



Western Big-Game Migration Program

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PARTNERS

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- ConocoPhillips
- BNSF Railways
- Microsoft

ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 5,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$6.1 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org

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Pronghorn

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the Department of the Interior, ConocoPhillips and BNSF announced the 2021 round of funding for the "Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors" program. To conserve migration corridors and winter ranges for elk, mule deer and pronghorn, 16 new grants totaling \$4 million were awarded. The awards announced generated \$21.6 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$25.6 million.

The projects supported by the 16 grants announced today will enhance and improve habitats on winter ranges, stopover areas and migration corridors used by big game species, both on federal lands and private lands whose owners volunteer to participate in conservation efforts.

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

- Restoring degraded priority winter range, stopover areas and migration corridors by activities identified through state plans
- Working cooperatively with private landowners and state highway departments to improve fencing, including modifying, removing, installing if serving to direct big game movement out of harm's way, or seasonally adapting fencing if proven to impede movement of big game through priority migration corridors
- Implementing measures such as conservation easements and management agreements or other actions to protect bottle necks within corridors and other areas within priority winter range or stopover areas threatened by fragmentation
- Using other proven actions necessary to improve the habitat quality or restore priority big-game winter range stopover areas or migration corridors across the West

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

- Protecting 59,000 acres of private land from fragmentation through conservation easements
- Restoring 13,000 acres of public and private land through efforts such as invasive weed and conifer removal treatments
- Improving management on 108,000 acres of private and public working lands through efforts such as grazing and wildlife management plans
- Removing or improving 171 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly specifications, reducing direct mortality and increasing landscape connectivity
- Reconnecting 132 miles of migration corridors for big game species
- Reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions on US Highway 28 (ID) from 420 to 42 individuals annually

Employing Virtual Fencing Techniques to Preserve Wildlife Connectivity on Grazing Allotments (ID)

Grantee: Bureau of Land Management
 Grant Amount:\$89,500
 Matching Funds: \$769,950
 Total Project Amount: \$859,450
 Establish targeted grazing using new technology through the Vence System that manages cattle remotely using collars with GPS sensors, virtual fencing and a mobile tracking application on the Davis Grazing Allotment in Bliss, Idaho. Project will preserve migratory corridors, big game winter range habitat and conserve sage-grouse habitat by leaving these grazing allotment unfenced.



Mule deer

Restoring Pronghorn Habitat by Removing Invasive Juniper on Hat and Slate Mt. Grazing Allotments (AZ)

Grantee: Arizona Game and Fish Department
 Grant Amount: \$220,000
 Matching Funds: \$220,000
 Total Project Amount: \$440,000
 Remove encroaching juniper and pinyon pine trees from historic grassland areas to restore habitat for mule deer, pronghorn and elk through mastication utilizing a drum grinder mounted on a rubber-tired tractor. Project will restore more than 2,300 acres of habitat that serve as a critical migration link from winter to summer grounds for ungulates.

Restoring Big Game Winter Range by Removing Invasive Woody Vegetation (AZ)

Grantee: Arizona Game and Fish Department
 Grant Amount: \$100,000
 Matching Funds: \$100,000
 Total Project Amount: \$200,000
 Restore critical winter range and stopover habitat for mule deer and pronghorn in northern Arizona by mechanically masticating invasive woody vegetation from historic browse communities and grasslands. Project will reduce tree densities and restore 800 acres of grassland habitat.



Elk

Improving Big Game Connectivity by Removing Fences in Horse Prairie and Big Hole Valley (MT)

Grantee: National Wildlife Federation
 Grant Amount: \$165,981
 Matching Funds: \$167,000
 Total Project Amount: \$332,981
 Provide capacity for a Southwest Montana Fence Coordinator position to identify and implement fence modification projects and build collaborative partnerships to benefit wildlife and landowners. Project will update 16 miles of fence to wildlife friendly standards and improve connectivity through 100 miles of ungulate migration corridors.

Conserving Big Game Connectivity by Placing a Conservation Easement on Buffalo Horn Ranch (CO)

Grantee: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
 Grant Amount: \$150,000
 Matching Funds: \$3,592,034
 Total Project Amount: \$3,742,034
 Prevent development and conserve vital sagebrush, riparian and forestland habitat, as well as a migration corridor and pathway for two of Colorado’s largest migratory ungulate herds by placing a conservation easement on Buffalo Horn Ranch north of Meeker, Colorado. Project will permanently protect approximately 14,000 acres, protecting critical winter and transition range for elk and mule deer.

Improving Grasslands and Fences to Restore Habitat Connectivity for Pronghorn (NM)

Grantee: Carlsbad Soil and Water Conservation District
 Grant Amount: \$378,603
 Matching Funds: \$378,603
 Total Project Amount: \$757,206
 Restore grassland habitat by treating and removing invasive mesquite and creosote in the Indian Basin area of Eddy County in Southeast New Mexico to improve connectivity for pronghorn in the region. Project will remove invasives on more than 6,000 acres and remove or improve 10 miles of fencing.

Permanently Conserving Big Game Migration Corridors and Improving Public Access and Recreation (MT)

Grantee: The Trust for Public Land
 Grant Amount: \$400,000
 Matching Funds: \$11,253,000
 Total Project Amount: \$11,653,000
 Link migration corridors for mule deer and elk, creating landscape continuity and stitching together landscape-scale conservation efforts protecting wildlife habitat, prime fisheries, and highly productive timberland on private lands nestled within the Kootenai National Forest in Montana. Project will protect 38,000 acres of habitat under permanent conservation easement.

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Bighorn sheep

Restoring Mule Deer Habitat in the Slink Fire Scar (CA, NV)

Grantee: California Deer Association
 Grant Amount: \$262,178
 Matching Funds: \$291,000
 Total Project Amount: \$553,178

Restore migratory corridor and winter and spring range habitat for California-Nevada interstate mule deer impacted by the Slink Fire in Mono County and Alpine County, California. Project will plant mule deer forage, install wildlife-friendly fencing, perform erosion control and restoration, deter invasive weed conversion, acquire a conservation easement in a migratory corridor, and analyze data on mule deer migration and plant seeding restoration preference.

Restoring High Desert Habitat for Elk, Mule Deer and Pronghorn in the Maury Mountains (OR)

Grantee: Crook County Soil and Water Conservation District
 Grant Amount: \$73,855
 Matching Funds: \$375,508
 Total Project Amount: \$449,363

Restore high desert migration corridor habitat in the Maury Mountains by treating and removing invasive juniper and grasses and reseeding native fobs and bunchgrasses to increase forage quality and cover habitat for elk, mule deer and pronghorn. Project will work with private landowners to restore or improve 1,300 acres.

Improving Big Game Migration Connectivity while Maintaining Agricultural Land Stewardship (MT)

Grantee: Ranchers Stewardship Alliance
 Grant Amount: \$472,000
 Matching Funds: \$937,000
 Total Project Amount: \$1,409,000

Remove or improve 68 miles of fence on public and private lands in north-central Montana to increase landscape permeability and access to critical habitat for migratory big games species including elk, mule deer and pronghorn. Project will coordinate with various state, federal and private landowner partners to enhance permeability, increase habitat availability, restore connectivity and reduce fragmentation for big game species.

Improving Wildlife Crossings over Highway 28 to Increase Habitat Connectivity and Driver Safety (ID)

Grantee: The Mule Deer Foundation
 Grant Amount: \$176,132
 Matching Funds: \$677,613
 Total Project Amount : \$853,745

Enhance migration corridors in the Lemhi Valley Priority Area in Idaho, improving existing conditions for a road crossing and 4 miles of fencing to reduce animal vehicle collisions with big-game and increase permeability of the crossing. Project will result in increased passage success rates and animal survivorship of big-game within the Lemhi Valley Complex Priority Area and surrounding habitats.



Pronghorn

Treating Invasives and Improving Fences to Restore Big Game Migratory Corridor Habitat (WY)

Grantee: Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount: \$591,000

Matching Funds: \$566,000

Total Project Amount: \$1,157,000

Restore and improve big game migration corridors and crucial ranges directly benefitting the Dubois, Platte Valley, Sublette and Wyoming Range mule deer herd units. Project will implement 4,076 acres of invasive weed treatments, modify 21.9 miles of fences and conduct land restoration on 2,750 acres of public land.

Restoring Fire-Impacted Sagebrush and Forest Habitat in Big Game Migration Corridors (WA)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant Amount: \$261,423

Matching Funds: \$617,545

Total Project Amount: \$878,968

Improve winter range habitat quality and migration corridors for mule deer in eastern Washington by implementing conservation and restoration projects in the highest-priority Mule Deer Management Zone that will promote robust and sustainable populations of mule deer. Project will restore 1,450 acres of habitat burned in 2020, enhance 600 acres of public land, and close roads to vehicle access, thereby enhancing winter range for mule deer in the area.

Placing a Conservation Easement on Big Game Migratory Corridor Habitat in Pole Canyon (NV)

Grantee: Nevada Department of Wildlife

Grant Amount: \$150,000

Matching Funds: \$760,000

Total Project Amount: \$910,000

Conserve habitat along a critical migratory corridor for the largest population of mule deer in Nevada, as well as bighorn

sheep, mountain goat, and several species of conservation priority, including the greater sage-grouse. Project will permanently protect more than 12,000 acres of private rangeland along the base of the East Humboldt mountains in northern Nevada through a conservation easement.

Improving Habitat for Mule Deer and Pronghorn by Treating Invasives and Removing Fences (CA, NV)

Grantee: Nevada Department of Wildlife

Grant Amount: \$75,000

Matching Funds: \$75,000

Total Project Amount: \$150,000

Treat invasive grasses and remove invasive conifers and fences to improve connectivity and address an immediate barrier to migration for wintering-resident deer, resulting in reduced metabolic demands on mule deer and pronghorn, ultimately decreasing mortality. Project will restore 3,000 acres of habitat and remove or improve 40 miles of fences.

Protecting Critical Habitat and Facilitating Pronghorn Movement on the Fort Union Ranch (NM)

Grantee: New Mexico Land Conservancy

Grant Amount: \$390,547

Matching Funds: \$800,000

Total Project Amount: \$1,190,547

Protect and improve habitat to enhance movement and migration for pronghorn and other wildlife dependent upon grasslands on Fort Union Ranch in northeast New Mexico. Project will remove or improve 14 miles of fence and permanently protect 7,000 acres of pronghorn habitat, including both winter and summer ranges.