



# FY 2015 FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR WILDLIFE

*Wildlife and its habitat are valuable national assets. Wildlife related recreation is a \$145 billion a year industry.<sup>i</sup> Moreover, protecting wildlife and its habitat also supports healthy natural systems that provide clean air and water, food, medicines, flood protection and more. The value of benefits provided by natural habitats in the 48 contiguous states in the U.S. is estimated at \$1.6 trillion per year.<sup>ii</sup>*

Despite this importance, wildlife and habitat conservation programs have endured draconian cuts since FY 2010. Defenders of Wildlife urges opposition to any further funding cuts in crucial programs that support wildlife and habitat conservation in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey. In addition, we support crucial but modest increases to certain budgets.



## **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

Cooperative Recovery – Defenders supports the President’s requested increases of \$1.5 million in Conservation and Restoration under Ecological Services and \$0.3 million under Migratory Bird Management. This initiative is supporting more efficient and strategic efforts across landscapes to recover threatened and endangered species on National Wildlife Refuges and surrounding lands.

Renewable Energy – Defenders supports the President’s requested increases of \$1.1 million in Planning and Consultation under Ecological Services to support approvals of renewable energy projects while ensuring they do not significantly harm wildlife and \$1.4 million under Service Science to assess potential impacts of energy transmission corridors on sensitive lands and wildlife in the West and to identify mitigation strategies.

Endangered Species – The President’s request includes a major restructuring of the Ecological Services Activity which includes the Endangered Species program. Defenders has some concerns about this proposal and is still evaluating it. We will have further information on our position regarding the restructuring itself soon. In the meantime, Defenders supports the requested increases for the endangered species portion of Ecological Services, \$21.7 million that includes:

- A \$4 million increase to support the unprecedented effort to conserve the greater sage-grouse and its sagebrush habitat.
- A \$2.3 million increase for listing species. This funding will support progress in listing approximately 145 candidate species, many of which have awaited Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection for years.
- An \$11.1 million increase to support the recovery of the more than 1,500 listed U.S. species so that ESA protection is no longer necessary.
- Defenders opposes a \$1 million reduction for the Wolf Livestock Loss Demonstration Program that assists livestock owners co-existing with wolves. We urge restoration of this funding.

Cooperative Landscape Conservation – The President’s request includes an increase of \$3.3 million that will support the continued development and work of the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives.

Science Support – The requested \$14.4 million increase will help to answer pressing questions about climate adaptation and other landscape level ecological changes as well as about energy development, White-Nose Syndrome that is devastating bat populations, and other agency management challenges.

National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) – The request includes a \$4.2 million increase which includes funding for Challenge Cost share projects with partners and volunteer groups and for law enforcement. Instead, Defenders supports an \$8 million increase over FY 2014 which is the minimal amount needed each year to keep up with operating costs such as fuel, utilities and rent.

Environmental Contaminants – Under Ecological Services, a \$1.2 million increase in Planning and Consultation will help to support the process for national consultations related to pesticide registrations and a \$2 million increase in Conservation and Restoration will help increase capacity to respond to impacts of contaminant releases.

Office of Law Enforcement – A \$2.5 million increase requested by the President will support wildlife science forensics and efforts to combat an unprecedented level of illegal trade in wildlife.

International Affairs – A \$1.1 million increase in the request will support local communities in reducing poaching of flagship species such as tigers, rhinoceros, and elephants.

### **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM)**

Sage Grouse – Continued full funding of the \$65.2 million request for the Wildlife and Fisheries Management program, a \$0.347 million increase, will support the greater sage grouse conservation initiative including revision of resource management plans, on-the-ground habitat restoration, and monitoring.

Threatened and Endangered Species Management – The BLM has funding to implement only about 10 percent of the work it is required to do in recovery plans for ESA listed species on BLM lands, but the request includes just a \$0.178 million increase. Instead, Defenders supports an increase of \$1 million over the request which simply restores the budget to the FY 2010 level and will better help move listed species to recovery.

Renewable Energy – Full funding of the \$29.2 million request, a \$0.171 million increase, will help BLM to move forward with renewable energy development on public lands while avoiding areas with natural resource conflicts, including conflicts with sensitive wildlife species.

Resource Management Planning – The \$5.2 million increase in the President's request is crucial to support priority planning efforts for vast areas of BLM lands, including maintaining the currency of resource management plans.

### **US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center/Climate Science Centers – An \$11.6 million increase in the request will support scientific needs in planning for climate change adaptation and building resiliency of ecosystems.

Ecosystems – A \$9.2 million increase in the request will help to support numerous research needs including declines in native pollinators and measures needed to avoid harming sensitive wildlife from renewable energy development.

### **FOREST SERVICE**

Wildlife and Fish Habitat Management – The budget has again proposed merging this and other accounts into an Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR) account. Defenders supports continuing IRR as a pilot so that the agency can demonstrate its ability to adequately protect habitat under the consolidated program. The Wildlife and Fish Habitat Management program should be funded at no less than the FY 2014 level of \$140.5 million.

### **LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF)**

Defenders supports the proposal in the request for full and permanent funding of LWCF that will help to save some of the 6,000 acres of open space, including wildlife habitat, that are lost each day in the U.S.

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/fhw11-nat.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> The Economics Associated with Outdoor Recreation, Natural Resources Conservation and Historic Preservation in the United States  
[www.nfwf.org/Content/ContentFolders/NationalFishandWildlifeFoundation/HomePage/ConservationSpotlights/TheEconomicValueofOutdoorRecreation.pdf](http://www.nfwf.org/Content/ContentFolders/NationalFishandWildlifeFoundation/HomePage/ConservationSpotlights/TheEconomicValueofOutdoorRecreation.pdf)