



Western Big Game Migration Fund

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PARTNERS

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Bezos Earth Fund
- BNSF Railways
- ConocoPhillips
- 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 6,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$8.1 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org



Pronghorn in Yellowstone

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced the 2023 round of funding for the Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund. Thirteen projects totaling \$3.9 million were awarded to 11 organizations to restore habitat and improve migration corridors across 11 western states. The 13 awards generated \$9.2 million in matching contributions resulting in a total conservation impact of \$13.1 million.

The western United States is home to some of the largest herds of wild native ungulates in North America. However, the seasonal migrations that many of these populations rely on 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 13 projects awarded will conserve critical winter range and migration corridors in Tribally and state-identified focal areas within Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming. The projects will: remove or improve 890 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly standards; improve management on 903,000 acres of rangelands; restore 218,614 acres of public, private, and tribal lands; place protective easements on 175,410 acres; and treat 13,000 acres for invasive plants. These outcomes will be accomplished through:

- Restoring degraded priority winter range, stopover areas and migration corridors by removing encroaching trees from sagebrush ecosystems, rehabilitating areas damaged by fire or treating exotic/invasive vegetation to improve the quality and value of these areas to big game and other wildlife.
- Working cooperatively with private landowners and state highway departments to achieve permissive fencing measures including potentially modifying, removing, installing or seasonally adapting fencing if proven to impede movement of big game through priority migration corridors.
- Conservation easements and management agreements, or other actions to protect bottlenecks within corridors and other areas within priority winter range and stopover areas threatened by fragmentation.
- Utilizing other proven actions necessary to improve the habitat quality or restore priority big game winter range, stopover areas or migration corridors across the West.

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2023 GRANTS**Removing Woody Invasives for Big Game Migration and Grasslands Restoration (AZ)**

Grantee: Arizona Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount:..... \$500,000

Matching Funds:..... \$500,000

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

Restore historic Arizona grasslands to facilitate pronghorn genetic transfer; understory regeneration, erosion reduction, and prescribed fire regimes. Project will restore 4,000 acres of public grasslands via mastication of woody invasive plants.

Improving Browse and Forage Quality to Enhance Mule Deer Winter Range on the Kaibab Plateau (AZ)

Grantee: Arizona Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount:..... \$300,000

Matching Funds:..... \$300,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$600,000

Enhance winter range for the Kaibab Plateau Herd in northern Arizona by reducing the invasive woody vegetation encroachment and stimulating browse growth. Project will manually and mechanically remove invasive conifers to restore 1,100 acres of mule deer winter range.

Conserving Year-Round Big Game Habitat via the Mitchell Flat Conservation Easement (CA)

Grantee: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Grant Amount:..... \$200,000

Matching Funds:.....\$1,250,000

Total Project Amount:.....\$1,450,000

Conserve year-round big game habitat in northern California via a conservation easement on the varied Mitchell Flat property. Project will place a conservation easement on 3,125 acres of woodlands, grasslands, intermittent ponds and streams, and riparian habitat.



Bull elk

Removing Obsolete Fencing to Reduce Big Game Entanglement and Improve Migration Corridors (CO)

Grantee: State of Colorado Department of Natural Resources

Grant Amount:..... \$92,000

Matching Funds:..... \$92,300

Total Project Amount:..... \$184,300

Improve big game migration corridor permeability in northwest Colorado to benefit the state's largest herds of mule deer, elk and pronghorn. Project will remove 40 miles of wildlife-unfriendly fencing.

Improving Coordination Between Idaho Stakeholders to Conserve Big Game - Phase II (ID)

Grantee: The Mule Deer Foundation

Grant Amount:..... \$403,800

Matching Funds:..... \$635,400

Total Project Amount:.....\$1,039,200

Facilitate collaboration between the Mule Deer Foundation and the Idaho Fish and Game Department to employ a shared coordinator for big game conservation across Idaho. Project will improve 20 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly standards, remove 10 miles of wildlife-unfriendly fencing, place 1,000 private acres under improved management, place 100,000 public acres under improved management, restore 500 private acres of grasslands, restore 10,000 public acres of grasslands and remove annual invasive plants from 5,000 acres.

Enhancing Wildlife Migration Routes Across Public and Private Grasslands (MT)

Grantee: Montana Outdoor Legacy Foundation

Grant Amount:..... \$275,000

Matching Funds:.....\$1,050,000

Total Project Amount:.....\$1,325,000

Work with landowners and organizations to improve big game habitat quality in southeast Montana via seasonal burning, conifer removal, weed management, expansion of conservation easements and fence modification. Project will reconnect 50 miles of corridor, improve 20 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly standards, remove 20 miles of wildlife-unfriendly fencing, install 20 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing, burn 10,000 acres, place 50,000 acres under conservation easements, improve management on 75,000 acres, restore 20,000 acres and remove invasive plants from 50,000 acres.

Improving Connectivity of Big Game Winter Range in Southwest Montana (MT)

Grantee: National Wildlife Federation

Grant Amount:..... \$404,000

Matching Funds:..... \$407,100

Total Project Amount:..... \$811,100

Improve big game movement and connectivity in Montana's Priority Area C by removing or modifying woven wire sheep fence that hinders migration routes and fragments winter range of pronghorn, elk, mule deer, and moose. Project will improve 40 miles of obsolete woven wire sheep fence to wildlife-friendly standards.

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Mule deer herd in Colorado

Increasing Landscape Permeability and Enhancing Big Game Habitat in Northern Montana (MT)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant Amount:..... \$415,400

Matching Funds:..... \$415,400

Total Project Amount:..... \$830,800

Collaborate with federal and local partners to increase landscape permeability and enhance big game habitat in northern Montana. Project will improve 35 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly standards, improve grazing management on 15,500 private acres and restore 1,866 acres of grassland.

Increasing Migration Corridor Permeability on the Taos Plateau (NM)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant Amount:..... \$53,500

Matching Funds:..... \$53,500

Total Project Amount:..... \$107,000

Increase migration permeability in northern New Mexico by modifying wildlife-unfriendly fencing. Project will remove 7 miles of wildlife unfriendly-fencing and replace it with 7 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing.

Conserving the Aspen Valley Ranch and Pitchfork T Properties to Benefit Big Game (OR)

Grantee: Deschutes Land Trust

Grant Amount:..... \$53,100

Matching Funds:..... \$1,078,600

Total Project Amount:..... \$1,131,700

Conserve the Aspen Valley Ranch and Pitchfork T properties in Oregon to perpetually restrict development, surface alteration, and commercial uses for the benefit of pronghorn, elk and mule deer. Project will place a total of 4,000 acres under long-term conservation easements.

Improving the Migration Route Between Paunsaugunt Mule Deer Herd Seasonal Ranges (UT)

Grantee: Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Grant Amount:..... \$370,000

Matching Funds:..... \$2,540,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$2,910,000

Protect the Paunsaugunt mule deer herd by reducing wildlife mortality rates on Utah's US Highway 89 and removing hazardous fuels by removing invasive woody vegetation. Project will install exclusionary fencing along 7.2 miles of US Highway 89 and restore 3,227 public acres of sagebrush.

Modifying Fencing to Improve Habitat Around the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (UT)

Grantee: Wild Earth Society Incorporated

Grant Amount:..... \$123,900

Matching Funds:..... \$123,900

Total Project Amount:..... \$247,800

Survey, map and remove barbed wire fence around the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah to understand the threat posed by these barriers to big game species and improve migration passages. Project will survey and map at least 150 miles of fencing and remove or improve at least 10 miles of wildlife-unfriendly fencing.

Improving Migration Corridors and Winter Range for Priority Mule Deer Herds (WY)

Grantee: Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount:..... \$732,500

Matching Funds:..... \$732,500

Total Project Amount:..... \$1,465,000

Improve forage quality and connectivity between seasonal ranges in Wyoming for mule deer and other wildlife. Project will improve 25.4 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly standards, restore 3,050 public acres, and remove invasive vegetation from 5,776 acres.