

The Outdoorsman

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A New Solution to Non-Game Program Funding?

News and Comment by George Dovel

On July 3, 2007, a public meeting of an ad hoc committee formed to discuss future funding for IDFG took place at F&G Headquarters in Boise. Chaired by Senate Resource Committee Chairman Gary Schroeder, the members included House Resource Committee Chairman John A. “Bert” Stevenson, Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC) Co-Chair Senator Dean Cameron and former F&G Commissioner Representative Fred Wood.

Sen. Schroeder indicated that the Committee was formed in response to Fish and Game’s request for an additional funding source. Three additional members representing the agency’s perspective were F&G Commission Chairman Cameron Wheeler, Vice-Chairman Wayne Wright and IDFG Director Cal Groen.

Comm. Wheeler commented, “We have a more complex society now,” and said he had a feeling that (society’s) priorities are different than they were 15 years ago. This reflected the Department’s justification in its 15-year planning document, “The Compass”, for expanding its traditional role to include managing wildlife and plants for other than hunters, fishermen and trappers.

Game, Fish Programs Cut to Fund Nongame

Commissioner Wright said he viewed the Committee as a great first step to identify and prioritize F&G’s problems, which, he said, include losing critical habitat for game. Then he stated that IDFG has **only 25%** of the funds needed to fund its non-game activities.

Director Groen’s comments basically agreed with Wheeler’s and Wright’s but he added that the new emphasis on (non-game) “preservation and prevention” during the past 15 years has resulted in less enforcement, less fish stocking and the need to broaden the funding base. He suggested F&G needs to protect traditional hunting and fishing (license) dollars so they are spent for hunting and fishing.

Although it was inevitable under the circumstances, the candid admission by Wright and Groen that IDFG has been using sportsmen’s license dollars to fund the bulk of its non-hunting and fishing activities was “a first”. Recently outgoing Director Steve Huffaker assured Commissioners that no license dollars were being used to fund nongame.

“The Compass” Promise To Sportsmen Ignored

When several Commissioners and Natural Resource Policy Bureau Chief Tracey Trent rewrote The Compass to satisfy sportsmen’s concerns on December 23, 2004, Trent included the following language under “Funding”:

“The Department’s main funding source comes from one segment of the population—hunters and anglers—primarily through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. This money has been—and will continue to be—used to manage fish and wildlife for hunting and fishing.

“The Department will not use hunting and fishing license fees to meet all the desires of the public, other agencies and local governments for managing fish, wildlife and native plants.” (emphasis added)

Despite assurances to the Commission by Idaho Conservation Data Center (CDC) Biodiversity Program Leader Rita Dixon that her group has secured adequate matching funding outside IDFG, thousands of dollars of hunter’s and fishermen’s license money is spent by several F&G Bureaus every day in support of this activity. Much of this money comes in the form of incidental logistical support that is never charged to CDC or any other non-game activity.

Don’t “Beat Dead Horses” – But...

During the July 3, Committee meeting Rep. Wood commented that he hoped the Committee didn’t “beat too many dead horses” and that is good advice if the horses are dead and buried. But continuing to repeat the unsupported claim that the citizens who fund resource management want to change emphasis from providing sustainable harvests of game and fish to building birding trails and interpretive centers and focusing on assorted non-game species indicates the “outlaw horse” still needs attention.

These and other unfunded mandates were imposed on Idaho fish and game managers by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) and their fellow travelers Defenders of Wildlife et al – all based in Washington, D.C. When these groups couldn’t convince Congress to support

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their biodiversity agenda using terms like “Conservation and Reinvestment Act” and Teaming With Wildlife”, they changed the name to “State Wildlife Grants” (SWGs) and claimed their proposed legislation would save states millions of dollars by preventing assorted creatures and plants from being listed as endangered.

SWGs Encourage New ESA Listings

Instead, some states have improperly* taken additional millions of dollars from sportsmen to use as matching funds, to provide the preservationist groups with the very data that is required for them to petition to list even more species. To add insult to injury, Idaho sport license buyers - not the CDC non-game entity - paid for much of the prolonged research to prevent the Westslope Cutthroat Trout from being listed.

(* The SWG funding rules prohibited use of sport license fees or federal excise taxes as matching funds).

This information has been documented by experts in previous Outdoorsman articles and is mentioned here to remind the alternate funding Committee and other Idaho Legislators of what they are being asked to fund. Sen. Cameron is well aware of the implications of seeking additional funding for nongame programs.

Nongame Programs Mushroom in 10 Years

During the 1996 legislative session he argued against JFAC approving funding to hire six nongame biologists “to help non-hunters enjoy the state’s nongame wildlife programs,” insisting it would result in premature need for fee increases. But F&G Finance Chief Steve Barton assured JFAC members that IDFG would have a \$2 million surplus In FY 1998 and would remain solvent at least through FY 2000 so they ignored Cameron’s warning.

Three months later, Barton reported a deficit of \$530,900 in the fund equity balance for FY 1997 and a projected deficit of \$1,462,000 for FY 1998. Hiring those six regional nongame biologists at a reported cost of \$200,000 in FY 1997 mushroomed into a Natural Resources Policy Bureau budget of \$3,429,000 in FY 2006 plus more than two million dollars in admitted nongame expenditures in the Wildlife Bureau budget alone.

Should F&G Provide Environmental Services?

During the July 3, 2007 meeting Sen. Cameron said the Committee must ask whether or not the Department should be providing environmental services and whether they should provide non-game. He said each member should ask, “Do I want the Department to have these other responsibilities, which shouldn’t be on the backs of the sportsmen?”

Sen. Schroeder expressed the concern that sportsmen opportunities will be diminished and said we must ask whether F&G should be providing expertise to other agencies for free. “Why are we doing analysis for private sector entities who don’t allow (sportsman) access?”

But Rep. Stevenson responded, “We think of these needs we have and we already have the biologists. I’m uncomfortable at hiring new ones – we need to find a way to extract some money.”

F&G Becomes “Fish, Game and Flowers”

A similar argument was used in 2003 when a majority of Rep. Stevenson’s Resource Committee members supported House Bill 67. The bill removed the authority and duty of Parks and Recreation to manage wild flowers and plants and gave it solely to Fish and Game, along with the responsibility to manage rare and endangered plants.

Parks and “Rec” spokesmen said although it had been their responsibility for several decades and they were receiving federal money to do it, they had not hired botanists and had used the Conservation Data Center housed in IDFG headquarters to track rare plants. They turned over the federal money, which ultimately covered only half of the costs, to IDFG and said this would prevent duplication of effort by the two agencies.

Sportsmen Pay For Biodiversity Agenda

Several House Resource Committee members, who opposed the bill, raised concerns that the transfer would allow sportsmen license fees to be used to manage endangered plants. But IDFG Director Huffaker said the CDC was created 15 years earlier as an aftermath of the Endangered Species Act and claimed that during that time sportsmen money has never been used for anything that would not benefit sportsmen.”

Huffaker’s statement reflects his willingness, and that of several previous IDFG Directors, to mislead the resource owners and their elected officials in order to promote the biodiversity agenda of IAFWA, The Nature Conservancy and the United Nations. Four years earlier, former F&G Director Steve Mealey documented **\$2.9 million** of sportsmen license fees that was spent by IDFG that year for non-game/fish activities with no tangible benefit to sportsmen.

In a public Commission meeting Mealey described Administration Bureau Chief Steve Barton as “a magician who can always come up with money from somewhere when it’s needed.” The problem was that the money Barton “came up with” was always sportsman license fees - including dedicated funds that were misappropriated (with the Director’s approval according to Barton).

How Did We Get in This Mess?

Instead of repeating the IAFWA claim that “changing public attitudes during the past 15 years” have caused a major shift in management priorities, the Committee needs to examine facts to determine when, why and how the funding shortages really began to occur.

During the first 40 years of its existence IDFG used appropriate biological tools to manage wild game, fish and furbearers, and paid the costs with income from sport licenses (user taxes), fur sales and fines. For most of

the next 40 years the cost of managing game, fish and furbearers was paid by a combination of license fees and federal excise taxes on guns, ammo and fishing equipment (still user taxes).

Dramatic Change in F&G Priorities

A comparison of actual F&G expenditures in FY 1980 when Jerry Conley was hired to replace retiring F&G Director Joe Greenley, and in FY 1996 three months before Conley resigned, reflects the change in priorities from managing wild game to promoting nongame, biodiversity and wildlife watching.

Actual IDFG Expenditures in FY 1980 and FY 1996

	<u>FY 1980</u>	<u>% of Ttl</u>	<u>FY 1996</u>	<u>% of Ttl</u>
Administration	904,200	- 8.7%	7,874,500	- 17.4%
Enforcement	2,239,900	- 21.7%	6,832,500	- 15.1%
Fisheries	3,098,600	- 30.0%	16,105,900	- 35.6%*
Wildlife	3,212,600	- 31.1%	8,095,300	- 17.9%
Info & Education	397,900	- 3.8%	2,373,500	- 5.6%
Engineering	397,600	- 3.8%	808,600	- 1.8%
Nat Resource Pol	84,500	- 0.1%	1,623,500	- 3.6%
Set-Aside Fund	0	- 0.0%	1,544,400	- 3.4%
Total	10,335,300		45,258,200	

(* The increase in the percent of the total budget spent by the Fisheries Bureau in FY 96 resulted from ~\$11.9 million dollars in mitigation money received from Bonneville Power, National Marine Fisheries, Idaho Power, FWS and others, plus \$3.4 million in D-J federal excise taxes on fishing equipment sales.)

Wildlife Funding Cut – Administration Doubled

In FY 1980, game and fish populations were healthy and increasing but by 1996 many had reached record lows. The single largest source of income to IDFG is from deer and elk hunters yet the percent of total income spent by the Wildlife Bureau had been cut nearly in half while the percent spent by Administration had doubled, hiding the use of license fees to support non-hunting.

The percent of total money spent by Enforcement and Engineering had also been cut dramatically while the percent spent by I&E (Communications) and Natural Resource Policy had skyrocketed. F&G spending for non-hunting/fishing activities was completely out of control and Governor Batt ordered the F&G Commission to make drastic cuts in non-essential spending for FY 1997.

Spending Cuts Targeted Hunters and Fishermen

The austerity program began with the Commission cutting its own travel and meeting expenses but the newly appointed Commissioners deferred to the “old hands” who had supported the nongame/biodiversity/watchable wildlife expenditures, to make the important cuts. They, of course, allowed Jerry Conley and Steve Barton to decide which programs would be cut, which sportsmen charged was “putting the rabbits in charge of the cabbage patch.”

Although Conley and Barton claimed they had made “across-the-board” cuts in all Bureaus, the analysis by Legislative Budget Analyst Jeff Youtz one year later

revealed that the cuts only impacted hunters and fishermen. From FY 1996 to FY 1997 the number of resident hatchery fish produced dropped from 27,417,781 to only 19,970,000, including 390,000 fewer “catchable” 10-12” trout raised and stocked in Idaho lakes and reservoirs.

The number of anadromous hatchery fish produced declined from 6,493,599 to only 5,125,698 and there was a 50% reduction in moose sheep and goat census and 100 fewer helicopter hours flown counting deer, elk and antelope. Wild pheasant trapping and transplanting was cut 50% and weed control and restroom maintenance on WMAs was curtailed.

The number of law enforcement personnel was reduced and several officers’ duties were shifted from law enforcement to other activities. Yet the number of teachers trained in “Project WILD” and the number of nongame presentations to schools increased by 33%-46%.

While actual Fisheries and Wildlife Bureau spending decreased by 7% and 10% respectively, Natural Resource Policy Bureau spending **increased** by **36%** in FY 1997. Ignoring the priority established by the Governor and the new Commissioners, Conley and Barton continued to increase biodiversity, nongame and watchable wildlife funding using “leftover” license fees.

What’s in a Name?

If you run a computer thesaurus or spell check program on “biodiversity”, “nongame” and “watchable” wildlife, you probably won’t find those words. Yet they have become the bywords of environmental protectionist groups and state and federal wildlife management agencies.

Until environmental extremism replaced game and fish management during the late 1960s and 70s, “wildlife” was defined as “mammals, birds and fishes hunted by man.” In 1976, following IAFWA recommendation, IDFG quietly suggested the Idaho Legislature change the definition of wildlife to the UN’s “any form of animal life, native or exotic, generally living in a state of nature.”

That change in definition in I.C. Sec. 36-202(g) opened the door for F&G biologists to justify protection of any “critter” regardless of its harmful effect on other species that were generally considered beneficial or desirable to humans. For example, it is used to supercede even the ESA by prohibiting the control of predators that prevent recovery of pygmy rabbits.

“Biodiversity”

In 1974 The Nature Conservancy launched the first of its state “Natural Heritage Programs” advocating preservation of “natural diversity” (ecosystems made up only of so-called “native” species). In 1984 a joint effort by The Nature Conservancy, Idaho Parks and Recreation and the IDFG Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program formed Idaho’s Natural Heritage Program.

In 1986 a National Forum on Biological Diversity used the term “biodiversity” to describe TNC’s agenda of

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restoring a diverse mix of "native" species to ecosystems - rather than manage to maintain healthy populations of existing species that are beneficial to humans. The introduction of Canadian wolves into areas where wolves have been absent or significantly reduced for more than a century is a major component in the plan to restore "biodiversity" in "native" ecosystems.

The following year IDFG followed the IAFWA recommendation and took over full management of the Natural Heritage Program (also referred to as the "Conservation Data Center" or Idaho CDC). The FY 1998 Stockholder's Report states the following Purpose for the CDC:

"Collect the best biological information on rare or special status animals and plants, plant communities and habitat areas. Manage this information in a series of interrelated databases. Disseminate this information as widely as possible to potential users. Interpret and synthesize this information to support proactive habitat conservation efforts."

Contrary to Huffaker's claim to the Legislature (see **Sportsmen Pay For Biodiversity Agenda** on page 2) the entire FY 98 CDC budget of \$11,699 was funded with sportsman license fees. In fact the largest item ("Technical Assistance") in the Natural Resource Policy budget in FY 98 was funded with \$482,915 of license dollars and \$396,898 of federal aid.

The Purpose: "Provide fish and wildlife technical assistance to federal and state agencies, local governments, private individuals and entities and others to minimize or eliminate impact to fish and wildlife populations and habitats from a wide variety of projects and proposals." These free services paid for mostly by sportsmen, result in the concerns expressed by Sen. Schroeder (see **Should F&G Provide Environmental Services?** on Page 2).

The "Official" Definition of Biodiversity

During the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the definition of "biodiversity" adopted by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity was:

"The variability among living organisms from all sources, including, 'inter alia', terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems."

Biodiversity includes every living organism in each designated ecosystem, including several million species, many of which are microscopic, that will never be included in an ESA listing. However scientists estimate there are between 1 million and 100 million larger species that can be seen with the naked eye, with estimates of from only 3-5 to as many as 140,000 disappearing every year.

Virtually every scientist agrees with the Nature Conservancy opinion that it is not possible to restore all of

even the relatively few species that are already listed as endangered or threatened. Most concede that 40% of freshwater fish in South America have never even been classified and only a tiny unknown fraction of saltwater species have been identified.

On their respective websites, both TNC's Chief Biologist and IDFG's Nongame and Biodiversity staffs admit there are too many nongame species to attempt to manage them individually. They say they "attempt to take a habitat and landscape-based approach to nongame wildlife conservation and management by advocating protection of specific plant communities" such as the shrub-steppe ecosystems of southern Idaho.

Two Questions That Need Answers

The IUCN* "Red List" of 40,168 species and 2,160 subspecies assessed in 2006 claims that 16,118 of the main species (40%) are threatened with extinction. Most of these threats are blamed on human induced habitat loss or degradation. (* International, Union for Conservation also called "World Conservation Union")

Whether it's the UN, TNC, IDFG CWCS Team or other involved groups, their biologists agree that since humans appeared on earth their activities have been the major cause of biodiversity loss. Some claim this will cause dramatic irreversible changes during the next 100 years while others point out that the present degree of loss in biodiversity can be sustained for many thousands of years without reaching the 20%+ loss that occurred during the five major mass extinctions of the geological past.

When white explorers crossed large stretches of Nevada in the early 1800s they reported a land nearly barren of game with only a few scattered half-starved Indians. Irrigation development by white settlers turned large tracts of that land into a virtual paradise, rich with lush habitat and assorted game and other wildlife species.

Why should the agency charged with perpetuating and managing Idaho's wild game and fish for hunting, fishing and trapping be working to restore a "natural" feast or famine condition? Why does IDFG support the agendas of national and international environmental activist groups rather than give its allegiance to Idaho citizens who own the resource and to their elected officials?

The IDFG "Nongame" Program

For many centuries game managers in all parts of the world have recognized that conditions which produce abundant game populations for humans to harvest also support an abundance of other species. But for more than two decades environmental activists who do not support hunting have lobbied Congress to authorize and fund management of species that are not sought by hunters and fishermen.

Rather than refer to these species with the accurate terms "non-hunted" or "non-game" the activists created a new word, "nongame", to promote those species as having at least equal value to traditional game animals, birds and

fishes. But as with many other confusing words or phrases invented by wildlife biologists, a non-game program may have nothing to do with nongame species.

Different Nongame Classifications

Readers with internet access who are interested can read the Idaho vertebrates listed as “nongame” by entering: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/nongame/> and then click on “Mammals” or “Amphibians and Reptiles.” Then to view the list of birds click on “Nongame Bird Program”, and then click on “List of Idaho’s Bird Species” in the lower right hand corner.

These three lists include only the 619 or so vertebrate species (having a backbone) that have been recognized as living in or migrating to Idaho - of which 523 are classified as nongame. The 619 include 111 mammals, 39 amphibians or reptiles and the rest birds, but do not include Idaho fish and hundreds of assorted mussels, snails, crustaceans, insects, etc. also found in the CWCS list of “Idaho fish and wildlife species.”

As reported in the April 2004 Outdoorsman, IDFG “management” of nongame species consists of giving most of them protected status, which automatically invokes severe federal penalties for killing, possessing or attempting to trade or sell the species or any portion. Its tacit admission that neither Idaho reptiles nor amphibians need protection is obvious since up to four native amphibians and reptiles of each species may be captured and held in captivity by holders of a valid Idaho hunting license.

On July 23, 2007, KTVB Boise news reporter Carolyn Holly featured a dog that had been bitten repeatedly by a rattlesnake when it jumped between the snake and a small child. The cameraman also showed an adult (the child’s father?) displaying the snakeskin which had been illegally removed and tacked on a flat surface for drying.

Although the F&G rule that became permanent law on April 6, 2005 says the protected status is not intended to prevent protection of personal health and/or safety, who decides when killing a protected species is warranted? The popular theme that people are “intruding” in rattlesnake, wolf, bear or lion habitat implies that humans should either be content to live and work in crowded urban “islands” of human habitat or suffer the consequences from predators that are protected in all of the surrounding rural and wilderness areas.

The 1992 UN Biodiversity Treaty

That has been the published agenda of the UN and its non-governmental organization (NGO) international allies (TNC, IUCN, etc.) since its Conference on Human Settlements in Toronto in 1976. Unfortunately it is also partly the agenda of the IAFWA, which dictates the agenda of all state and provincial fish and game agencies.

After the UN “Convention on Biological Diversity”, also called the “UN Biodiversity Treaty”, was

presented at the UN Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, former President Bush refused to sign it. But new President Bill Clinton signed the treaty on June 4, 1993 and Vice President Al Gore was already constructing his “White House Task Force on Ecosystem Management” in preparation for implementing the Treaty.

The U.S. State Department officially transmitted the Treaty to the Senate on November 20, 1993 asking for “fast-track” ratification and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 16 to 3 to recommend ratification. A massive effort by America’s natural resource users and grassroots groups killed the ratification but the Clinton-Gore team continued to implement it and the UN “Agenda 21” provisions as if the treaty had been ratified.

F&G Allegiance to Biodiversity

Despite the fact that the Treaty has still never been ratified NGOs including IUCN, TNC, the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club continue to support its “Wildlands Project” agenda. My efforts to discuss these issues with IDFG officials usually results in that “glazed-over look” and their failure to continue the discussion, yet examples of their allegiance to the Biodiversity Treaty are abundant.

For example, three months after the Idaho F&G Commission passed the rule making rattlesnakes a protected species, an Idaho Statesman article by Darin Oswald on the Southern Idaho Ground Squirrel quoted the following from the IDFG Nongame website on the squirrel’s recovery. “Threats: (are) Shooting, poison, predators like rattlesnakes, habitat degradation and the replacement of nutrient-rich native plants with less nutritious invasive alien plants.” (emphasis added).

When I pointed out, in a letter to several legislators, the inconsistency in protecting a major predator of several species listed as “Candidates” for ESA listing by the federal government, IDFG deleted the “predators like rattlesnakes” from the “threats” to ground squirrel recovery and substituted “*overgrazing by livestock*”. Currently the CWCS “Appendix F: Species Accounts and Distribution Maps for Idaho Species of Greatest Conservation Need” has deleted all reference to predation as a cause of decline for most of the species that are included.

The UN/TNC/IAFWA/IDFG excuse for not including predation as a cause of species decline is, “Native prey species have evolved and co-existed with native predators for thousands of years.” They have no intention of controlling predator numbers to the extent that scientific research shows is necessary to allow prey species to recover once they decline to an unhealthy level.

Because their allegiance is to biodiversity rather than game management, IDFG will continue to ignore science and claim that planting more big sagebrush will restore healthy pygmy rabbit populations and that promoting quaking aspen growth will restore healthy mule deer herds. But why wasn’t the biodiversity treaty ratified?

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Why the Treaty Was Not Ratified

In 1994, with Senate Majority Leader Mike Mitchell (D-Maine) heavily involved in environmental reform, what caused him to pull the Biodiversity Treaty at the last minute instead of allowing the Senate to vote for ratification? The answer is that he learned that the UN and the Treaty supporters weren't telling the truth about the "Wildlands Project" that would be implemented if Congress ratified the Treaty.

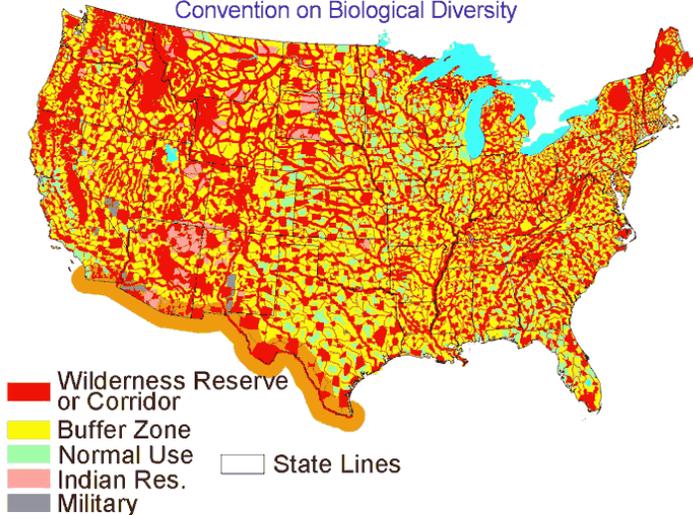
The mind-boggling goal of the Wildlands Project was, and still is, to set aside up to half of the North American continent as "wild land" for the preservation of biological diversity. In the U.S. these proposed wild core areas would be created from public lands such as National Forests and Parks, each comprising from 10,000 up to 25 million acres, and would allow little, if any, human use.

Wildlife corridors, to enable animals to migrate to other areas as a result of predicted climate changes, would also be protected from humans. Buffer zones consisting primarily of private lands, often acquired by purchase or restricted easement, would allow limited use by humans.

On September 30, 1994, a 4-foot by 6-foot version of the following map was presented on the floor of the U.S. Senate along with portions of the UN's "Global Biodiversity Assessment" (GBA) required by the Treaty. The GBA identified the Wildlands Project as the vehicle for implementing the Treaty, and the map (along with others not included here) illustrated the proposed lock-up of vast areas in North America.

Simulated Wildlands Project

As Required by the UN
Convention on Biological Diversity



Although the color map, reproduced here in black and white, is too small to see state boundaries and the few "normal use" or Indian and military reservations, the many dark areas in each state are the Core Areas and Corridors closed to humans. Most of the rest are the Buffer Zones where human use would be carefully regulated.

NAFTA Implements Biodiversity Plan

The medium gray area along the U.S.-Mexico border is a 120-mile-wide "International Zone of Cooperation" which has already been established by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA also created the "North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation," a Montreal-based agency representing the United States, Canada and Mexico, which says the continent faces a "biodiversity crisis" with half of North America's most "biodiverse" eco-regions severely degraded.

For several years Canada has been forced to increase its seal harvest significantly in order to continue harvesting cod but this group blames declining populations of cod and other food fish on over-harvesting by humans rather than on predation by protected marine mammals. Recently it convinced the Canadian government to reduce the harvest of excessive seal populations – resulting in further decline in cod populations and harvests.

"Restoring Large Meat-Eating Predators"

The failure of the U.S. Congress to ratify the Biodiversity Treaty as ~188 other nations and the European Union now have, slowed – but did not stop – implementation of the Wildlands Project. A visit to the Wildlands Project website lists the same goals it had in 1991 - *restoring large meat-eating predators to a landscape where wilderness has also been "restored"*.

All life (human and non-human) would have equal value, and resource consumption above what is needed to supply "vital" human needs would not be allowed. It says its "primary objective is the closing and removal of roads on public lands."

It boasts that it is supported by hundreds of organizations both in the U.S. and internationally, working to achieve its goals and it describes projects by other organizations (like the Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative) that complement the Wildlands Project. Several of these groups, including The Nature Conservancy, receive millions of dollars annually in federal money, income from property transactions, and tax deductible donations from individuals and trusts.

Bit by bit they are implementing the UN plan to displace rural Americans and relocate them in "sustainable communities" while restoring their vision of North America as a "pre-Columbian wilderness untouched by humans." That, of course, means that wildlife will not be managed in this vast wilderness network and many state wildlife managers, including IDFG biologists, have already adopted that "hands-off" philosophy of "managing" wild game.

Although they still pay lip service to their mandate to preserve protect and perpetuate wild game and manage it to provide continued supplies for hunting, fishing and trapping, they refuse to use any of the biological tools that are needed to do the job. These tools include reducing

hunting season length and vulnerability, mitigating the impact of extreme winters or other natural disasters by promptly providing emergency feed where indicated and effectively controlling predators, and maintaining healthy male-to-female-to-juvenile ratios in populations at or near the normal carrying capacity of their range.

“Wildlands” Not Justified by Science

Instead they have slowly embraced the philosophy of “**deep ecology**” admitting that ecosystems are too complex to manage or even understand. Once large predators that existed prior to Columbus discovering America are free to roam the North American Continent, many believe their sole responsibility will be to enforce restrictions on human activity.

The architects of the Wildlands Project freely admit that science cannot be used to justify their project as follows:

“The Wildlands Project requires not only a re-thinking of science, politics, land use, industrialization, and civilization, it also requires re-thinking humanity’s place in nature. It requires a new philosophical and spiritual foundation for western civilization. That foundation is the ecophilosophy of deep ecology. Deriving much of its ideology from Buddhism and Taoism, and the philosophy of Spinoza, deep ecology contends that science has little to tell us about living in harmony with the planet, and other non-human life forms.”

The Biased “Fishing & Hunting” Survey

With the new emphasis on promoting sport hunting and fishing following the end of World War II, industry reps lobbied for a Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife (BSFW) survey of hunters and fishermen in the lower 48 states. The International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners (later changed to IAFWA) told FWS the survey was needed to determine the economic value of hunting and angling to the national economy, and recommended it be funded with sportsmen excise tax dollars.

The second BSFW survey, including Alaska and Hawaii, was requested for 1960 and, since this was all about money, responses from hunters or fishermen who did not spend more than \$5 or take at least three hunting or fishing trips were not included. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) conducted a similar survey of all types of outdoor recreation (including camping skiing, boating, bird watching, etc.) but did not exclude those who did not take enough separate trips or spend enough money.

“Incidental” Hunters, Fishermen Not Counted

In the 1965 BSFW Survey, FWS included information on “incidental” wildlife photographers and wildlife watchers from the BOR survey. Yet it did not include those it referred to as “incidental” hunters and fishermen in its own survey simply because they did not spend enough money or take enough trips.

The U.S. Census Bureau was paid to conduct both surveys in 1965 and in most other years but the information

collected was for very different purposes. The questions concerning income, degree of education, etc. on the BSFW survey funded by Sport Fish and Wildlife Recovery dollars are designed to enable industry groups to profile and target potential customers.

The following totals from both 1965 surveys show that **34%** of hunters and fishermen who paid state and local taxes and purchased hunting and/or fishing licenses were treated as if they didn’t exist in the national survey they were required to help pay for:

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>BSFW Survey</u>	<u>BOR Survey</u>
Hunted only	5,000,000	5,000,000
Fished only	19,000,000	31,000,000
Hunted & Fished	<u>9,000,000</u>	<u>14,000,000</u>
Total Participants	33,000,000	50,000,000

In his presentation of the 1965 survey data to IAFWA, BSFW Director John Gottschalk implied that the one-third of hunters and fishermen who didn’t spend money to travel long distances, stay in motels and hire guides were not “serious” sportsmen. He used terms like “real” fishermen to describe anglers who spent a lot of time and money and said, “The 1965 Survey mainly covers the more enthusiastic sportsmen - those we call ‘substantial’ participants.”

Surveys Emphasize Non-Consumptive Recreation

That survey’s bias in favor of casual wildlife watchers and other non-consumptive wildlife advocates, regardless of whether or not they contributed to the economy, signaled the beginning of a shift in emphasis to promoting “non-consumptive wildlife-based recreation.” The 1975 Survey was the first time the BSFW collected its own estimates of wildlife watching and the survey questions and methodology continued to change every five years.

The 1991 Survey continued efforts to improve accuracy of state information at a cost exceeding **\$13 million**, with additional emphasis on increasing the percentage of non-consumptive wildlife recreationists compared to hunters and fishermen who also enjoy seeing and observing wildlife.

That Survey and subsequent Surveys did not include wildlife watching or photographing that occurred on hunting, fishing or game scouting trips. Yet it counted virtually every non-sportsman activity from backyard bird feeding - to visiting the city park to watch ducks or feed pigeons popcorn - to taking a cross-country trip during which the respondent observed or photographed wildlife.

“Watchable Wildlife”

On December 3, 1990 four preservationist groups signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with eight federal agencies and IAFWA agreeing to cooperatively develop, implement, maintain, and enhance a “Watchable Wildlife Program” on Federal and State lands. The MOU

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stated, "IAFWA represents the interests of State wildlife agencies, each of which has responsibility for and interests in promoting Watchable Wildlife opportunities within their respective States." (emphasis added)

The MOU specified that the eight federal government agencies (including the Departments of Army, Navy and Air Force and the BLM, FS, FWS, NPS and Bureau of Reclamation) shall assure the diversity of wildlife and habitats in the lands they manage. This includes assistance provided by Defenders of Wildlife, the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation and/or the Isaac Walton League of America.

The goals include educating the American public about "its responsibility" to preserve "all" wildlife and providing the opportunity to observe "native" North American wildlife species. Although the program is often referred to as a "federal" program, it is a nationwide program initiated by Defenders of Wildlife (DOW), which continues to play a leading role in its development.

DOW, called the "Anti-Steel Trap League" during its early years, is well known for promoting biodiversity and for using the courts to protect wolves from sport hunting or trapping and control by state wildlife managers. Yet a DOW representative is part of a three-person IAFWA committee which establishes the criteria for the state CWCS nongame species plans.

A New Definition of Wildlife Watching

The millions of dollars spent by the federal and state agencies to promote non-consumptive wildlife-related recreation did not halt the decline in wildlife watching reported in the 1980-1996 Surveys. But DOW and IAFWA convinced every state, including Idaho, to change the definition of "wildlife" watching to include, not only traditional bird watching, whale watching and viewing big game animals, but also the following activities:

- Photography of animals, plants and landscapes
- Wildflower walks
- Plant or mushroom identification
- Watching salmon or other fish

More Deception About Wildlife Watching

DOW selected coastal states like Washington, Florida and California with several hundred thousand tourists who came to view the unique scenery, and convinced the state wildlife agencies to also consider these tourists as wildlife watchers. Now, in addition to backyard bird feeders and visitors to the city park, virtually every camper, hiker or tourist can qualify as a "wildlife" watcher.

Idaho's neighboring state of Washington was listed in fourth place among the top "wildlife" watching states in 1997. After six years of working with DOW to make wildlife watching pay, the Washington Department of Wildlife's website says, "Over \$1.7 billion is spent annually in Washington on wildlife watching activities."

It says the money is spent locally on food, lodging, transportation and equipment and credits wildlife watching with supporting 21,000 jobs. Yet on another page it admits that most of the wildlife watching is incidental "while engaged in some other form of tourism, and/or outdoor recreation."

Washington is one of a small group of traditional "tourist" states that conducted research into the economic value of wildlife watching ("nature" watching) and then supplied the info to the BSFW Survey to estimate how much "wildlife" watchers spend. Of course most tourists and other travelers enjoy seeing wildlife, but the claim that all the money most of them spend results solely from watching wildlife is a gross exaggeration.

When the 2001 Survey data was released in 2002 anti-hunting groups and state nongame biologists praised the small increase in total wildlife watchers compared to a decrease in hunters since 1996. They ignored the fact that the number of wildlife watchers (and feeders and photographers) had steadily declined since the 1980 "watcher" survey.

New MOU Adds Agencies, New NGO

In 1999 DOW and the three other NGO groups that had signed the 1990 MOU decided to form a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit corporation called "Watchable Wildlife, Inc." (WWI). On October 16, 2002, they signed another MOU with the eight original federal agencies and four new ones* plus IAFWA. (* National Marine Fisheries Svc., National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).

The new MOU gave WWI increased powers and says, "Watchable Wildlife Inc. is dedicated to advancing wildlife viewing as a viable economic and conservation enterprise for communities throughout Canada, the United States, and Mexico. WWI is committed to helping communities realize the economic potential of nature-related recreation while conserving native plants and animals in their natural habitats." (emphasis added)

FS, Others Teach UN Biodiversity Agenda

The Forest Service "NatureWatch" website advertises that its 192 million acres (300,000 square miles) of habitat for thousands of species of wildlife, fish and wildflowers offers thousands of "NatureWatch" Viewing Sites. Its Mission: "To provide children and adults the opportunity to safely view, and participate in, activities and programs that raise their level of awareness and understanding of wildlife, fish and plants, and their connection to ecosystems, landscapes and people."

Along with 11 other federal agencies, the FS is teaching the UN biodiversity message to the urban American tourist. First-time watchers are provided a viewing guide and ethics information with the "look-from-a-distance-but-don't-touch-or-feed wildlife" message (a similar message is available from other agencies for observing marine mammals, etc.).

Check Out IDFG's Nongame Website

If you have internet access check out the IDFG "Nongame" and "Watchable Wildlife" website to confirm the activities "wildlife" watching includes. Then click on "Wildlife Viewing Tips and Ethics" to get the same "look-from-a-distance-but-don't-touch-or-feed-wildlife" message.

You'll learn not to walk through grass or water or off of established paths because "damage to the habitat affects all species in the ecosystem." Continue to read "Don't alter the environment by feeding the animals. Feeding wildlife supplies more food than would normally be provided by nature." (emphasis added)

Now you know the real reason IDFG wildlife "managers" refuse to feed mule deer that are obviously starving to death during extreme winters. During the August 4, 2007 Mule Deer Management Workshop in Pocatello, County Commissioner (former Idaho Sen.) Lin Whitworth asked why, if they refuse to feed starving deer with the dedicated fund provided by sportsmen, F&G does not give the money back to hunters. He got no answer.

Biodiversity To Trump Other Resource Use

Whether you are a member of the Alternate Funding Committee, an Idaho F&G Commissioner, a Legislator representing your constituents, or a frustrated mule deer or pheasant hunter, the following statements in the 1140-page UN Global Biodiversity Assessment explain how protecting biodiversity will limit human harvest of natural resources:

"Plants and animals are objects whose degree of protection depends on the value they represent for human beings. Although well intentioned, this specifically anthropocentric (man is superior) view leads directly to the subordination of biological diversity, and to its sacrifice in spite of modern understanding of the advantages of conservation.

"We should accept biodiversity as a legal subject, and supply it with adequate rights. This could clarify the principle that biodiversity is not available for uncontrolled human use. Contrary to current custom, it would therefore become necessary to justify any interference with biodiversity, and to provide proof that human interests justify the damage caused to biodiversity."

Palouse Prairie SAFE Program

From Agenda 21 to UN Heritage Sites, the Treaty that was never ratified is being implemented by every state and federal agency involved in natural resources. By the time you receive this issue the "Palouse Prairie SAFE program" will have been initiated, signing up a small number of growers to convert their cropland to fields and corridors of permanent native grasses, forbs and shrubs.

The program is designed to convert only one percent or less of the Palouse cropland to native species, yet the estimated *minimum* cost of the 10-year project is **\$11.2 million**. A survey of sample fields for savannah sparrows and grasshopper sparrows will be conducted three times to see if they were attracted by the plantings.

According to IDFG CWCS data, this project will recover populations of these and other declining birds, including non-native pheasants, "which will provide more local economic benefits." A similar multi-million dollar habitat project designed to save declining pygmy rabbit populations in Washington during the past decade resulted in predators killing all of the remaining wild rabbits (see "A Wasted Effort" in the October 2007 issue).

Because many Idahoans dislike the impact development has on our traditional rural areas, some are willing to close their eyes to reality and pretend that by spending billions of dollars nationwide we can turn back the clock a few centuries and re-create so-called "native" ecosystems. But, unless we allow the UN to overrule our Constitution, these lands remain in private ownership and will ultimately be sold.

Sustainable Development – UN Agenda 21

The United Nations University - Institute of Advanced Studies, a "virtual" university headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, continues to provide direction for "Sustainable Development" for thousands of U.S. cities. This implementation of UN Agenda 21 purportedly addresses both "Brown" agendas to improve air and water quality for the poorer cities, and "Green" agendas to reduce damage to ecosystems by more affluent cities.

In 1993, 25 days after President Clinton signed the UN Biodiversity Treaty, he signed an executive order creating the President's Council on Sustainable Development. Consisting of 29 *non-elected* federal officials and representatives of major environmental organizations (including the National President of TNC), the Council adopted the UN's definition of sustainable development and translated Agenda 21 into 154 public policy recommendations to be implemented throughout the United States.

Missouri Promotes UN Agenda

In November 1995, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) issued a "Coordinated Resource Management Plan to sustain our natural environment" which also endorsed the creation of a "UN Biosphere Reserve" in the lower Ozarks. The Reserve was promoted by TNC and by agency officials who were members of the President's Council.

But Missouri residents, who own 93% of the land, discovered that the language and methods in the Resource Plan were similar or identical to those in UN Agenda 21. They objected vigorously to the Plan and former IDFG Director Jerry Conley was hired as MDC Director to use his experience in Idaho to implement the plan.

Conley Denied UN/NGO Influence

But Missouri residents convinced their legislators the Plan was designed to implement the mandate in the UN Biodiversity Assessment and Conley was forced to cancel it on March 19, 1997. In a March 27, press release, Conley

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ridiculed citizens' groups that had expressed concern about the United Nation's influence on the CRMP as "pure unadulterated bunk." He said concerns about shifting governmental authority over to non-elected groups was "absolute hogwash."

Yet three years later in 2000, Congress gave IAFWA, assisted by DOW, the authority to administer the newly enacted State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program which directs state wildlife agencies to support biodiversity as dictated by DOW. The "unholy alliance" of this state wildlife agency lobbyist with DOW and other predator preservationist groups also convinced Congress to enact the Multistate Conservation Grant (MSG) Program.

MSGs are also administered by IAFWA, but unlike SWGs its program allows IAFWA to award \$6 million from the previously-untouchable P-R and D-J sportsman excise tax funds to any state(s), agency *or nongovernmental group*. The *only* requirement for the NGOs (*including anti-hunting groups*) to receive a grant is that they must submit a statement agreeing not to use the grant money for any activity that promotes or encourages opposition to the regulated hunting or trapping of wildlife or the regulated taking of fish.

The Truth

The IAFWA, DOW and other NGOs are neither elected nor accountable to American citizens yet they continue to promote the "restoration of native ecosystems" agenda espoused in the UN Global Biodiversity Assessment. The results of their efforts to de-emphasize hunting, fishing and trapping are immediately apparent when you view and explore the Missouri Dept. of Conservation website.

From its "Grow Native" biodiversity program (a collaborative effort with the State Ag. Dept.) to its "Master Naturalist" program, the emphasis on "preserving sustainable native plant and animal communities" and providing present and future generations with "diverse and balanced outdoor recreation opportunities" brings home its real agenda. Hunting, trapping and fishing are briefly mentioned as a necessary tool in providing money and controlling some wildlife and fish populations, but "preserving our 'outdoor recreation' heritage" is the central theme.

Public Funding Leads To Other Activities

During the IDFG July funding meeting Senator Cameron expressed concern that the Department would become like Parks and Recreation and that is exactly what has happened in states like Missouri after they received additional funding from sources other than hunters and fishermen.

In 1975 the MDC and its NGO support group, the Missouri Conservation Federation, decided to seek additional funding from the general public with a 1/8 of one percent sales tax. It enlisted help from licensed

hunters and fishermen who traveled from house to house convincing the public to amend the State Constitution to help fund fish, game and timber management.

The amendment, approved by voters in 1976, provided that the sales and use tax money, and all other MDC income, must be used "for the control, management, restoration, conservation and regulation of the bird, fish, game, forestry and wildlife resources of the state...and for no other purpose." The purchase or other acquisition of property for said purposes was also allowed. (emphasis added)

The amendment was originally very popular among sportsmen and timber interests because it offered a Constitutional guarantee that fish, game and timber would be restored and conserved. County and State officials supported it because it also provided that a portion of the money must be used to pay the full tax value (in lieu of taxes) for any property acquired by MDC.

Missouri Ignored Spending Restrictions

The wording in Article IV Section 43(b) has never been changed yet MDC now spends millions of the sales tax dollars every year on providing elaborate camping facilities, bicycle, hiking and horseback trails, interpretive centers and wildlife watching facilities. Disgruntled sportsmen point out that it was hunters and fishermen who campaigned, knocked on doors and drove people to the polls for this tax to pass - yet none of these programs make any effort to recruit a new generation of hunters.

In 2003 Missouri Senators proposed SJR 103 to divert half of the \$96 million annual sales tax revenue from MDC to education, and implement a sunshine clause that would require the tax to be re-approved every four years. It was defeated by lobbying from those who benefit from the programs.

Missouri Legislator Cites Abuses

In 2005 the sponsor of SJR 3 praised increased timber, hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching revenues, but cited examples of inappropriate use of the tax fund. These included excessive payment for land purchases, expensive conferences (one costing \$30,000 for several employees), \$900,000 spent for catering in 3 years, no cost reports or use records for 1,300 highway vehicles, and ownership of three airplanes and one helicopter.

SJR 3 proposed a re-authorization of the tax once every 10 years with the following explanation from its sponsor:

"Unfortunately, this is the only department in the state that does not have a system of checks and balances. They can spend their money and regulate what they want without one person making them accountable for the spending of our tax dollars. In the unlikely event the conservation tax is not approved by voters, this will not end the department because federal regulation ensures hunting and fishing license fees will not be used for any purposes other than funding state fish and wildlife agency."

The Same Thing Could Happen Here

The Missouri Senator could have been describing IDFG with its history of unlawfully using dedicated emergency feeding and fish hatchery funds for non-game/fish activities. These fees and the matching P-R and D-J funds are *use* taxes that hunters and fishermen pay.

Unlike MDC, IDFG has not yet reached the stage where it purchases and sets aside core areas in a "Natural Areas System." But its willingness to misappropriate hundreds of thousands of dollars, with approval of its Deputy Attorney General, indicates that lack of unlimited funding is the only thing that's stopping it.

In its Five-Year Accomplishment Report titled "Idaho State Wildlife Grant Success Stories," the IDFG biodiversity team brags that it spent **\$6.8 million** during the first five years of its existence. The result of this expense was recommending that sagebrush habitat be preserved (duh!) and IDFG purchasing a 101-acre lease to protect Idaho habitat used by the Columbia Spotted Frog.

Wildlife Watcher Subsidies Expensive

But now that it must match the SWG money 100% rather than the 33% match required through FY 2006, it's asking for another handout because, unlike hunters and fishermen, nongame wildlife watchers will not pay for the "free" programs they receive. But what about the National Survey that claims wildlife watchers contribute billions of dollars?

Although the Preliminary 2006 Survey Report claims another small increase in their numbers, it admits there are still fewer wildlife watchers than there were in 1991 – and far fewer than existed in 1980 (which it says shouldn't be used for comparison). If that is true how can the state and federal agencies justify their multimillion-dollar expenditures for Watchable Wildlife facilities, birding trails, and massive promotional campaigns for the past 17 years?

Grossly Exaggerated Biodiversity Losses

Despite its obvious inaccuracy and bias, the Report admits that state wildlife agencies use it to justify their requests for additional nongame funding. But even if we ignore the high cost of Watchable Wildlife, how can we ignore the claimed loss of up to 140,000 native species from native ecosystems every year?

The short answer is that is an absurd exaggeration with no basis in fact. If you run a Google search on "biodiversity loss" you will come up with about 1.9 million responses. If you spend a few weeks verifying what has actually been documented you find that the accepted figure of *verified* life forms on the planet (animals, plants, fungi, protozoans, bacteria, viruses, etc.) is 1.4 to 1.9 million.

Most of these have not been classified but more than half are insects, which make up 73% of the known "animal" species. The *estimated* total of all life forms based on this known number is 3.63 million – far fewer than the 10-100 million claimed by the doomsayers.

During the last 504 years the *known* number of just *birds and mammals* that have gone extinct worldwide is **136**. That represents a loss of only about one every 3.7 years, which hardly qualifies as a biodiversity "crisis". Remember that most of the world's life forms are insects with little or no species loss (except minor losses in small isolated environments).

The known number of **all** species (including microscopic) lost in the last 504 years is less than 800 (<2 species per year). The estimated total loss based on scientific calculations of indicator species is estimated at only 2-5 species per year out of several million.

Listing Restricts Human Activity

Yet the IUCN and its ardent followers continue to perpetuate the unsubstantiated claim that thousands of native species are in danger of being exterminated. For example, Germany listed 34% of its insect species as threatened in spite of the fact that many of those listed are abundant and widely distributed.

Each time a new species is classified as "endangered", "threatened" or "a species of concern" by a state it opens the door for more restrictions on human activity, including hunting and trapping. While there is little doubt that humans are responsible for some of the native biodiversity loss there is no doubt that the benefits to humans from much of this activity far outweigh any alleged benefit from preserving some "native" species.

For example, Florida listed 634 species in these three categories, including the endangered malaria mosquito *Anopheles albimanus*, in 1994 and reaffirmed the listings in 2004 and 2006. The philosophy that protects the animal and insect carriers of multiple deadly diseases and such organisms as the smallpox virus, would appear to violate American citizens' rights and human decency, and fly in the face of reason.

Team Members Suggest Resource Foot the Bill

Instead of making the biodiversity advocates pay the cost of and accept responsibility for their activities, the Idaho F&G Commission and the Funding Committee are exploring new ways to make the resource foot the bill. Commissioner Wright suggested that sportsmen be surveyed for their input but Rep. Wood correctly stated that the same special groups always respond to the F&G surveys with the same answers.

The Funding Committee is fortunate to have Rep. Wood as a member, with his years of experience as a F&G Commissioner who learned firsthand how public opinion is manipulated by the agency to suit its private agenda. There is little hope for realistic solutions to the funding problem until the Committee looks beyond the rhetoric and addresses that agenda.

Rep. Stevens and Sen. Cameron both suggested the Committee explore selling special (trophy) hunts, which can generate up to one hundred thousand dollars or more.

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Tracey Trent responded that in his 24 years with the Department sportsmen have never approved that practice and he said they never will.

Idaho Trophy Units Don't Produce Trophies

Rep. Wood reminded them that it takes eight years to grow a trophy and you can't kill all of the male animals before that age (as is being done now) and still sell a high-priced hunt. Outdoorsman Bulletin 23 documented the overcrowding of hunters and poor harvest success in other units that result from managing even one unit for "trophy" hunting.

And although certain Idaho units are called "trophy" units because there is a higher percent of 4-point bucks or 6-point bulls, the odds of killing an animal that meets the Boone & Crockett minimum score for entry are extremely poor. Wealthy sportsmen will not pay the higher prices unless they know there are bona fide trophies to be had (as in the Unit 11 sheep hunt where IDFG carefully monitors the rams and allows only two sheep hunters).

One obvious solution to increase funding by sportsmen is to eliminate extended-season special draw hunts and hunting in the rut for mule deer and elk. This, plus temporarily halting antlerless mule deer harvest, is the quickest way to insure a significant increase in mature bucks and bulls that are available for every hunter (which always results in increased purchases of licenses and tags).

Duplication of Effort is Part of the Problem

However this will not solve the dilemma of how to fund IDFG constructing and maintaining wildlife/nature watching facilities, campgrounds, hiking, biking and horseback riding trails, or improving wildlife habitat and wildflowers. These are functions of Parks and Recreation and the federal and state land management agencies and should be returned to them rather than perpetuate the expensive duplication of effort.

UN Definition of "Wildlife" Inconsistent

When the Idaho Legislature approved IDFG replacing the dictionary definition of wildlife in I.C. Section 36-202(g) with the UN definition (see "**What's in a Name?**" On page 3) it used the definition of "animal" that refers to the "animal kingdom" consisting of all living things that are animated (mammals, birds, fishes, insects, crustaceans, etc.). But throughout the rest of the F&G Code, "animal" means only "mammal" (a class of higher vertebrates, comprising man and other animals that nourish their young with milk and with skin that is more or less covered with hair).

Since it first began selling hunting licenses 104 years ago, IDFG has managed the "**mammals birds and fishes hunted by man**" and the *major predators* that must be controlled at times in order to perpetuate those mammals, birds and fishes. Other species that were protected by federal or state law were *not* managed, but laws prohibiting their harvest were enforced.

When IAFWA and FWS first created "nongame" funding, IDFG convinced the Legislature to let it raise matching money to obtain the federal handouts. When its fund raising efforts failed to meet increasing demands for matching funds it began to misappropriate license dollars.

Both the Nongame Staff and the CWCS staff use the UN "wildlife" definition in 36-201(g) to justify their existence and funding. Yet they admit there are too many nongame species for them to *manage* any of them.

The UN definition of wildlife ("any form of animal life") includes insects that sting or bite, mosquitoes that transmit West Nile Virus, ticks that transmit Lyme disease and two forms of tick fever, and countless other insects rodents, etc. Many of these species destroy our trees, our animals, our crops and plants, and even us.

The logical way to correct this inconsistency is to re-define wildlife in I.C. Sec. 36-202(g) as "**mammals, birds and fishes traditionally harvested or protected.**" This would again reduce the number of managed species to a reasonable number while still protecting (but not *managing*) the countless birds and other species that have been or may later be protected by state or federal law.

I.C. Sec. 36-201 could also be amended to remove the Commission's authority to classify or re-classify one or dozens of species by temporary rule without public input as occurred in March 2004. This secretive scattergun approach, allegedly implemented in order to *possibly* help prevent one or more species from being listed under the ESA, violates the principles of open government and creates more problems than it solves.

Is CWCS Really Preventing Species Extinction?

Even if Nongame/CWCS efforts to restore a few token pre-Columbian plant communities are eventually successful, there is no evidence that alone will prevent any species from becoming extinct. The Funding Committee will have to examine the evidence and determine whether this is a UN agenda, a federal agenda, an IAFWA-DOW-TNC agenda, or just an incredible coincidence.

Regardless of whose agenda it has become the Committee needs to know exactly how much it is costing and where every dollar of the money comes from as Sen. Cameron suggested. Based on past performance it is doubtful that IDFG will include all of the costs such as prorated overhead, administrative and logistical costs, and the nongame/CWCS portion of amortization and/or depreciation of capital expenditures.

The Committee will also need to evaluate the impact that replacing productive land with native plant communities will have on Idaho's economy, customs and culture to see if they really want a state agency to continue to pursue the radical preservationist agenda.

TNC Says It Can't Be Done

The Nature Conservancy, which founded the Natural Heritage Program (Conservation Data Center) and the NatureServe network (that tells IDFG the status of all

Idaho species) has used the CDC for its “Conservation By Design” program for more than 10 years. The goal of the program is to “ensure the effective conservation of places that represent at least 10 percent of every major habitat type on Earth.”

The TNC website provides comments by its Chief Scientist Peter Kareiva explaining its conservation agenda:

“No conservation organization can honestly claim it is halting extinction. We have to stop defining conservation success exclusively in terms of species loss. We have to start defining it in terms of functioning ecosystems, and functional variety and intact native animals and plants.

“That we can find grizzly bears and wolves and higher predators in the wild landscapes of the Yellowstone to the Yukon is every bit as special as any long list of species.”

TNC explains: “The Nature Conservancy’s strategy along the Rocky Mountain Front is to secure habitats used most heavily by grizzly bears. An ever-widening network of partners – including local landowners, government agencies and Native Americans – are working together to protect this magnificent habitat” (see Y2Y map below).

Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative Map



Conservation Easements Protect Grizzly Range

In the U.S. portion of the Y2Y, the three major “core ecosystems” are the Greater Yellowstone of northwest Wyoming, southwest Montana, and eastern Idaho; the Salmon-Selway of central Idaho; and the Northern Continental Divide of northwest Montana. In several locations at its website TNC cites its acquisition of conservation easements on two Montana ranches in 2005 to insure an extension of grizzly bear habitat forever.

According to its website, TNC owns **232,325 acres** of conservation easements on private land in Montana, with 1.4 million additional acres of easements owned by other local land trusts or government agencies. In Idaho TNC says it owns only **25,370 acres** of private land conservation easements, with another 25,798 acres of easements owned by local and regional land trusts.

About 10,000 of the 25,370 conservation easement acres owned by TNC were obtained from landowners along Silver Creek, the world famous fly-fishing trout stream 15 miles southeast of Bellevue in Blaine County. TNC also owns and operates the 883-acre Silver Creek Preserve, which reports populations of rainbow and brown trout* at ~5,000 per mile of stream.

(* Both are classified as Idaho “invasive species,” which would appear to conflict with TNC’s emphasis on eradicating invasive species elsewhere)

TNC’s Bill “To Protect the Family Ranch”

Although TNC sells or otherwise transfers most of the private land and/or conservation easements it acquires it still owns **3.2 million acres** of private land conservation easements just in the United States. Idaho easements make up less than one percent but that is about to change if TNC is successful in convincing the Idaho Legislature to pass its “Ranch, Farm and Forest Protection Act” in 2008.

In the 2007 Session, Idaho TNC Executive Committee member and Conservation Committee Chairman Laird Noh introduced its bill (House Bill 262) to familiarize Legislators with the bill and its supporters. Touted as “a measure to save the family farm and ranch from developers,” the TNC proposal would provide up to \$500,000 each in tax relief to *selected* landowners who donate (sell) a conservation easement to groups like TNC.

For example, when TNC or another qualified NGO or government agency selects a parcel of private land it wants to preserve, it will offer to pay the landowner up to half the appraised value of the parcel in return for granting a conservation easement which prohibits improvement or development forever. However the landowner must continue to pay property and income taxes which will quickly erase much of the benefit of the cash received.

TNC has already convinced lawmakers in some states to waive tax payments over a period of years so the landowner gets to spend most of the money. But there are serious downsides to this proposal.

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Taxpayers Would Subsidize Easements

Idaho taxpayers are being asked to pay up to three million additional dollars each year to subsidize a few selected landowners who agree to limit certain uses of their land and not allow it to be developed. But as with Idaho's original 1% sales tax, once the bill passes, justifying future increases will be relatively easy.

In many cases taxpayers are already subsidizing TNC with federal and matching state grant money that it often uses to purchase those easements. And, to add insult to injury, federal money is sometimes used to buy these easements from TNC at a profit later on.

Practical Solution – or Added Liability?

Receiving a substantial sum of operating money without parting with the land may sound like the answer to a cash-strapped ranching family's prayer. But it can turn into their worst nightmare when they find they can't build new fences, roads or buildings or even remodel their home to accommodate their growing family.

Some states, including Montana, have been forced to attempt to amend similar existing laws to prevent widespread abuses from over-restrictive easements that even prohibit necessary home repairs or modification of farming methods. Sometimes TNC simply acts as a broker, quickly selling the easement for a profit to the federal government or other powerful entity.

Then by declaring the landowners in default on some minor technical aspect of the easement they can be forced to defend themselves in expensive legal actions. When the powerful easement owner or grantee prevails, the landowners are forced to also pay its legal costs which can easily result in loss of the property in a negotiated settlement.

Easements Destroy Property Value

Once a perpetual conservation easement becomes part of a property deed the resale value takes a nosedive. Despite recently enacted federal income and estate tax benefits for granting conservation easements, major agricultural financial institutions have discontinued the practice of making loans on any property that has been encumbered by a conservation easement.

Even if the small farm, ranch or timber family is allowed to retain enough unencumbered acres to meet zoning requirements for their children to build houses and access roads, the easement lands generally represent a financial liability for their heirs and will probably end up in government ownership within a generation.

TNC uses sophisticated global satellite imagery and helicopter surveys to predetermine the lands it intends to protect as part of core areas, buffer zones or wildlife corridors. Unless private land meets its special criteria (e.g. part of a high biodiversity ecosystem, special grizzly habitat, a chance to turn a quick profit, etc.) it may show no interest in purchasing an easement.

Millions of Rural People Displaced

It is difficult for the average person to imagine how rich and powerful The Nature Conservancy and a handful of other international conservation (preservation) NGOs have become. With board members or close allies in high places they manipulate governments and international banking systems to agree to forgive nations' debts in return for their establishing a vast network of parks, reserves, wildlife sanctuaries and corridors.

In the past four decades the number of these protected areas has increased more than a hundred fold, with more than **12%** of the earth's total land mass protected as wild lands by the end of 2005. Instead of benefiting the indigenous people of these lands as TNC and the other preservationist groups claimed it would, millions of native people have been driven from lands they occupied for centuries and forced to survive in crowded refugee camps.

Estimates of the number of rural people displaced by NGO efforts to preserve biodiversity in Africa alone range as high as 14.4 million! Yet the UN Study on Biodiversity reported that 90% of the current biodiversity in Africa is found outside of the protected areas – mostly in places occupied by humans.

UN Claims Undocumented Species Losses

Despite admitting the reality that human activity is also responsible for *increased* biodiversity in many rural areas, IUCN, TNC and other NGOs continue to provide the UN Commission on Biodiversity with material to support its claim that "the sky is falling." In its 92-page "Global Biodiversity Outlook 2" report issued in a March 2006 meeting in Curitiba, Brazil, the UN charged that humans are responsible for the sixth major extinction event in the history of earth - the greatest since the dinosaurs disappeared 65 million years ago.

The report estimates the current rate of extinctions is 1,000 times greater than historical rates, yet cites only the IUCN Red List of **844** animal and plant species that are believed to have gone extinct in the wild during the last **500** years. That figure includes every living organism that was ever reported on land or sea from 1500-2004, except protozoa, bacteria and viruses, and which has not been documented recently.

For example it includes "Bennet's Seaweed" reported at two isolated locations near islands in Australia in the 1800s and not seen since. It is defined as having different characteristics than plants, animals and fungi and is the sole example of a separate species that has never been seen by a human that is still alive.

The 844 includes **60** animal or plant species such as the Hawaiian Crow that have not been documented in the wild recently, but which exist in captive breeding programs. The last time said crow was reported seen in the wild was in 2002 and captive crows that were released have either disappeared or been recaptured.

TNC Scare Tactics Raise \$1.4 Billion

South African Richard Leakey's unsupported claim that the rate of species decline is 1,000 times greater than historical rates is just as absurd as the predictions only 10-20 years ago that millions of species would go extinct by the year 2000. Yet Leakey's irresponsible claim is repeated by the UN and TNC in pleas for funding and by the media that thrives on sensationalism, without offering even a single fact to support it.

In 2000 when TNC announced its campaign to raise one billion dollars for its U.S. Campaign for Conservation "to ensure lasting protection of our natural heritage" it used the same scare tactics to raise the money. Using its own staff, now called NatureServe, and "green" publisher, the Association for Biodiversity Information, it published "Precious Heritage" claiming that 1/3 of the plant and animal species found in the U.S. are in peril.

TNC's scare campaign was so successful that it raised \$1.4 billion by 2003, and by 2005 questionable investments and property transactions which had been under IRS, GAO and Congressional investigation for several years, increased TNC's net worth to **\$4 billion**. Wealth begets power and in June 2006 President Bush appointed, and the Senate unanimously confirmed, TNC Board Chairman Henry Paulson as the new Secretary of the Treasury.

IUCN Suggests Much Lower Extinction Rate

The IUCN Red List published in 2004 mentions the claimed 1,000 times historical rate of increase in extinctions, but suggests it is probably nearer 2-4 times as great as the fossil records of known species indicate. It correctly points out that the evolution of new species and the extinction of others is a natural ongoing process but also says "the high number of recent extinctions suggests that the world might now be facing a rapid net loss of biodiversity." (emphasis added)

Because the IUCN Red List is the accepted worldwide list of known species as well as those that are reported to have become extinct, logic dictates we use its data to see what we really know.

Extinction Rate Declining

According to ICUN, the fossil records indicate a rate of extinction equal to one species per year out of every one million species that existed. Thus if there are five million species, the average annual total of extinction dating back to the periods we can identify is five species per year.

The 1,413,247 animal and plant species known to exist in 2004 can reasonably be compared to the 784 animal and plant species listed as having become extinct by 2004. If there were no new species added to the existing 1,413,247 plus the 784 known extinctions over the 504 year period, the annual known extinction rate per million would be only 1.04 (almost exactly the average extinction rate from the fossil records).

Now let's examine "Extinctions in Recent Time" documented by thousands of botanists, entomologists, etc. in every state and country during the 20-year period from 1984-2004, and discussed thoroughly in the ICUN Red List. Of the 10 animal species listed, there were six tropical frogs or toads, one newt from China and three tropical birds. The remaining five species listed were four tropical plants and one Asian plant.

Despite all the efforts to confirm additional extinctions, there were no mammals, fishes, turtles, lizards, snakes, bivalves, gastropods, branchiopods, crustaceans, arachnids or insects found to be extinct anywhere in the world during the two decades! In fact the rate of extinction declined to only 3/4ths of one species per year per million species – 25% less than the average from both the fossil records and the previous 504 years!

But because IUCN also depends on large sums of money to exist, it suggests that the extinction rate of yet-to-be-documented species may be much greater than the rate for the known species. In reality, a smaller percent of insect species have been documented and insects make up the majority of all species, yet they are also less likely to be driven into extinction.

IUCN admits that most species that have become extinct existed in small, isolated tropical environments and evolved into a separate subspecies, often with significant color differences from similar species found in abundance elsewhere in slightly different habitat. The fact that these species will appear and disappear over time as they always have is used as an excuse to lock up vast areas of the earth to humans who were stewards of the land for centuries.

But the harsh reality that forcing these rural humans off of the land is destroying – not preserving – biodiversity was driven home to so-called conservationists at Bangkok in 2004. Maasai leader Martin Saning'o from Tanzania, patiently explained to 6,000 wildlife biologists that his people were the original conservationists yet their lives and cultures have been destroyed by people who call themselves "conservationists."

Implementing "Wildlands" is TNC Goal

All of the major conservation NGOs quickly admitted that the Maasai and countless farmers and ranchers around the world make a valuable contribution to conservation of wildlife species. Yet they continue to aggressively pursue their agenda of transferring private rural land to government ownership and protection.

Calling itself "Nature's Real Estate Agent," TNC could better be described as "the government's real estate agent." Buying or receiving gifts of millions of acres of land in the guise of "species conservation," it has reportedly sold over 10 million acres of private land to the federal government for huge profits.

With the admission by TNC Chief Biologist and former Board member Peter Kareiva, "No conservation
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organization can honestly claim it is halting extinction," (see page 13) it appears that pretending to prevent species extinction is just a gimmick to facilitate removing ownership or control of private land from rural dwellers. Other remarks by Kareiva and TNC make it clear that TNC's goal is implementing the Wildlands agenda described in the UN Biodiversity Assessment.

TNC and Global Warming

Using "NatureServe" it tells the IDFG CDC and its other CDC groups what species to consider as threatened to support its increased land acquisition as well as its strong opposition to crop irrigation projects. Operating in their usual crisis mode, TNC, IUCN and Al Gore claim human-caused carbon emissions and greenhouse gases are largely responsible for global warming which (they say) is a primary cause of current species extinctions.

However nearly 20,000 scientists reportedly agree that cooling and warming of the earth's crust are natural cyclic conditions created by factors in the universe beyond human control. According to them, there is no convincing evidence that human activity is causing or will cause catastrophic heating of the Earth's atmosphere.

Depending on interpretation of theory, we are either in the warm-up stage of the most recent "ice age" or else that age ended 10,000 years ago following extinction of the mastodons in the Midwestern U.S. and emigration of U.S. camels to Asia 13,000 years ago.

"Pests and Weeds Will Dominate"

A group of Cornell University ecologists and evolutionary biologists say it would be more realistic to attempt to re-introduce Indian elephants, African cheetahs and Asian Bactrian camels to the U.S. and allow them to "re-evolve" as they were 16,000 years ago, than continue to attempt to emulate conditions in 1492 A.D.

They claim the end result of the current biodiversity plan will be a return to a landscape dominated by "pests and weeds" (rats and dandelions). They insist there will be even fewer species than existed 10,000 years ago when species were just beginning to recover from the last ice age.

Neither side offers proof that reintroducing their choice of protected mega-fauna in a man-made wilderness (where humans have lived since the ice receded) will provide so-called "healthy" ecosystems or increased biodiversity. Yet TNC continues to use questionable tactics to expand artificial wilderness while increasing its assets.

TNC's Woodpecker Hunt

Another of TNC's "unique" acquisitions of private land in the U.S. began in March 2004 when it hired a university photographer/computer specialist to photograph an Ivory-billed Woodpecker reportedly seen in Arkansas' so-called "Big Swamp." On April 24, 2004 the

photographer produced a 4-second videotape of what he claimed was a female Ivory-bill, a species that was last reported seen in Arkansas in 1910.

TNC kept the information and the existence of the videotape a secret from the general public for a full year while it arranged for ~\$20 million in federal funding to expand the search and to acquire conservation easements from local farmers. When the Cornell University Ornithology staff released the information and blurred 4-second videotape on April 28, 2005, it was initially heralded as a great conservation achievement by scientists.

But once experts on Ivory-billed Woodpecker identification examined the video and audio tapes offered as proof, they concluded the bird was simply a common Pileated Woodpecker. Even when he was forced to admit that the object "confirmed" as an Ivory-bill in one frame was actually only a tree branch stub, the head of the Cornell Lab Team insisted the blurred videotape confirmed the woodpecker still exists in the wild.

FWS Creates Woodpecker Recovery Plan

Apparently unwilling to admit that it has already spent millions of dollars trying to locate a live bird and acquire land and conservation easements based on what may be a hoax, FWS recently prepared a 183-page "Draft Recovery Plan for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker" dated August 2007. The plan lists recovery costs (including money already spent) totaling \$27,785,000 for the 5-year period from 2006-2010 - with delisting scheduled to be initiated in 2075 if recovery criteria are met.

A Feb, 20, 2007 article at the TNC website entitled, "Save of the Week," explains how TNC teamed with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to secure an additional \$7.1 million from the USDA CREP Program "to acquire* (another) 6,250 acres along the Cache River where the ivory-billed woodpecker was re-discovered in 2004." (*the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program leases the farm croplands for 10 or 15 years and TNC acquires perpetual conservation easements on the farms.)

The farms are retired from producing crops and the Arkansas G&F monitors them to see that they don't violate the restrictive easements. Meanwhile, TNC adds another 6,250 acres of conservation easements to the more than three million acres of easements it already owns, thereby increasing its net worth without paying income or property taxes on any transactions

Governor Praises Elimination of Farms

The TNC website quotes Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe; "For farm producers in the project area, it will provide significant financial incentives and rental payments to retire their low-yielding, hard-to-farm croplands. Equally important, it will serve to restore premium wetland and wildlife habitat within the Cache River and Bayou DeView watershed. It's a win-win-win partnership."

Rather than save the small farmer as TNC claims it will do with its tax relief bill in Idaho, it did just the opposite in Arkansas. Now the Arkansas Governor is telling even more farmers that they shouldn't be farming or managing their own land but should give those rights up to TNC or a government agency in return for receiving 10 years of subsidy payments courtesy of the American taxpayer and licensed sportsmen.

In Idaho, "the restoration of premium wetland and wildlife habitat" praised by Governor Beebe, usually results in massive infestations of noxious weeds such as yellow starthistle and spotted knapweed that quickly become too costly to control – much less eradicate.

Is TNC Really Helping Farmers & Ranchers?

Most Idahoans are not surprised to learn that a group of former "Earth First!" activists were largely responsible for adoption of the Wildlands agenda by the UN in 1992. But the fact that TNC, with help from our natural resource managers, is the primary force facilitating the re-wilding of North America is difficult for many people to accept.

After all, TNC has acquired and preserved many of our natural scenic attractions for citizens to enjoy, while allowing limited sport hunting and fishing to continue on selected preserves. Yet there is little evidence that TNC is trying to encourage small farmers or ranchers to remain on the land and provide forage for wild game that hunters hunt.

Its website describes how it identifies target properties that will become Wildland Core Areas or Buffer Zones and, using cash and the lure of conservation tax savings, convinces a farmer, and then his neighbors to sell their lands to TNC below its appraised value. Then it advertises the lands for sale, to a selected list of "Conservation Buyers" and real estate brokers, at a substantially reduced price once the value of the conservation easement granted to TNC is deducted.

The federal tax savings are huge and, if the Idaho Legislature passes former Sen. Noh's tax proposal, up to half a million dollars in state tax savings may be allowed for such purchases in Idaho. Unlike many of the easements negotiated with ranchers or farmers, the conservation buyers are normally allowed to exclude property from easements which can be utilized to provide a new home site and other developments.

Yet the land covered by the easement still qualifies as "agricultural land" for the tax savings if the new owner receives a minimum of only \$1,000 per year in gross income from a small grazing lease - or temporarily idles fallow land (see I.C. Sec. 63-604[b][ii]). The tax perks plus the ability to enjoy a private game preserve or even a fishing or hunting lodge make this an attractive investment.

Representative Wood described to his fellow funding committee members how the purchase and lockup

of large Idaho acreages by wealthy nonresidents has created a major loss of hunting access. But that is not the only way TNC and other non-hunting NGOs are adversely affecting hunter harvest of wild game in Idaho.

IDFG Preaches, Follows TNC Agenda

From IDFG Director Groen down through the biologists and C.O.s in the field, a repeated reference to "restoring native vegetation" as a substitute for active species management parrots the TNC agenda. As students, IDFG biologists were taught that passive hands-off wildlife management is practiced only in national parks which have become "nature's classrooms."

Yet wild game management elsewhere has now been replaced with people manipulation – the eco-religion of every game department employee in every state and province who wants to keep his or her job and advance in their chosen profession. That philosophy allows IDFG biologists to manage so-called "invasive species" such as yellow perch in Cascade Reservoir and pen-reared pheasants in WMAs, but does not allow management of native species like mule deer and grouse.

"Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act"

Few Idahoans seem aware that TNC's efforts to restore 15th Century flora and fauna are also destroying rural America's customs, culture and economy. Fewer still are aware of HR 1975 the "Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act" introduced in Congress on April 20, 2007 and supported by **187** Congressmen (only 31 short of the majority needed to pass).

This bill complements the Wildland acquisitions by TNC in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming and would create **25 million acres** of **new** wilderness in these three states, including 5 million acres in Wildlife Corridors connecting larger wilderness areas and 4 million acres of developed land that would be allowed to return to a "natural" state. This would nearly triple the amount of wilderness in the three states and would include the Greater Salmon-Selway and Hells Canyon Ecosystems in Idaho (plus some lands in Washington and Oregon).

The bill also adds 2,056 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers and creeks in the three states and would halt timber harvest and road building on every piece of roadless USFS land in the five states totaling 1,000 acres or more for potential wilderness consideration *by the founders of the Wildlands Project.*

Finally, this bill, which creates the "National Wildland Restoration and Recovery System," and a "Wildland Recovery Corps," has been introduced in similar form in the past eight sessions. Thanks to well-funded lobbying, it gains new Congressional supporters every month.

Undue Influence

A recent off-the-record boast by an IDFG official that the Commissioners take no action that is not approved

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Will State Constitutions Protect the Future of Hunting?

By Darren LaSorte

(Darren LaSorte is Manager of Hunting Policy for the National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action (NRA/ILA) NRA Hunters' Alliance. This is the NRA Hunters' Rights Organization dedicated to protecting every American's Right to Hunt.

The following article, written by Mr. LaSorte and published in the September 2007 issue of *The American Hunter*, explains why we need a Right to Hunt amendment to our State Constitution now. The author candidly explains how and why state game commissions and agencies in Arkansas and Tennessee officially opposed proposed amendments that were introduced in their respective legislatures, along with some "sportsmen's" organizations who are too closely aligned with the agencies.

Included in the article is a model Right to Hunt amendment developed by the NRA to fit most circumstances

I am especially grateful to NRA for giving me permission to provide this unedited article to Idaho Legislators, F&G Commissioners and all Outdoorsman readers who want to preserve our hunting, fishing and trapping heritage for future generations. – ED)

Over the last few years, NRA-ILA has been working diligently to change the course of the well-intended campaign to enshrine the Right to Hunt in state constitutions. The voters in eight states have overwhelmingly approved these constitutional amendments since 1996. Vermont, the only other state with a constitutional protection of hunting, has had its provision since 1777.

The language in the eight constitutions amended during the last decade generally recognizes that the people have a right to hunt pursuant to laws and regulations. While NRA-ILA has supported the adoption of these provisions, we have concluded that a more aggressive approach is necessary in order to provide truly meaningful protections against the anti-hunting zealots who are conspiring daily to put an end to our proud and honorable heritage. Because it's been done one way in the past does not mean it cannot be improved in the future. After all, we often have only one bite at the apple when it comes to amending a state constitution.

This new approach provides specific protections against the kinds of prohibitions most likely to be sought by Wayne Pacelle's Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and others. It is hard to argue that including more specific language in a constitutional amendment is bad, especially in an age when many judges seem to believe that their personal political agenda trumps the plain language of constitutions. Addressing specific issues limits the potential for mischief from the bench.

Make no mistake about it; the threat to our sporting heritage posed by HSUS's Pacelle and the young anti-freedom crusaders his \$120 million-a-year organization is funding is real. They are hoping that the continuing population shifts from rural to urban America and the associated changes in values will soon provide for a political climate that will allow for the majority of non-hunters to crush the hunting minority – relegating us to political insignificance. For the time being, however, polls show that hunting is supported by a healthy majority of Americans. They understand that American hunters are the nation's true conservationists and ethical wildlife managers who provide an essential public service.

Pacelle has told the Associated Press, "If we could shut down all sport hunting in a moment, we would." He wasn't concealing his agenda when he told the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, "Our goal is to get sport hunting in the same category as cock fighting and dog fighting. Our opponents say that hunting is a tradition. We say traditions can change."

Borrowing from the playbook written by those who have campaigned for decades to strip honest, law-abiding Americans of their Right to Keep and Bear Arms and right to self-defense, Pacelle has chosen an incremental approach. As his quote to the Associated Press indicates, he well knows that he cannot end all hunting tomorrow. Instead he campaigns to end it one species, method or jurisdiction at a time.

HSUS lobbies elected officials and bankrolls ballot initiatives to end hunting for species like dove, cougar, bear and deer. It claims that bow hunting is inhumane and causes far too much suffering to remain legal. Of course, this suggests that other hunting implements such as rifles are somehow acceptable to the group when nothing could be further from the truth. It told the *Washingtonian* "[T]here is no rational basis for maintaining a moral distinction between the treatment of humans and other animals." Using hounds and trapping are a couple of the methods of taking game routinely targeted by the group.

To HSUS hunting is never an appropriate means of managing overpopulated species. It would rather see the government use expensive and unproven contraception methods to control deer populations or harass marauding bears with loud noises and rubber bullets, as is currently being done unsuccessfully in New Jersey to the tune of nearly one million dollars per year. Of course, the harassed bears simply move from the garbage can where they were being annoyed to one where they are not. Such inadequate efforts endanger lives by enhancing the probability of vehicle/animal collisions and encounters

with aggressive predators.

Our hunting heritage faces many threats; therefore it is important that state constitutions offer meaningful protection against those threats. It is time that Right to Hunt amendments address these specific threats in order to ensure, to the extent possible, that activist judges don't interpret the provisions to mean nothing, as some of them have had a history of doing with regard to our Right to Keep and Bear Arms.

As is the case with the general provisions adopted by the voters in eight states since 1996, NRA-ILA's model language refers to the people's right to hunt and fish, subject to laws and regulations. However, our model language requires that the restrictions be "reasonable."

The intent is to ensure that science and objective management practices, not emotion and politics, drive the development of hunting regulations. Examples would include the adoption of hunting seasons and bag limits, distinction between male and female animals, imposition of penalties against violators, and the assessment of license and tag fees for conservation and enforcement efforts.

In order to defend, for example, against future proposed bans on the hunting of doves or bears, use of archery tackle, or dogs for hunting, the model language provides specific protections for the hunting of "traditionally pursued" species using "traditional methods." To protect against states turning to taxpayer-funded sharpshooters, blow horn-armed agitators, and contraception methods first as a means of wildlife management, the model language also explicitly states that public hunting and trapping is the preferred means of controlling wildlife. This does not rule out other practices where appropriate.

Together, the NRA-ILA model language offers real protection against clear and present dangers posed by Pacelle and his clan. If you're a hunter in Tennessee and a politically motivated dove hunting ban is proposed-like the one HSUS successfully helped to pass in Michigan last year-would you rather have a constitutional provision that generally recognizes your right to hunt pursuant to laws and regulations, or one that recognizes your right to specifically hunt doves (traditionally pursued species)? Our model language offer far less language for an activist court to side with ban advocates.

Opposition to the NRA-ILA model language is coming from some disappointing sources. Game commissions and agencies in Arkansas and Tennessee have officially opposed proposed amendments that have been introduced in the state legislatures. One official with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) might have been too frank in 2005 when he argued that the agency would oppose any constitutional right to hunt because it might need to ban certain types of "unpopular hunting for political reasons." His example at the time

was hunting with hounds but how long before the same justification could be used to ban bow hunting after HSUS engages in a well-funded and sophisticated Nashville media campaign depicting the "inhumane aspects" of this traditional method?

Unwittingly, the official could not have advanced a more compelling argument in support of a truly meaningful Right to Hunt amendment. Unfortunately, government entities rarely, if ever, voluntarily relinquish power once they have acquired it. The ability to ban certain types of hunting for political reasons is one power TWRA will indeed lose if the model language is adopted. This would be a very good thing for hunters and for TWRA, whether it knows it now or not.

Other opposition has come from "sportsmen's" organizations that are too closely aligned with the game commissions and agencies. If they support the adoption of any Right to Hunt amendment, it is the general language of the past. These are the versions that might protect hunters against an outright prohibition of all hunting but, unlike the NRA-ILA model language, very well could allow bans on doe hunting of certain species or prohibition of certain methods. After TWRA's unqualified opposition to all proposed constitutional rights, it should concern hunters in the Volunteer State that it is now neutral regarding the general language. This suggests that the agency believes the general language does nothing to curb its current power.

These organizations and their agency or government partners also contend that the risk of legal challenges to common game regulations is too great if a Right to Hunt is adopted. While this has not been the case in any of the nine states with existing constitutional provisions, little is ever gained without some risk. Regardless, the real risk is for the good guys to do nothing.

Some citizens, elected officials, game commissioners and even sportsmen argue that the effort to enshrine the Right to Hunt in state constitutions is not necessary. In many states they feel secure in the ability of future generations to head to their favorite duck blind or deer stand.

Fortunately James Madison and the rest of our country's founders did not hold a similar short-sighted belief when they wrote and ratified the first and second amendments to the U.S. Constitution as part of the Bill of Rights.

In 1789, no one questioned the freedom of the press or the individual citizen's right to free speech or to keep and bear arms. After all, the combination of those thoroughly exercised rights won that generation, and our country, its freedom.

As we saw earlier this year in Washington, D.C., James Madison's words, written more than 200 years ago,

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by the Department reflects the agency's attitude that they are running the show and the Commissioners are just a figurehead to provide the appearance of complying with Idaho law. When a new Commissioner is appointed by the Governor, Department employees conduct a training session telling him what his responsibilities are and how he must do his job.

From that point forward biologists and other employees feed him limited information, often in the form of a power point presentation which appears to support their recommendation, rather than provide the facts and the time necessary to make an informed decision. Commissioners don't know enough about wildlife ecology to demand a forage inventory when declining populations are blamed on lack of habitat.

In fact the Commission spends far more time debating which special interest group gets the biggest slice of the pie or whether side-locks or in-lines are more effective, than demanding proof that creating wildlands benefits Idaho wildlife.

Hopefully, this lengthy discussion of biodiversity, species extinction and wildlands agendas will allow the wildlife diversity funding committee to take a closer look at what you are being asked to fund. New Jersey agreed to use general fund money to match the million or so dollars provided each year in federal SWG funds but that is only the tip of the iceberg.

If the CWCS program is not going to save any species from the massive extinction that isn't really happening, does it make sense to continue subsidizing it? And if we do, should it remain under the Fish and Game roof? Senator Cameron asked some valid questions that deserve answers before we decide to pour more \$millions into what appears to be a bottomless pit.

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were used by the U.S Court of Appeals to strike down some of the most draconian firearm laws in the land— laws that left citizens defenseless against criminals for more than three decades.

In the same vein as the attacks on the rights of citizens to keep and bear arms over the last many decades, attacks on the hunting traditions of the people of Tennessee, Arkansas and the rest of the states will come. You need only ask the sportsmen in states such as Maine, New Jersey, Michigan, Colorado, California, Oregon, Florida, North Carolina, Maryland, Arizona and Alaska. They have all weathered the assaults, some better than others.

It is time to exercise some of the same foresight associated with the adoption of the Second Amendment and the Right to Keep and Bear Arms constitutional provisions found in 44 state constitutions. It is time to adopt new and improved amendments recognizing our Right to Hunt.

Man has been hunting since the beginning of time, at least as we know it. This was well documented on the walls of caves and, more recently, through science. The only question is whether we will be hunting until the end of time. Legislators and voters who will be considering meaningful constitutional amendments safeguarding the Right to Hunt hold the answer. NRA-ILA will be working hard with your help to ensure all future generations will enjoy the thrill of the hunt and all the benefits it brings.

**NRA-ILA Model Right to Hunt and Fish
Constitutional Amendment**

The people have a right to hunt, fish, trap and harvest game, subject to reasonable regulations. Consistent with the public trust to conserve birds, fish, game and wildlife, traditional methods may be used to take non-threatened species traditionally pursued. Public hunting, fishing and trapping shall be the preferred means of managing and controlling non-threatened wildlife. Nothing in this amendment shall be construed to modify any provision of common law or statutes relating to trespass, eminent domain, or any other property rights.

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