species of fish, including these threatened bull trout in the Pacific Northwest.

Young grizzly bear
in Montana



Studying grizzlies
in Montana



● SITE VISITS BY
BEAR SPECIALIST

HELPING PEOPLE AND BEARS COEXIST

In 2017, NFWF continued to support an effective effort in rugged northwestern Montana to reduce the potential for conflicts between people and bears. A bear management specialist supported by NFWF grants averages 96 annual visits to local residences to prevent or resolve conflicts that could lead to bear removals or fatalities.

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

PREVENTING CONFLICTS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND BEARS

In the mountains of northwestern Montana, dealing with grizzly bears often requires a personal touch.

Sometimes the bears need to be trapped, moved and tracked. And sometimes, people need one-on-one attention, too. Residents need to bear-proof their trash and install electrified fencing around chicken coops, fruit trees and livestock pens. Hikers, mountain bikers and hunters need to be able to identify grizzly bears, understand their behaviors and take action to avoid risky encounters.

In the Cabinet-Yaak region of Montana, many of these tasks fall to Kim Annis, a bear management specialist with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. An expert on carnivore ecology and human-wildlife conflict management, Annis has been working since 2007 to keep the peace between grizzlies and people in this rugged region of the Northern Rocky Mountains.

"I help people understand how they can secure the things that attract bears to avoid a conflict," Annis said. "People and bears can amicably coexist. The key to helping recover this grizzly bear population and get them off the Endangered Species list is to work side-by-side with residents."

"People and bears can amicably coexist. The key to helping recover this grizzly bear population and get them off the Endangered Species list is to work side-by-side with residents."

— Kim Annis, Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

The program, which has been supported by NFWF for 10 years and received a \$50,000 grant award in 2017, is showing strong signs of success. Over the past decade, Annis averaged 96 annual visits to local residences to prevent a human-bear interaction from occurring or to resolve one that had already begun. Since her position was established in 2007, there have been no known human-caused grizzly bear mortalities due to human-related food attractants within the project's boundaries.

NFWF supports Annis' work through its Northern Rockies: Great Migrations and Crucial Corridors Program, which focuses on restoring and enhancing habitats and connecting landscapes for some of America's most spectacular animals.

For bears, this includes not only helping them avoid conflicts with humans but also giving them the space they need to move through the seasons and complete their life cycles.

Other efforts supported by the landscape-scale program focus on helping mule deer and pronghorn complete long-distance migrations across a patchwork of public and private lands. These animals often must run a gauntlet of fencing, highways, energy extraction sites and residential developments.

NFWF works with a coalition of public and private partners to target the most critical bottlenecks and key linkages in these migrations, ensuring the survival of some of the country's most iconic wildlife.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS BNSF RAILWAY, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, U.S. FOREST SERVICE



WHEN DISASTERS STRIKE

Federal agencies and nonprofits rely on NFWF to be a nimble and fast-moving partner following man-made and natural disasters. Crucial work to help wildlife and habitats recover from catastrophic events continued in 2017, with NFWF awarding more than \$390 million to projects benefiting wildlife and habitats harmed by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and \$7.1 million to projects focused on wildfires in Western forests. NFWF also quickly launched new efforts to address white-nose syndrome in bats and to help wildlife recover from hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. In Puerto Rico, NFWF worked quickly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to bring emergency supplies to damaged aviaries sheltering some of the world's few remaining Puerto Rican parrots, a critically endangered species.

Puerto Rican parrot

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

RESTORING LAND AND WATER FOR WILDLIFE

Many of the most important conservation projects in America today are unfolding on private lands.

Some projects help families permanently protect natural areas while retaining ownership. Others help farmers more efficiently use fertilizer, or provide timber owners with the resources and expertise needed to restore areas damaged by wildfires. Sometimes an opportunity arises when a property is no longer needed for a particular business purpose, and that land can be returned to nature.

Such was the case in Carmel, California last year, when a coalition of conservation partners jumped at the chance to acquire and restore 190 acres of a 36-hole golf course along the Carmel River, including 40 acres of primary floodplain and native streamside forest.

Over the past few generations, the land had evolved from a natural setting to being part of a dairy operation, then later a golf course. The spectacular property provides an opportunity to enhance habitat and water quality for a number of imperiled species, including California red-legged frogs, tricolored blackbirds and South-Central/Southern California Coast steelhead trout.

“Private lands are the linchpin to conservation efforts across the nation, and especially here in California. NFWF’s support helps us move quickly and decisively when all the pieces fall into place.”

— Guillermo Rodriguez, The Trust for Public Land

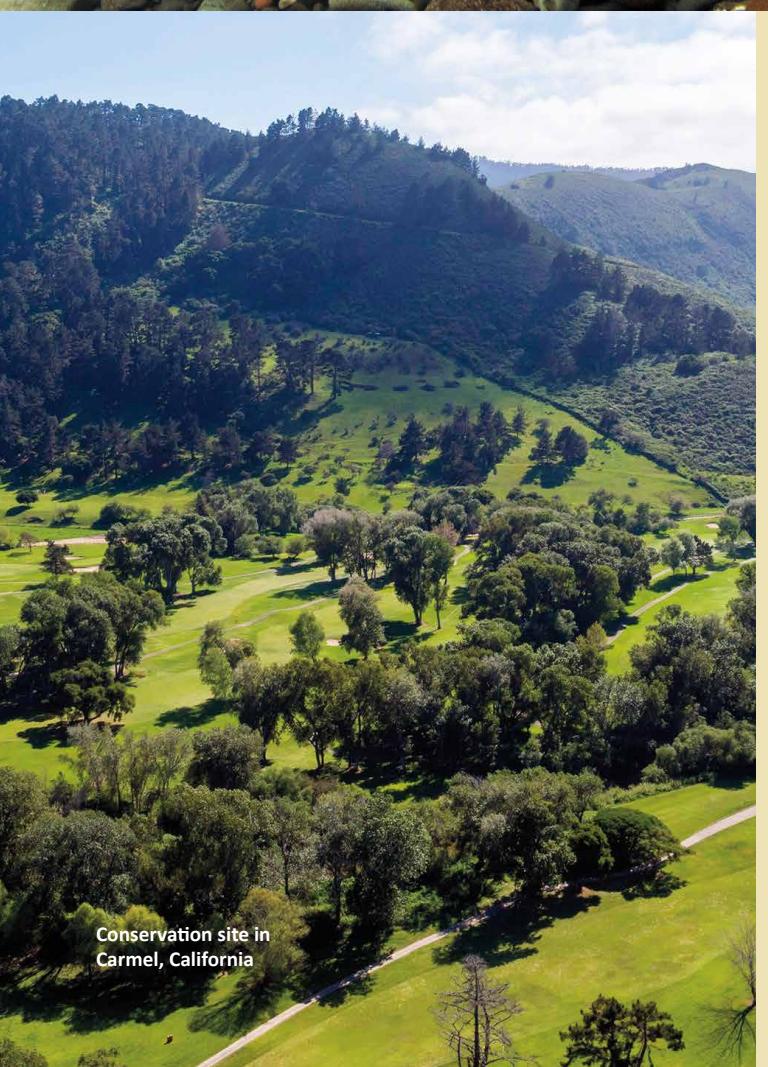
Now, thanks to an effort led by The Trust for Public Land, the property and its associated water will be returned to nature. In 2017, NFWF awarded a \$200,000 grant to the organization to be used toward the expected \$10 million cost of acquiring the property, a sum reached through the support and collaboration of about a half-dozen private and public sources.

The acquisition will allow the retirement of nearly all water diversion from the golf course, which had reached a peak of about 550 acre-feet per year, the amount used annually by approximately 1,500 households.

“Private lands are the linchpin to conservation efforts across the nation, and especially here in California,” said Guillermo Rodriguez, California state director for The Trust for Public Land. “NFWF’s support helps us move quickly and decisively when all the pieces fall into place, when we have willing landowners who want to support conservation and the chance to protect and restore ecologically important landscapes and freshwater flows.”

The restored property will augment a network of protected land stretching 150 miles from Carmel to San Luis Obispo, providing a critical north-south corridor for wildlife movement. Ownership will be transferred to the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, providing a suite of community benefits, including access to the river and the adjacent Palo Corona Regional Park. Project partners also have plans to engage people in conservation through an outdoor classroom and environmental education programs for visitors and school groups. What’s more, the restored property will absorb water when the river runs high, protecting downstream communities from flooding.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNER ISHIYAMA FOUNDATION



WILLING PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION

A coalition of partners in California worked with a willing landowner to restore natural habitats on a former golf course and open that land up for public recreation. The project also will return precious freshwater to the Carmel River, benefiting an endangered population of steelhead.



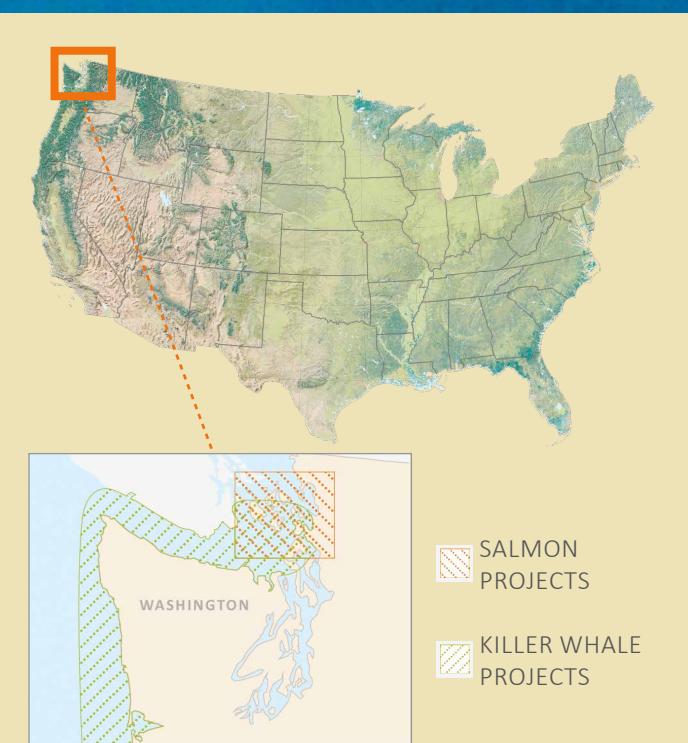
ENGAGING PEOPLE

Projects that engage people in conservation put more boots on the ground for wildlife, generate jobs in rural areas and boost grass-roots support for such efforts in communities across the country. Throughout 2017, NFWF awarded grants that provide volunteer opportunities or paying jobs for young people, college students, military veterans, Native Americans, researchers and wildlife management professionals. These grants support a wide range of conservation organizations, including the Student Conservation Association, National Wildlife Refuge System friend organizations and youth corps associations.

An adult female Southern Resident killer whale nursing her calf in waters off Washington state



Researchers using a drone to study the health of killer whales



MULTIFACETED EFFORT TO SUPPORT KILLER WHALES
NFWF's Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program supports efforts to advance the knowledge and conservation of killer whales by increasing the availability of salmon, improving habitat for killer whales and strengthening management through game-changing research.

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT



FIGHTING TO SAVE AN ICONIC SPECIES

Killer whales carry more toxins in their bodies than almost any other animal on the planet.

These highly efficient hunters sit atop complex marine food webs. Through a lifetime of eating fish with very small amounts of contaminants, killer whales accumulate these dangerous man-made chemicals in their internal organs and blubber.

Scientists call this "biomagnification," and they have noted a particularly distressing effect on killer whales and other marine mammals: Mothers pass these toxins along to their young during pregnancy and nursing.

Researchers suspect this dynamic might be one factor suppressing the reproductive success of the approximately 80 remaining Southern Resident killer whales inhabiting Washington's Puget Sound. These highly endangered animals feed primarily on Chinook salmon that, in turn, feed on other organisms that are contaminated by toxins in surrounding waters.

"The low number of observed births in this population is a serious barrier to recovery," said

Dr. Judy St. Leger of SeaWorld Entertainment.

"Managers need to better understand the factors driving this lower reproductive success in this population, compared to others. This type of research is critical to identifying the most effective actions we can take in the field to help these whales recover."

— Dr. Judy St. Leger, SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment

So how, exactly, does one study pregnant or nursing whales? In 2017, NFWF awarded a number of grants through the Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program to support creative, cutting-edge efforts to learn how to do just that.

Researchers from the University of Washington are using detection dogs on boats to locate and collect whale feces, which is scientifically valuable material that can provide insights on pregnancy, nutritional status and toxin loads in the whales. Scientists with the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre are collecting and analyzing skin and blubber biopsies and comparing that data to imagery of whales taken with cameras mounted on unmanned aerial vehicles. Another team from the National Marine Fisheries Service is studying killer whale mothers and calves at SeaWorld San Diego and San Antonio.

Supporting research projects such as these is just one focal area of the Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program. Other grants awarded in the program's first two years have supported on-the-ground work to bolster populations of Chinook salmon, including pollution control and habitat restoration in key salmon spawning and nursery habitats across the Pacific Northwest.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS SEAWORLD ENTERTAINMENT, SHELL OIL COMPANY, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



2017

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

(in millions of dollars, for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2017)

	2017	2016
REVENUE, EXPENSES AND NET ASSETS		
Total Revenue and Support	\$321.7	\$288.3
Total Expenses	\$301.6	\$279.1
Change in Net Assets	\$20.1	\$9.1
Net Assets, beginning of year	\$197.7	\$188.5
Net Assets, end of year	\$217.8	\$197.7

USE OF FUNDS

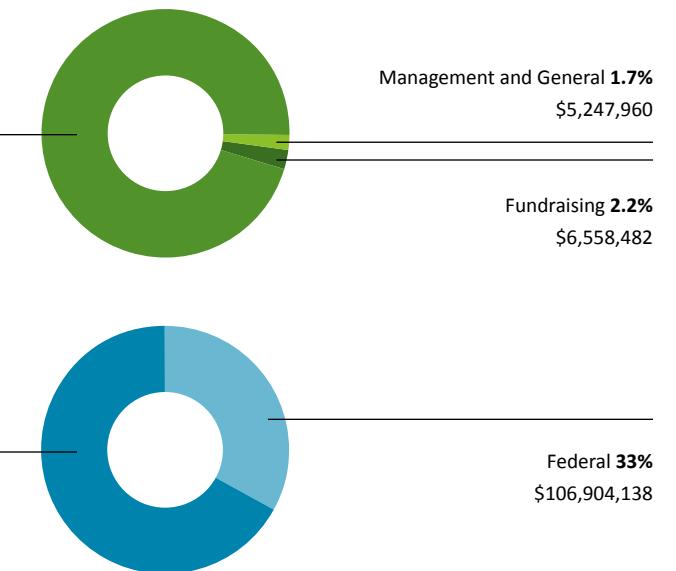
\$301,618,783

Program/Mission 96.1%
\$289,812,341

TOTAL REVENUE

\$321,733,850

Non-Federal/Other 67%
\$214,829,712



CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

(in millions of dollars, as of September 30, 2017)

	2017	2016
ASSETS		
Cash and Investments	\$1,955.3	\$1,553.0
Other Assets	\$48.8	\$25.4
Total Assets	\$2,004.1	\$1,578.4
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities	\$1,786.3	\$1,380.7
Net Assets	\$217.8	\$197.7
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,004.1	\$1,578.4



Hawaiian monk seal

CORPORATE PARTNERS



The **Alcoa Foundation**/NFWF Biodiversity Initiative, launched in 2013, is dedicated to strengthening communities by improving the health of rivers and protecting biodiversity in landscapes of mutual importance to Alcoa and NFWF. The program funds on-the-ground restoration projects that benefit fish and wildlife habitat and water quality, while contributing to broader community-based goals.



Through its Restoring America's Resources partnership with NFWF, **Altria** is helping to protect and restore some of the most important ecosystems in the nation, including the Chesapeake Bay, forests and rivers of the Southeast, and rivers of the Western United States. The partnership works to ensure clean and abundant water for people and wildlife through the restoration of rivers, streams and forests.



American Eagle Outfitters supports the employments of youth and veterans in conservation corps. This effort leverages a highly collaborative, public-private partnership of federal agencies, corporations and nonprofit groups dedicated to providing service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low-income and disadvantaged youth. This partnership protects, restores and enhances public and tribal lands and waters, as well as natural, cultural and historic resources. Most importantly, conservation corps help develop the next generation of skilled workers, conservation professionals and engaged citizens.



As a founding corporate partner of the Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative, **Anadarko Petroleum** is developing a new way to address conservation challenges in West Texas and Southeast New Mexico. The Pecos Watershed is a unique and extraordinary resource, and the growing group of corporate sponsors along with state and federal agencies are partnering with NFWF to ensure that the development of oil and natural gas resources goes hand in hand with protecting wildlife and improving the quality of life for local communities in the region.



Since 2007, **ArcelorMittal** has partnered with the NFWF to sustain, restore, and protect fish and wildlife habitat in the Great Lakes basin. ArcelorMittal's leadership and dedication to improving the ecological health and water quality of the Great Lakes helped create the Sustain Our Great Lakes program, a public-private partnership that has awarded more than \$67 million in grant funding to support stream, wetland and shoreline habitat restoration projects. Additionally, ArcelorMittal supports the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, a public-private partnership dedicated to restoring the health, vitality and accessibility of the waterways in the Chicago/Calumet region by awarding grants for green stormwater infrastructure, habitat enhancement and public-use improvements.



Through its partnership with NFWF, **Bass Pro Shops** and the Johnny Morris Foundation invest in conservation activities that restore, protect and enhance native populations of sensitive or endangered fish species and their habitats across the United States, especially in areas on or adjacent to federal agency lands.



From Chicago westward across the Great Plains and the Northern Rockies to Washington State, **BNSF Railway** supports a diverse set of NFWF programs. These programs strive to maintain the incredible wildlife of the Great Plains, secure wildlife migration corridors in the Rockies, and improve the health and vitality of urban waterways in the Chicago region. Funding directly supports community-based conservation projects that provide the ability for community leaders to protect and restore wildlife habitat, promote job creation, and contribute to the achievement of local economic goals.



human energy®

As a founding corporate partner of the Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative in 2017, **Chevron Corporation** is developing a new way to address conservation challenges in West Texas and Southeast New Mexico. The Pecos Watershed is a unique and extraordinary resource, and Chevron with other area operators and state and federal agencies are partnering with NFWF to ensure that the development of oil and natural gas resources goes hand in hand with protecting wildlife and improving the quality of life for local communities in the region.



Partners for 20 years, **ConocoPhillips** and NFWF launched the SPIRIT of Conservation Program in 2005 to help conserve critical species, migratory birds, and water resources across the United States and internationally. Currently the program supports new innovative tools and projects that significantly advance water and biodiversity stewardship efforts. In Alaska, ConocoPhillips also has partnered with NFWF since 2003 to support polar bear research and Cook Inlet beluga whale conservation projects.



Covanta, working with NFWF, NOAA and Schnitzer Steel Industries, provides a no-cost option for fishermen to dispose of old, derelict or unusable fishing gear through the Fishing for Energy program. The program also works with state and local agencies, community and industry groups, and local ports to foster solutions to prevent gear loss and to reduce the impact of derelict gear to marine habitats and wildlife. Collected gear is either recycled or converted into renewable electricity for local communities at Covanta's Energy-from-Waste facilities.



CSX works with NFWF to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, supporting projects to restore fish and wildlife habitat, reduce water pollution and engage the public in environmental stewardship activities. In 2013, CSX joined NFWF and the state of Maryland to implement the largest natural oyster reef restoration project ever undertaken in the Chesapeake Bay.



In partnership with NFWF and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, **Enbridge** supports the National Wildlife Refuge Friends Program, with a focus on Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Oklahoma and Texas. The National Wildlife Refuge Friends Program supports local organizations working to be effective co-stewards of important natural resources within the National Wildlife Refuge System. Since 1998, the program has provided over 459 awards totaling more than \$1.9 million in federal and corporate funding.



EverSource's Partners for New Hampshire's Fish and Wildlife is dedicated to restoring and sustaining healthy forests and rivers in New Hampshire. EverSource, through its subsidiary Northern Pass Transmission, has supported the efforts of a range of stakeholders — private landowners, government agencies, academic institutions and conservation groups — to cultivate science-based conservation strategies and cost-effective, on-the-ground projects that restore forest and freshwater habitat for New Hampshire's fish and wildlife.



FedEx works with NFWF in 18 U.S. cities to fund community-based conservation projects. With FedEx team member engagement, the projects restore watersheds, improve air quality, encourage environmental stewardship, and foster community environmental outreach and support.



International Paper and NFWF recently renewed their award-winning Forestland Stewards Partnership to identify, restore and protect landscapes in four priority regions in the United States: the Low Country Forests of North and South Carolina; the Cumberland Plateau of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee; the Piney Woods of Texas and Louisiana; and the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley stretching from Cairo, IL to the mouth of the Mississippi River. The goals are to protect and restore more than 300,000 acres of forests, strengthen populations of important fish and wildlife, and improve water quality, all within the context of working landscapes.



Monsanto is partnering with NFWF, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies to support the Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund. Established in 2015, the fund supports efforts to improve the quality, quantity and connectivity of pollinator habitat, with a focus on the monarch butterfly. In its first three years, the fund has focused on planting milkweed, securing seed supplies, and improving coordination and capacity to help reverse the population decline of this iconic species.



Occidental Petroleum

As a founding corporate partner of the Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative in 2017, **Occidental Petroleum** is developing a new way to address conservation challenges in West Texas and Southeast New Mexico. The Pecos Watershed is a unique and extraordinary resource, and the growing group of corporate sponsors along with state and federal agencies are partnering with NFWF to ensure that the development of oil and natural gas resources goes hand in hand with protecting wildlife and improving the quality of life for local communities in the region.



Since 1999, the **Pacific Gas and Electric Company** (PG&E) has partnered with NFWF on PG&E's Nature Restoration Trust program, to support riparian, coastal and wetland habitat restoration throughout California. This PG&E and NFWF collaborative partnership empowers local communities to care for native habitats and species and engage youth in hands-on enhancement, restoration and stewardship projects.



Phillips 66 is partnering with NFWF to fund local, community-based habitat projects. The partnership has funded coastal restoration, invasive species and native grassland restoration efforts.



SeaWorld Entertainment supports two initiatives at NFWF that focus on coastal and marine resources: the Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program and the Ocean Health Initiative. The Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program funds efforts to advance the knowledge and conservation of wild populations of killer whales with a primary focus on activities that aid in the recovery of the Southern Resident killer whale distinct population segment and the Northern Pacific Resident population. The Ocean Health Initiative works to build the capacity of marine mammal and sea turtle stranding response networks and improve access to information that can support conservation management and species recovery.



The Shell Marine & Wildlife Habitat Program is a partnership between **Shell Oil Company** and NFWF that supports conservation of priority habitats and species in the communities where Shell lives and operates. The program supports conservation and restoration activities that benefit key species, including bats and killer whales, and their habitats across the U.S. Since 1998, the partnership has funded over 270 projects, supporting the protection, restoration, and management of more than 155,000 acres of habitat, as well as the improved monitoring and management of key species in coastal ecosystems.



For 15 years, **Southern Company** has partnered with NFWF to support critical, long-term longleaf pine, riparian, coastal and wetland habitat restoration and the conservation and recovery of at-risk species characteristic of the South. In partnership with Southern Company's four electric utilities and growing renewable and natural gas units, grants are awarded to nonprofits, government agencies and academic institutions, which target both landscape-scale and community-based efforts focused primarily on Southern Company's operating area in Georgia, Alabama, the Florida panhandle and southeast Mississippi.



The Coca-Cola Foundation supports the Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists program, a highly collaborative partnership of federal agencies and nonprofit groups dedicated to providing service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low-income and disadvantaged youth. This partnership protects, restores and enhances public and tribal lands and waters, as well as natural, cultural and historic resources. Most importantly, conservation corps help develop the next generation of skilled workers, conservation professionals and engaged citizens.



Walmart and NFWF created Acres for America in 2005 to conserve lands of national significance; protect critical habitats for birds, fish, plants and wildlife; connect existing protected lands to unify wild places and protect migration routes; provide access for people to enjoy the outdoors; and help ensure the future of local economies that depend on forestry, ranching and recreation. Since its inception, the Acres for America program has protected more than 1.3 million acres by funding 81 projects in 35 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.



The **Wells Fargo** Resilient Communities grant program launched in 2017 as part of Wells Fargo's commitment to prepare for future environmental challenges by enhancing community capacity to plan and implement resilience projects. The grant program is designed to support projects that focus on floods and droughts, forest health concerns and sea-level rise. The program emphasizes community inclusion and assistance to traditionally underserved populations in vulnerable areas through investments in adaptation and community capacity.



In FY 2017, Acres for America, a collaboration between NFWF and Walmart, supported an effort to reintroduce elk to West Virginia. About two dozen elk, including this magnificent bull, were released on a former coal mining property that had been restored. The new herd already has produced its first calves, and state wildlife managers were planning to reintroduce even more elk to the area in 2018.



Desert bighorn sheep

FEDERAL PARTNERS

NFWF was established by Congress in 1984 to conserve fish, wildlife and plant species through innovative partnerships with federal agencies, corporations, foundations and nonprofit organizations in order to generate new resources for conservation.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's **Natural Resources Conservation Service** (NRCS) provides farmers, ranchers, foresters and other private working landowners the tools they need to restore and protect the productivity of their lands. NFWF partners with NRCS to support outreach, education and conservation technical assistance on farms and ranches in order to provide conservation benefits for wildlife, water quality and soil health while strengthening local economies. In 2017, the relationship significantly increased through an expanded Working Lands for Wildlife partnership and new agreements across the country with NRCS State offices. Focal geographies include the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay watersheds, and restoration within the longleaf pine, bottomland hardwood, Gulf Coast, Central Appalachia, Northeast forest, and Northern Great Plain landscapes.



NFWF partners with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's **U.S. Forest Service** (USFS), through both the National Forest System and the State and Private Forestry programs, across the country. The partnership supports restoration of priority USFS landscapes including the grasslands of the Northern Great Plains, longleaf pine forests of the Southeast, sagebrush ecosystems in the West and the forests of New England. NFWF also supports post-fire restoration on individual National Forests and targeted fuels management projects to protect critical habitat and infrastructure from being damaged by catastrophic wildfire. New in 2017 is a partnership to support family forest landowners as they work to improve the health and productivity of their lands in the Southeast.



NFWF, in partnership with the **U.S. Department of Defense** (DOD), is working to conserve, restore and manage the longleaf pine ecosystem throughout the Southeast. DOD supports longleaf restoration around military bases. Longleaf habitat supports the conservation of sensitive species off-base and creates important natural buffers around military bases. Together, these outcomes support military training and readiness goals.



The U.S. Congress formalized the partnership between the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** (NOAA) and

NFWF in 1994. Through this partnership, NOAA and NFWF work together to support marine and coastal conservation. Specific focal areas include coral reefs, marine debris removal, sustainable fisheries and improving the protection and resilience of coastal communities through natural infrastructure. NFWF also assists NOAA with the implementation of marine and coastal remediation, ensuring restoration is accomplished in a meaningful and timely manner.



NFWF supports efforts by the **U.S. Department of the Navy** and **U.S. Marine Corps** Installations East – Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune to manage longleaf pine habitat in coastal North Carolina. This longleaf pine habitat supports the recovery of the red-cockaded woodpecker and ensures the military mission is sustained and preserved over time. In 2017, the first two off-base restoration projects were initiated, helping Camp Lejeune fulfill its conservation commitments and supporting its training and readiness goals.



The **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** (FWS) has partnered with NFWF since the Foundation's establishment in 1984 to support our nation's fish and wildlife resources. FWS funding serves as the seed money to build new partnerships and attract private sector resources. The partnership supports landscapes throughout the country including the Great Lakes, Klamath Basin, Alaska's Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Central Appalachia and the Gulf of Mexico. The partnership also supports the migration of numerous species including mule deer, Atlantic shorebirds, monarch butterflies, sea turtles and Pacific seabirds. In 2017, NFWF worked with FWS to award the first slate of grants through the Bats for the Future Fund in order to combat white-nose syndrome and recover declining bat populations.



In partnership with the **Bonneville Power Administration** (BPA) and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, NFWF has supported an innovative, grassroots, incentive-based program to improve stream flows for imperiled fish throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. The Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (CBWTP), founded in 2002, is the first regional effort of its kind in the United States to enhance flows in tributaries through cooperative partnerships between flow restoration practitioners and farmers and ranchers. The program supports a combination of practices to restore instream flow to key Columbia Basin tributary reaches that support important anadromous and resident fish populations. In 2017, NFWF reorganized the CBWTP to become the Columbia Basin Program consistent with an effort to better align flow improvement investments with other priority habitat restoration efforts supported by private and public entities.



NFWF entered the second year of a partnership with the **U.S. Geological Survey** (USGS) in 2017, an effort focused on monarch butterfly recovery. The partnership supports research on monarch habitat restoration through NFWF's Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund. The knowledge gained from these projects will be used to ensure future monarch restoration efforts are even more efficient and effective at supporting the ultimate goal of increasing monarch butterfly populations.



The **Bureau of Land Management** (BLM) and NFWF partner to support conservation investments in the North Slope of Alaska, Northern Great Plains, Northern Rockies, and across western native trout habitats. Employment opportunities for youth to conduct restoration on BLM lands remains

an emphasis of the partnership. In 2017 NFWF worked with BLM and several energy companies on the development of a new Southwest Rivers program that will support watershed restoration efforts in New Mexico. NFWF also worked with the BLM Montana State office on a new partnership to help leverage Greater sage grouse investments throughout the state.

on the Middle Rio Grande watershed. NFWF and Reclamation will work with the local irrigation district and landowners to pilot voluntary water leasing and other innovative conservation solutions that support the needs of the farming and ranching community. NFWF is currently supporting Reclamation's coho salmon recovery goals in the Lower Klamath Basin through a grant program focused on improving flow and habitat in Northern California. In Western Nevada NFWF is working with the Walker Basin Conservancy under a Reclamation grant to restore and maintain Walker Lake while at the same time protecting agricultural interests and supporting new opportunities for public recreation in the Walker River Basin. Reclamation also supports a multiagency youth employment program that provides economic opportunities to youth through restoration of Reclamation lands and facilities.



The **Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) and NFWF partner to improve water quality through natural restoration activities. The partnership supports coordinated conservation activities across large watersheds in partnership with the states and other federal agencies. Partner programs include the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, Sustain Our Great Lakes program (in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Long Island Sound Futures Fund, and Five-Star and Urban Waters Restoration grant programs. Community engagement and support of projects that address local government priorities are core features of the partnership.

In 2017, NFWF also worked with the following agencies:

Marine Mammal Commission
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Coast Guard



In 2017 the **Bureau of Reclamation** (Reclamation) partnership with NFWF expanded to include the development of a new collaboration in New Mexico focused



2017 DONORS

In 2017, generous gifts from these donors furthered NFWF's actions to sustain and restore wildlife and their habitats. We greatly appreciate their support.

\$500,000+

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