Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission

RESOLUTION

A Resolution to endorse the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources' recommendation of a new funding mechanism to ensure the sustainability of all fish and wildlife for current and future generations and to urge Tennessee's Congressional Delegation to support federal legislation implementing this recommendation.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission is statutorily charged with establishing objectives which will enable the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to develop, manage and maintain sound programs of hunting, fishing, resource management and other wildlife related outdoor recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee is home to more than 2,000 species of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife: and

WHEREAS, of the more than 2,000 species of wildlife and fish, 931 are considered species of greatest conservation concern; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Acts that established funds to support conservation and science-based management of harvestable game and sport fish species financed by hunters, recreational shooters, fishermen and boaters; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated and sustainable federal funding mechanism is lacking for many of species of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, reptiles, mussels, and crayfish that are not hunted or fished; and

WHEREAS, across the nation, the number of species petitioned for federal endangered species listing has increased by more than 1,000% over the last five years; and

WHEREAS, in Tennessee there are currently 63 species listed under federal endangered species protection, 10 more listed as federally threatened; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee has a statutory responsibility to sustain and conserve all species of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, crayfish, and mussels native to Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency created a 2015 Wildlife Action Plan focused on the conservation of all species including those species not listed as game or sport fish; and

WHEREAS, the recent Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America 's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources, made up of 26 business and conservation leaders, was tasked with recommending a new funding mechanism to support state fish and wildlife conservation to ensure the sustainability of all fish and wildlife for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Don Young (R-AK) and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (D-MI) introduced the bipartisan "Recovering America's Wildlife Act (HR 5650)" in July 2016 calling for an annual dedication of $1.3 billion in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to state fish and wildlife agencies to conserve species of conservation need as recommended by the Blue Ribbon Panel; now, therefore,

BE IT REOLVED, the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission endorses the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel and the 'Recovering America's Wildlife Act'; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission urges the Tennessee Congressional Delegation to support federal legislation "Recovering America's Wildlife Act (HR.5650)" and/or future legislation that would implement this recommendation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that appropriate copies of the resolution be prepared and transmitted to the entire Tennessee Congressional Delegation, along with the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Lieutenant Governor of Tennessee

This the 27th day of October, 2016.

FOR THE TENNESSEE FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

_____	_____
William H. Cannon, Jr., Chairman	Ed Carter, Director

Bill Reeves

From: Mark Humpert <MHumpert@fishwildlife.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 8:55 AM
To: Mark Humpert
Cc: Sean Saville; Jen Mock Schaeffer; Devin DeMario
Subject: Recovering America's Wildlife Act (HR5650)

Importance: High

***** This is an EXTERNAL email. Please exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. - STS-Security*****

Hello **Wildlife Diversity Program Managers and State Wildlife Action Plan Coordinators**:
On the WDPM call yesterday I was asked to send the following information related to HR 5650. For those of you who missed the call, we are actively seeking co-sponsors (particularly Republicans) on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. This bill proposes to provide states with $1.3 billion annually to implement State Wildlife Action Plans as recommended by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources. We need a strong showing of support for this bill to help ensure it is reintroduced early next Congress. An email was sent to state F&W Agency Directors last Friday requesting their help with co-sponsors. We are hopeful that a companion bill will be introduced in the Senate after the election.

List of Co-sponsors-Currently 14 members of Congress have signed on as co-sponsors to HR5650 which was introduced by Cong. Don Young (R-AK) in July.
Rep. Dingell, Debbie [D-MI-12], Rep. Fortenberry, Jeff [R-NE-1], Rep. Thompson, Mike [D-CA-5], Rep. DelBene, Suzan K. [D-WA-1], Rep. Schiff, Adam B. [D-CA-28], Rep. Stefanik, Elise M. [R-NY-21], Rep. DeFazio, Peter A. [D-OR-4], Rep. Gibson, Christopher P. [R-NY-19], Rep. Lowenthal, Alan S. [D-CA-47], Rep. Bordallo, Madeleine Z. [D-GU], Rep. Green, Gene [D-TX-29], Rep. Miller, Jeff [R-FL-1], Rep. Meehan, Patrick [R-PA-7], Rep. Kind, Ron [D-WI-3].

What You Can Do To Help-Work with your agency leadership to reach out to and encourage members of your congressional delegation to co-sponsor HR5650. We are in particular need of Republicans. We would like a minimum of 5 additional Republicans and 2 Democrats to sign on before Congress adjourns. You can also help spread the word about the importance of HR5650 to your partners.

Where Can I Go For More Information-Don't hesitate to contact me, Sean Saville (Blue Ribbon Panel Campaign Mgr.), Jen Mock Schaeffer or Devin DeMario if you have questions, need congressional staff contact information, a list of top targets or additional information. An FAQ and related information is available at http://www.fishwildlife.org/index.php?section=blueribbonpanel. Thanks for the help.

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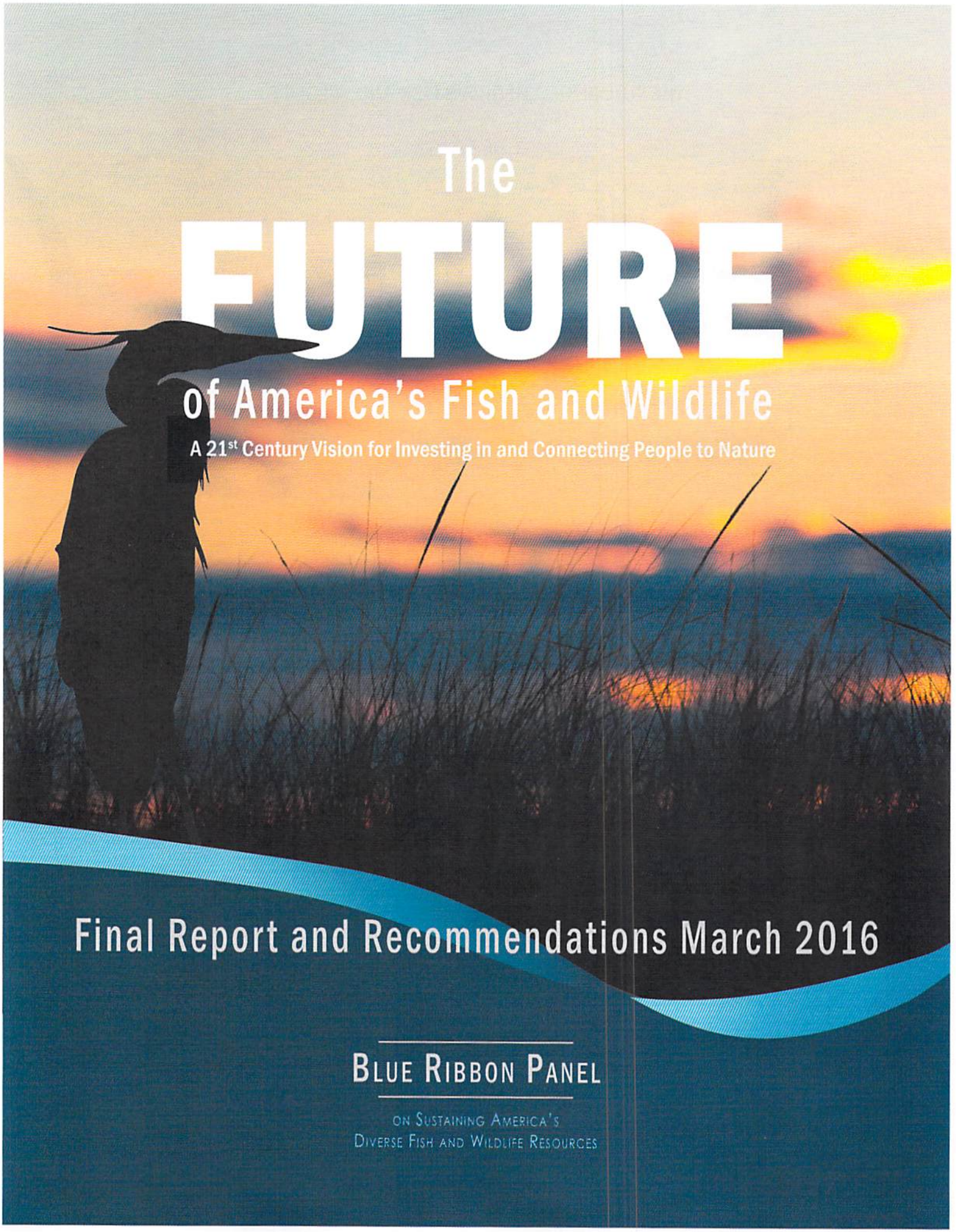

The FUTURE of America's Fish and Wildlife

A 21st Century Vision for Investing in and Connecting People to Nature

Final Report and Recommendations March 2016

BLUE RIBBON PANEL

ON SUSTAINING AMERICA'S DIVERSE FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES

THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S FISH AND WILDLIFE

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MEMBERS AND THEIR AFFILIATIONS

NATIONAL CO-CHAIRS

John Morris, Noted Conservationist and Founder, of Bass Pro Shops
David Freudenthal, Former Governor, State of Wyoming; Senior Counsel, Crowell & Moring

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Richard Childress, CEO & Chairman, Richard Childress Racing Enterprises; Board Member NRA
Jeff Crane, President, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Bruce Culpepper, Executive Vice President, Shell Americas
John Doerr, President & CEO, Pure Fishing, Inc.
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Michael Bean, Principal Deputy Asst. Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, US Department Interior
Ronald Regan, Executive Director, Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Foreword

Fish and wildlife have been central to our work and our lives. Whether it's providing gear for the outdoor enthusiast, governing a state with a rich outdoor heritage or simply spending quality time in the outdoors, we can't imagine a world without fish and wildlife.

Our generation has been blessed with abundant elk, wild turkeys and a diversity of sport fish—but this has not always been the case. A century ago, most game species were imperiled and our nation was facing a fish and wildlife crisis. Fortunately hunters, anglers and the shooting sports and fishing industries rose to the occasion and secured funding so the states could do the important work of restoring and managing fish and wildlife. This remarkable partnership led to one of the greatest conservation success stories the world has known.

Yet what is hidden from most Americans is another impending fish and wildlife crisis. For every game species that is thriving, hundreds of nongame species are in decline. Unlike the conservation finance system that was created for game and sport fish, there is no comparable funding mechanism to manage the majority of fish and wildlife under state stewardship. As a result, thousands of species of birds, frogs, turtles and even the iconic monarch butterfly are slipping through the cracks and could become endangered in the future.

Equally alarming to us is the growing disconnection between people and nature. Today, children and adults spend far less time in nature which is affecting their physical and mental health and untying a bond with the outdoors that helps ensure there is a next generation of conservationists. If this trend continues, fewer Americans will understand the importance of or need for fish and wildlife conservation.

David Freudenthal
Former Governor, State of Wyoming

John Morris
Founder of Bass Pro Shops

We asked a distinguished group of business and conservation leaders to help solve a problem plaguing the conservation community for decades. In this report, the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources recommends a new funding approach that will help ensure all fish and wildlife are conserved for future generations.

A lot is at stake if we don't act soon. Every American benefits when we have healthy and accessible fish and wildlife. We need to start down a new path where we invest proactively in conservation rather than reactively. Doing so will help us avoid contentious endangered species battles that inhibit business, slow the economy and pass on the high cost of species recovery to the next generation. We invite you to join us in our quest to advance a 21st century vision for fish and wildlife conservation.

WE BELIEVE IN SUSTAINING FISH AND WILDLIFE

Our nation's fish and wildlife are one of its most valuable assets. Our quality of life, outdoor heritage and prosperity are tied to the health and sustainability of these treasures. Yet, we are facing an impending fish and wildlife crisis that could alter future Americans' opportunity to benefit from these resources.

For decades, thousands of species of native birds, mammals, fish, frogs, turtles and insects have been slipping through the cracks because we lack a financial safety net to ensure their long-term survival. Threats such as habitat loss, invasive species, extreme weather and disease are taking an increasing toll. Today, over 12,000 species of fish and wildlife have been designated as species in greatest conservation need.

Compounding this problem are societal changes that are altering the connection between people and nature. Over 80 percent of Americans now live in urban environments and we spend an average of 11 hours a day on electronics. These changes and others are affecting the quantity and quality of time spent in contact with nature. This growing separation and aversion to the natural world is affecting our citizens' health and their understanding and appreciation of the natural environment.

Healthy habitats benefit more than just fish and wildlife. An environment managed sustainably for fish and wildlife helps safeguard the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the scenery we view and the $646 billion outdoor recreation economy. As our nation's population increases, so does the stress we put on our shared natural resources. When a species is pushed to the brink and becomes endangered, taxpayers are burdened with the cost of recovery, businesses face greater regulatory uncertainty and society risks losing a piece of the natural environment that we will never get back.

The states are entrusted with ensuring the health of our nation's fish and wildlife. Today, most are not able to meet this immense and important challenge because our conservation funding system is outdated and insufficient to conserve the majority of species under their care. Inadequate funding also limits efforts to inform and engage people to instill appreciation in fish and wildlife. If we don't modernize our system of conservation funding soon, thousands of additional species will become endangered and there may be far too few citizens in the future who will notice or care.

In the 1930s, the nation was mired in the Great Depression and the bounty of wildlife that greeted the first European settlers was rapidly dwindling. The need for restoration was urgent, but funding was scarce. Hunters and the shooting sports industry united with state fish and wildlife agencies, conservation groups, gardeners, women's clubs, birders and others to rally Congress to dedicate funding from an excise tax on guns and ammunition to restore game populations. In later years, the sport fishing and boating industries followed suit by establishing a similar tax on fishing gear and motorboat fuels to fund the restoration of our nation's sport fish. This historic collaboration is unparalleled and is the reason why we have thriving populations of white-tailed deer, wild turkey, largemouth bass and other game and sport fish species today.

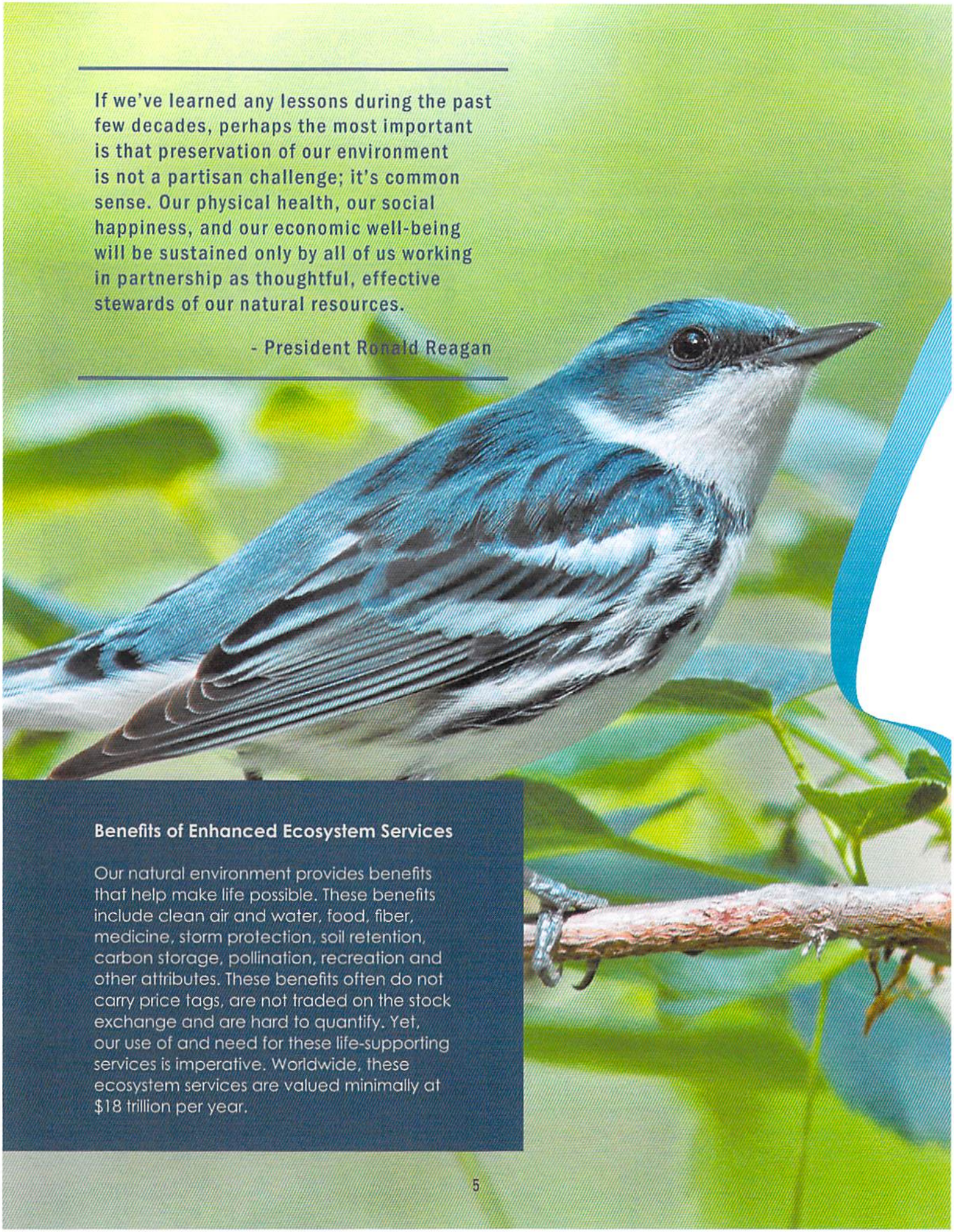
This remarkable success story demonstrates that in times of need, private citizens, government and business can work together to find an innovative solution to solve a significant conservation challenge. A similar collaboration is needed today to address the crisis facing thousands of species that are not hunted and fished and to help reconnect people with nature. We believe a 21st century conservation funding system is needed now to safeguard our nation's fish and wildlife.

About the Blue Ribbon Panel

In September 2014, John Morris, Founder of Bass Pro Shops and David Freudenthal, former governor of Wyoming asked business and conservation leaders to join them on the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources. The Panel was charged with examining the current system of conservation funding and recommending a new mechanism that will conserve all fish and wildlife. After three meetings and consideration of nearly two dozen potential funding options, the Panel agreed on two recommendations that will help set a new course for fish and wildlife conservation in this country.

Benefits of Connecting People (Especially Kids) with Nature

When we spend time in nature, we accrue physical and mental health benefits. Even a short amount of time in nature each day can improve concentration, reduce stress, lower blood pressure and improve mental health, all of which can help prevent disease. Some of the greatest health benefits are seen in children who are better able to complete tasks, follow directions, think critically and have improved physical fitness when they spend time outdoors.



If we've learned any lessons during the past few decades, perhaps the most important is that preservation of our environment is not a partisan challenge; it's common sense. Our physical health, our social happiness, and our economic well-being will be sustained only by all of us working in partnership as thoughtful, effective stewards of our natural resources.

- President Ronald Reagan

Benefits of Enhanced Ecosystem Services

Our natural environment provides benefits that help make life possible. These benefits include clean air and water, food, fiber, medicine, storm protection, soil retention, carbon storage, pollination, recreation and other attributes. These benefits often do not carry price tags, are not traded on the stock exchange and are hard to quantify. Yet, our use of and need for these life-supporting services is imperative. Worldwide, these ecosystem services are valued minimally at $18 trillion per year.

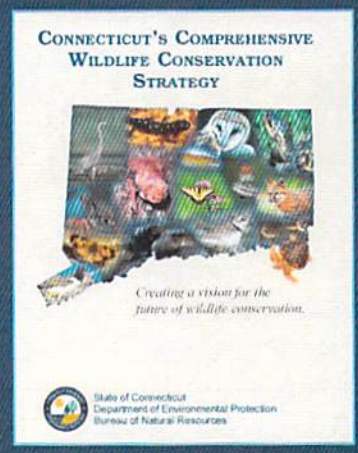
WE BELIEVE

There is a Fish and Wildlife Crisis

The recovery of the nation's game and sport fish is one of our greatest conservation success stories. This achievement was possible because hunters, archers, recreational shooters, anglers, boaters and their industries banded together to support a tax on their products to finance fish and wildlife conservation. Today, this funding provides over a billion dollars to the states to monitor fish and wildlife, conduct research, protect and manage habitat and deliver quality access for hunting and fishing. This funding along with hunting and fishing license fees, serves as the primary source of revenue for most state fish and wildlife agencies.

There is no similar source of dedicated funding for thousands of species that are not hunted or fished. As a result, an increasing number of species are becoming rare and imperiled. In the coming years, thousands of species could be added to the list of federal threatened and endangered species. Nearly 1,600 species of animals and plants are already listed and the states have identified over 12,000 species in their State Wildlife Action Plans that are in greatest conservation need. The 20th century model of funding was never designed to meet the 21st century demands of fish and wildlife conservation.

Decades of inadequate funding have prevented the states from implementing the proven, cost effective strategies needed to keep fish and wildlife healthy. It costs taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars each year to restore threatened and endangered species, outlays that might be avoided or greatly reduced if proactive conservation measures were implemented first. The cost of complying with endangered species regulations and lost revenue from project delays also impacts business. A new vision for fish and wildlife funding is needed that will allow a greater number citizens to be investors in fish and wildlife conservation.



State Wildlife Action Plans - Blue Prints for Conserving Fish and Wildlife

Each State, territory and the District of Columbia have created comprehensive State Wildlife Action Plans. These science-based plans, developed in collaboration with conservation partners, lay out the key threats to fish and wildlife and the actions needed to conserve over 12,000 species in greatest conservation need and their habitats. Development of the plans in 2005 was a historic accomplishment but implementation has been curtailed because of a lack of funding.

WE BELIEVE A SOLUTION IS IN SIGHT

RECOMMENDATION 1

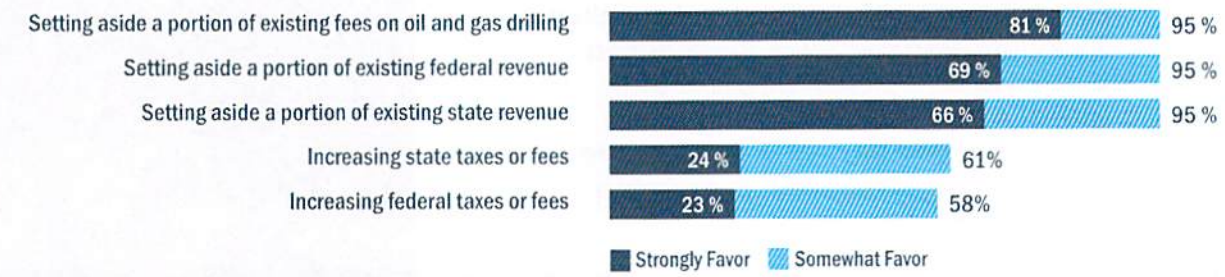
Congress dedicate up to $1.3 billion annually in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program (16 U.S.C. 669b(a)).

The Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources recommends that Congress dedicate up to $1.3 billion annually in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program. These funds would provide states with the resources needed to implement State Wildlife Action Plans which are designed to conserve 12,000 species in greatest conservation need. Effective implementation of these plans would require an estimated $1.3 billion in new funding. Without funding, the states will be unable to implement voluntary, non-regulatory measures that have been proven to prevent threatened and endangered species listings.

In 2013, businesses that extracted energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters paid $12.3 billion in royalties, fees, and bonus bids to conduct their work. These companies provide vital services to the country by supplying the raw materials needed to fuel our economy and meet consumer demand. The oil, gas and minerals found on federal lands and waters are held in trust and belong to every American. Investing a portion of these proceeds into fish and wildlife conservation is supported by the public and will help ensure that current and future generations share in this wealth.

When advocates are given a range of options to fund State Wildlife Action Plans, they are much more supportive of using existing revenues than tax or fee increases.

Source Public Opinion Strategies - 2006



This mechanism will not require businesses or taxpayers to pay more, but instead allow all Americans to become investors in fish and wildlife conservation.

The funds should be dedicated to the existing, but unfunded, Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program, without displacing or diminishing funding directed to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program was created by Congress in 2000 to "*extend financial and technical assistance to the States under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act for the benefit of a diverse array of wildlife and associated habitats, including species that are not hunted or fished, to fulfill unmet needs of wildlife within the States in recognition of the primary role of the States to conserve all wildlife*". The program allocates funds using a formula, requires nonfederal match and provides states with the flexibility to also implement programs that help people learn about and access fish and wildlife for wildlife viewing, photography and other passive forms of recreation.

In order to build support for increased funding, the role of the states in conserving fish and wildlife needs to be conveyed to the public. The states led the way a century ago when most of the nation's game species were imperiled and they can keep species from becoming endangered when they have sufficient resources. This story of state-based fish and wildlife conservation is not understood by most Americans. A communication and marketing strategy should be launched to inform the public of the states' role as guardian of our nation's fish and wildlife.

Additionally, strong and diverse grassroots support will be needed to make the case for new funding. The national Teaming With Wildlife coalition was organized two decades ago to support dedicated and sustained funding for fish and wildlife conservation. The coalition includes over 6,400 organizations representing millions of birders, hikers, hunters, anglers, natural resource professionals and others, making it one of the largest and most diverse coalitions ever assembled for a conservation cause. The coalition should be activated and expanded to support the recommendations of this Panel.

Benefits of the outdoors to the economy

Healthy fish and wildlife is good business and contributes to a strong economy. The nation's 90 million hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers spend $145 billion annually and generate tens of billions of dollars in federal, state and local taxes. Overall, consumers spend $646 billion on outdoor recreation and provide 6.1 million direct jobs each year.

Recommendation 2

The Blue Ribbon Panel will examine the impact of societal changes on the relevancy of fish and wildlife conservation and make recommendations on how programs and agencies can transform to engage and serve broader constituencies.

The Blue Ribbon Panel will convene a working group to examine how shifting demographics and changing attitudes about nature are affecting the relevancy of fish and wildlife conservation. As the nation becomes more urban, ethnically and culturally diverse and disconnected from nature, the public's perceptions and values associated with fish and wildlife are changing. Although core constituencies like hunters and anglers will continue to be key allies, there is a need to broaden stakeholder representation to ensure fish and wildlife conservation remains relevant and supported by people from all walks of life.

Every citizen has a stake in and benefits from healthy fish and wildlife, but most have little contact with or understanding of the state agency responsible for their stewardship. To remain relevant, state fish and wildlife agencies will need to transform their structures, operations and cultures to meet the changing expectations of their customers. If state fish and wildlife agencies fail to adapt, their ability to manage fish and wildlife will be hindered and their public and political support compromised.

The working group will solicit input from a team of interdisciplinary experts to better understand the challenges facing fish and wildlife agencies and make recommendations on how to help them transition and transform so they can more effectively serve the needs of all citizens and all fish and wildlife.

SUCCESS STORY - BALD EAGLE

A half century ago, our nation's symbol was severely imperiled. The continental population of bald eagles declined from over one hundred thousand nesting eagles to less than 600 pairs. Following nearly four decades of intensive conservation and management, the bald eagle has recovered with nesting pairs now exceeding 10,000.

SUCCESS STORY - ARCTIC GRAYLING

In 1994, Montana's artic grayling was designated a candidate for federal endangered species listing. State and federal agencies and private partners worked together to complete 450 habitat projects impacting 165,000 acres which helped double the arctic grayling population. In 2014 the US Fish and Wildlife Service determined that these efforts precluded the need to federally list the species, providing regulatory certainty for ranchers.

SUCCESS STORY - NEW ENGLAND COTTONTAIL

The New England cottontail, the inspiration for Peter Cottontail, was almost lost due to habitat degradation and competition from the eastern cottontail. In 2006, this species was designated as a candidate for federal Endangered Species Act protection. State and federal agencies, private organizations and private citizens worked together to start a captive breeding program and restore young forest habitats in New England. In 2015, the US Fish and Wildlife Service removed the species from the candidate list.

WE BELIEVE

Everyone Benefits from Healthy Fish and Wildlife

A fundamental shift in how we finance fish and wildlife conservation is needed. We invest far too little in conservation until a species is in trouble and "emergency room" care is required. This flawed approach drives up costs, puts fish and wildlife at great risk and creates an environment of regulatory uncertainty for business.

The Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources has a solution. Dedicating a portion of federal royalties and fees from mineral and energy development in proactive fish and wildlife conservation would stem the flow of endangered species listings and make every American an investor in this important work. New funding would also provide resources to states to help reconnect people with nature and improve access to the outdoors to improve health and cultivate the next generation of conservationists.

The fish and wildlife resources that are part of our rich natural heritage are here because of the vision, passion and commitment of the conservationists who preceded us. Our generation will be judged by the state in which we leave these resources to the next. We must pick one of two paths. Do we proactively invest in conservation to ensure fish and wildlife are sustained or saddle the next generation with the high cost of recovering the species whose care we neglected. We believe that the right path is to begin investing NOW in a 21st century vison for fish and wildlife.

Acknowledgements/Credits

We would like to thank Dave Chanda, Director of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife; Larry Voyles, Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department; Dan Forster, Director of the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division; Carter Smith, Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; and David Whitehurst, of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for their leadership and assistance with this project. Current and past staff from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies who supported the Blue Ribbon Panel include Mark Humpert, Patty Allen, Priya Nanjappa, Jen Mock Schaeffer, Jonathan Mawdsley, Davia Palmeri, John Lord, John Bloom, Angela Rivas Nelson, Estelle Green, Laura MacLean, Mary Pfaffko and Allison Vogt.

We would like to extend a special thanks to Caroline Gorga of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Laurie Hanauska-Brown of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Jenny Dickson of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection; Chris Burkett, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, John Kanter of the New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game; Norman Murray and Joanie Straub of the Missouri Department of Conservation; Richard Heilbrun and John Davis of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; Lydia Saldana, Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation and Amy Derosier, Kelly Carter Siciliano and Autumn Spitzley of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for their important contributions.

We appreciate the help of Bart Hudson and the staff at the Florida House and Nancy Mikolajchak and staff at Shell Americas for hosting listening sessions. Thank you to Martin MacDonald, Rob Keck and the staff at Islamorada Fish Company, Big Cedar Lodge and Top of the Rock Restaurant for hosting meetings in Aurora CO and Ridgedale, MO and to Mary Lou Fehr and the staff at Hess Corporation for hosting the meeting in Houston, TX.

To learn more

About the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources contact:

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Wildlife

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Look for the Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission web page at
fwp.mt.gov

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Resolution of the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

August 11, 2016

'Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2016'

WHEREAS, Montana is home to more than 700 species of wildlife and fish, and

WHEREAS, out of the 700 species of wildlife and fish in Montana only 102 are harvestable game or sport fish, and

WHEREAS, out of the 700 species of wildlife and fish, 120 species are considered species of conservation concern; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Acts that established a fund to support conservation and science-based management of harvestable game and sport fish species financed by hunters, recreational shooters, fishermen and boaters; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated and sustainable funding mechanism is lacking for many of these species of birds, mammals, fish, amphibians and reptiles that are not hunted or fished; and

WHEREAS, across the nation, the number of species petitioned for federal *endangered* species listing has increased by more than 1,000% over the last five years; and

WHEREAS, in Montana there are currently five species listed under federal *endangered* species protection, 10 more listed as federally threatened, and 3 more species are currently under consideration for listing; and

WHEREAS, Montana has a statutory responsibility to sustain and conserve all species of fish and wildlife native to Montana; and

WHEREAS, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks created a Wildlife Action Plan (2005, revised in 2015) focused on the conservation of all species including those species not listed as game or sport fish; and

WHEREAS, there is a recognized need to expand the funding base for wildlife conservation in Montana and throughout the Nation to implement Wildlife Action Plans and conserve species not listed as game or sport fish; and

WHEREAS, the recent Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources, made up of 26 business and conservation leaders, was tasked with recommending a new funding mechanism to support state fish and wildlife conservation to ensure the sustainability of all fish and wildlife for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Don Young (R-AK) and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (D-MI) introduced the bipartisan 'Recovering America's Wildlife Act (HR5650)' in July 2016 calling for annual dedication of $1.3 billion in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to state fish and wildlife agencies to conserve species of conservation need as recommended by the Blue Ribbon Panel; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that on August 11, 2016, the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission endorsed the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel and the 'Recovering America's Wildlife Act' recommending Congress dedicate $1.3 billion dollars annually in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program to diversify funding and management of all wildlife; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission encourages other Wildlife Commissions throughout the West to do the same; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission respectfully requests the Montana Congressional Delegation support federal legislation (HR5650) and/or future legislation that would implement this recommendation; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission supports state policy and legislation that would broaden dedicated funding mechanisms for wildlife conservation and implementation of the Montana Wildlife Action Plan, and encourages the Montana state legislature to allocate the necessary 25% non-federal match in the event that new dedicated federal funding is secured.

Dan Vermillion, Chairman

Richard Stuker, Vice Chairman

by Dan Vermillion

Matt Tourtlotte, Commissioner

Gary Wolfe, Commissioner

A Resolution Supporting Annual Funding for the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program

WHEREAS, North Carolina is home to unique populations of a tremendously diverse array of wildlife species; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina's Southeastern Coastal Plain and Southern Appalachian Mountains are internationally recognized biodiversity hotspots; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Pittman-Robertson Act in 1937 and the Dingell-Johnson Act in 1950 that established dedicated funds to support conservation and science-based management of bird, mammal, and sport fish species financed by hunters, recreational shooters, anglers, and boaters; and

WHEREAS, a similar dedicated and sustainable funding mechanism is lacking for the many species of birds, mammals, fish, amphibians and reptiles that are not hunted or fished; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina created a Wildlife Action Plan that was first approved in 2005 and revised in 2015 by this Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Wildlife Action Plan focuses on 457 Species of Greatest Conservation Need and 31 priority habitat types that require prescriptive actions to ensure persistence for future generations; and

WHEREAS, there is a recognized need to expand the funding base for wildlife conservation in North Carolina and throughout the Nation; and

WHEREAS, the recent Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources, composed of 26 business and conservation leaders, recommends a new funding mechanism to support state fish and wildlife conservation to ensure the sustainability of all fish and wildlife for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, securing dedicated federal funding is likely to require a non-federal state match similar to that in place for the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Acts.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission supports the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources recommendation that Congress dedicate 1.3 billion dollars annually in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program to diversify funding and management of all wildlife; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission respectfully requests that the North Carolina Congressional Delegation support federal legislation, including HR5650 entitled "Recovering America's Wildlife Act" that would implement this recommendation; and encourages other State Fish and Wildlife Agencies throughout the Nation to do the same; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission supports efforts that would broaden dedicated funding mechanisms for wildlife conservation and implementation of the North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan, and serve as the State's 25 percent match in the event that new dedicated federal funding is secured.

Approved this the 25th day of August, 2016, in an official meeting by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

John Litton Clark, Chairman

Gordon Myers, Executive Director