



Saving America's Wildlife: Toward a Common Agenda

The National Wildlife Federation
Strategic Plan | FY2018 - FY2021





President's Message

Federation Family, Conservation Partners, and Fellow Americans,

America is blessed with diverse wildlife and abundant natural resources. Over the past century, working in partnership, we have recovered hundreds of species and begun restoring vital natural resources. Yet despite these successes, more than one-third of our fish and wildlife species are at risk of extinction in the coming decades. Populations of pollinators, amphibians, and songbirds are plummeting. Whole species of mammals are collapsing, while aquatic species from fish to freshwater mussels are in staggering decline. These species are today's canaries in the coal mine, serving as a harbinger of a large-scale extinction event and calling upon us to act, not just for wildlife, but for our own health, prosperity, and ultimate survival.

This is a crisis we can solve, but only if we work together. Increasing wildlife populations requires more than simply doing more of what we're already doing. We must inspire and mobilize tens of millions of people to act for wildlife at a time when Americans are less and less connected with nature and spend more time indoors, on technology, and in cities. Think of the moments that opened your eyes to the wonders of wildlife. For me, it all started with Ranger Rick. My parents introduced me to nature by exploring the outdoors from our backyard to national parks—and today I'm passing on a lifelong love of wildlife to my daughters. We need all Americans to enjoy amazing experiences in nature because to save America's wildlife, we must rekindle America's love affair with nature and rebuild our conservation ethic.

Over the past two years, the National Wildlife Federation and our state and territorial affiliates embarked upon the hard work of charting a new course for our nation's wildlife. At our 2015 annual meeting, we adopted a "We Believe" statement of shared conservation values. In 2016, we unanimously committed to a shared vision of "increasing America's fish and wildlife populations and enhancing their capacity to thrive in a rapidly changing world." The four-year action plan that follows represents the best thinking from across the National Wildlife Federation, our affiliates, and our conservation partners on what collective actions are needed to make a sizable installment towards increasing wildlife populations within a generation. The plan sets in motion a "Common Agenda for Wildlife" built upon sound science, clear priorities, and scalable solutions that match the magnitude of the crisis. Our Common Agenda includes a commitment to:

- **Protect, Restore, and Connect Wildlife Habitat**—Promote active restoration and reconnection of fragmented and degraded habitat across protected lands, working lands, waterways, coasts, and communities.
- **Transform Wildlife Conservation**—Advance 21st-century wildlife management, defend public trust resources, and confront emerging stressors like climate change, invasive species, and wildlife diseases.
- **Connect Americans with Wildlife**—Inspire the next generation of conservationists and mobilize a diverse conservation army to broaden the stewardship ethic, conservation action, public and private investments, and support for policy changes necessary to save thousands of at-risk species in our time.

We Believe...

America's experience with cherished landscapes and wildlife has helped define and shape our national character and identity for generations. Protecting these natural resources is a cause that has long united Americans from all walks of life and political stripes. To hunters, anglers, hikers, birders, wildlife watchers, boaters, climbers, campers, cyclists, gardeners, farmers, forest stewards, and other outdoor enthusiasts, this conservation ethic has evolved and is now integral to our heritage. As Americans we share a sacred duty and obligation to protect and build upon our conservation heritage for the sake of wildlife, ourselves, our neighbors and, most of all, for future generations.

Adopted by National Wildlife Federation Affiliates, March 2015

Some will ask, “How can we possibly pursue this level of ambition now, given the dysfunction and threats in Washington?” Our answer: Wildlife cannot afford to wait—and neither can we. Not when thousands of species are at risk of extinction and waterways across our nation are unsafe to fish or swim. Not when we are losing millions of acres of habitat, when public resources are under threat of privatization, and when millions of children are spending hours in front of screens and mere minutes outdoors. These challenges do not belong to any political party; they belong to all of us, and it will take all of us to solve them.

The National Wildlife Federation and our conservation partners have proven time and again that when we bring together diverse forces from across the conservation community and act boldly, we accomplish great things for wildlife. Under the leadership of our first president, J.N. “Ding” Darling, our Federation’s first priority was securing passage of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson), a foundation of the revered North American model of wildlife conservation. This victory launched the recovery of dozens of bird and mammal species and propelled our later work with countless conservation partners and sportsmen and women to secure funding for sportfish, protect habitat and endangered species, and improve the quality of our water, soil, and air.

Today, this means working as One Federation to harness the full power of our unique organizations, broad political perspectives, and geographic diversity. Together, we will attract new investors and launch innovative programs and products that simultaneously advance our vision, expand our reach, and generate new sources of flexible funding to broaden our place-based efforts.

By framing this Common Agenda for Wildlife as a collective “call to action,” the National Wildlife Federation and our affiliates recognize we are not alone in this fight. Thousands of conservation groups and activists are working across the nation and around the globe to reverse our mounting ecological debt and restore the balance between humans and nature. Indeed, the National Wildlife Federation has many allies. But right now, we are not all working toward a common vision. Putting America’s wildlife on the road to recovery will require our One Federation to partner with organizations across the nation to advance the pieces of this Common Agenda that align most closely with their own priorities and help to mobilize an unprecedented conservation army for collective impact.

Saving America’s wildlife does more than conserve and protect our nation’s precious natural resources. It strengthens the fabric of our democracy and increases prosperity for future generations. In saving wildlife, we save ourselves. Please join us.

Your Happy Warrior,



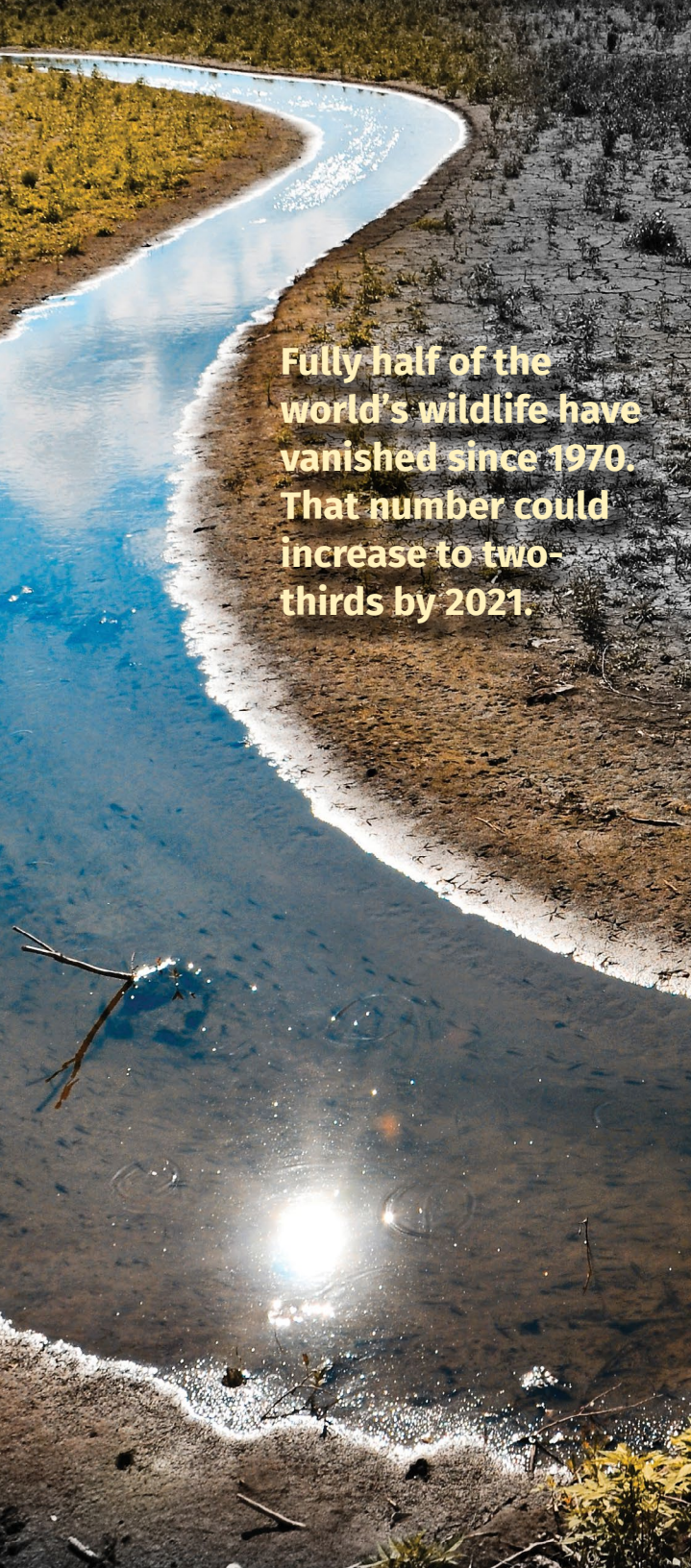
Collin O'Mara
President and Chief Executive Officer

[CLICK HERE](#)
for more about this plan
and its creators

**So, what will be different four years from now?
Here are five metrics of our success.**

Together, we will:

1. Ensure a majority of Americans and policymakers are aware of our nation’s wildlife crisis by activating 11 million people and joining forces with 2,500 partner organizations as part of America’s conservation army;
2. Put 25% of America’s at-risk wildlife species on a path to recovery, protect and better manage habitat and wildlife on 300 million acres of public and tribal land, and restore and enhance the resilience of 40 million acres of critical private land and water habitat by securing at least \$2 billion in additional annual conservation funding and advancing 21st-century wildlife management practices in partnership with state and federal wildlife agencies;
3. Rebuild America’s conservation ethic by engaging 25 million young people across 20,000 schools in environmental education and recurring outdoor experiences;
4. Increase the relevance of wildlife conservation nationwide by partnering on local water, wildlife habitat, and environmental justice projects in 1,000 diverse urban and rural communities; and
5. Defend America’s democratic public trust resources (public lands, waterways, and wildlife) for current and future generations from threats of divestiture, reduced access, or privatization.



Fully half of the world's wildlife have vanished since 1970. That number could increase to two-thirds by 2021.

The Urgent Need for Action

Historic accounts describe vast flocks of birds, massive herds of bison, and myriad other animals moving across America's seemingly endless forests, grasslands, and waterways. In past centuries, these resources were seen as unlimited and were therefore overexploited. At the turn of the 20th century, when the U.S. population was just 40% of what it is today, many conservation organizations and public agencies could see that continuing down the path of exploitation would mean an end to abundant and thriving wildlife in America.

The formation of the National Wildlife Refuge System along with expanded state wildlife reserves and the creation of many public agencies and private wildlife conservation groups—including the National Wildlife Federation in 1936—helped bring many species back from the brink of extinction through habitat protection, restoration, and management. These conservation successes include the recovery of deer, elk, bighorn sheep, whales, wild turkeys, wood ducks, eagles, snow geese, brown pelicans, and many more.

More than one-third of America's fish and wildlife species are at risk of extinction in the coming decades.

Despite these species-specific successes, there is an overall, systemic decline in fish and wildlife populations in the United States and across the globe, mostly due to habitat loss and degradation. Climate change has accelerated and intensified this decline. In fact, more than one-third of America's fish and wildlife species are at risk of extinction in the coming decades.¹

The United States is not alone in its loss of wildlife. According to the World Wildlife Fund's Living Planet Report 2016², populations of vertebrate species worldwide have dropped 58% over a 40-year period. Between 1970 and 2010, both land-based and marine species have decreased 39% and freshwater species an alarming 76%. The factors leading to these declines will only increase in future years as climate change and other large-scale threats come to bear on U.S. habitats and ecosystems.



¹Stein, B.A., L.S. Kutner, J.S. Adams eds. 2000. *Precious Heritage: The Status of Biodiversity in the United States*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

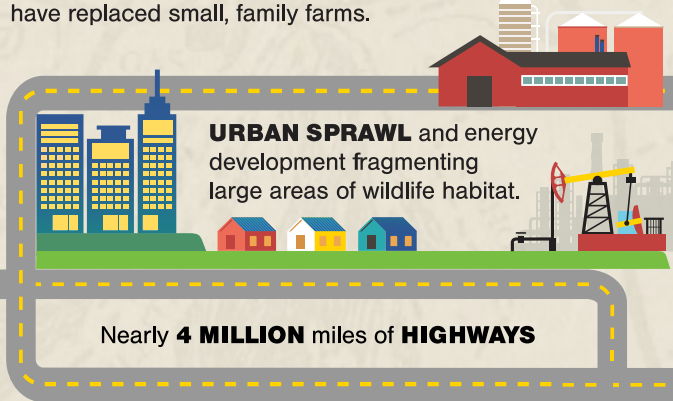
²WWF. 2016. *Living Planet Report 2016: Species and Spaces, People and Places*. R. McLellan, L. Iyengar, B. Jeffries, and N. Oerlemans (Eds). Gland, Switzerland: WWF.



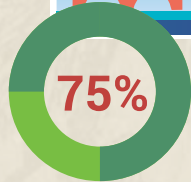
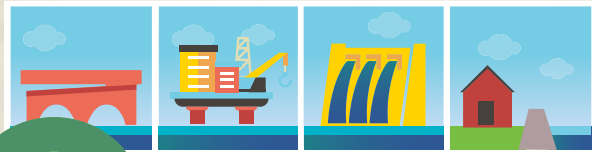
LAND USE CHANGES

200,000,000+

Hundreds of millions of acres of **INDUSTRIAL FARMS** have replaced small, family farms.



ALTERATION OF RIVERS AND WATERWAYS



of America's rivers and streams have been altered in ways detrimental to wildlife habitat.



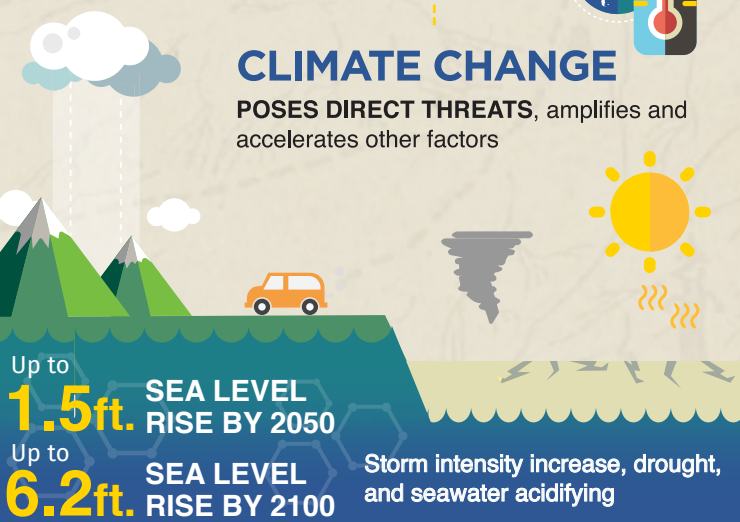
ONE-THIRD of the nation's rivers and streams do not meet basic water quality standards

WHY WILDLIFE ARE DECLINING:

LARGE-SCALE AND RAPID CHANGE



POPULATION GROWTH



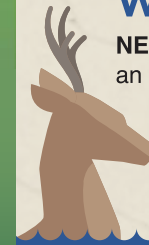
INVASIVE SPECIES

HARMFUL INVADERS are degrading natural habitats across the country.



WILDLIFE DISEASES

NEW AND EMERGING DISEASES are an increasing problem for many species.



CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE ravaging deer/cervids' brains.



Chytrid Fungus (Bd) decimating amphibian populations worldwide.



The Value of Wildlife

Economic:

Our natural heritage serves as the foundation of America's outdoor economy, which is one of the fastest growing parts of our national economy. More than 140 million Americans engage in outdoor recreation annually, generating more than \$887 billion in economic activity and supporting 7.6 million jobs. Much of this economic activity takes place in rural communities that have been disproportionately impacted by changes in the national and global economy. Recovering wildlife populations and restoring natural resources have the potential to create significant economic opportunities and prosperity in local communities across the nation.

Ecosystem Services:

Beyond economics, natural habitats provide other significant public values, such as clean water, groundwater recharge, flooding abatement, water retention in dry periods, cleaner air, cooler temperatures, and support for pollinators, which are critical to food supplies. These values and others—often termed ecosystem services—are not always well measured and articulated and, in many cases, are not fully appreciated when natural resource agencies are struggling for tight budget dollars.

Intrinsic value:

Wildlife has value far beyond economic returns and ecosystem services. Wildlife and our natural world inspire awe. For many people, they provide spiritual sustenance and even a path to virtue. They provide links from our present to our past and future. They are part of our heritage as a people, and they form our memories with family and friends—bonds built while camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, birding, and so much more.

Examples include:



Clean and abundant water is essential to all life.



The protection of native pollinators sustains our food supplies.



The tree canopy in communities, large and small, lowers hot weather utility bills, helps children with asthma, and reduces polluted runoff into drinking water supplies.



Wildlife habitat in steeply graded agricultural areas and along streams reduces soil loss, improves water quality, and stems flooding.



Wetlands along coasts buffer major storms and water surges.



Wildlife areas support local outdoor recreation and boost tourism income.

More than
\$887
BILLION
is generated from
outdoor recreation



Outdoor recreation supports
7.6 MILLION JOBS

140
MILLION
Americans
engage in outdoor
recreation annually



What's Working

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation³ has been responsible for great successes in conserving some of our most treasured fish and game species over the last century. In this system, wildlife belongs to the public and is managed according to sound science. The public has democratic access to wildlife resources, hunting and fishing are regulated to ensure sustainability, and dedicated resources are invested in habitat restoration. State agencies, with primary responsibility for wildlife management, have developed regulatory safeguards to conserve fish and wildlife, research programs to assess species status, and management actions to recover and reintroduce populations. On the federal side, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service co-manages migratory bird populations while also maintaining a system of national refuges, overseeing endangered species protection, and supporting a wide range of other conservation activities. These collective efforts have led to successful management of countless game and nongame species and helped bring many species back from the brink of extinction.

Recovery of endangered species like bald eagle, humpback whale, brown pelican

Restoration to healthy population levels of game species such as elk, wild turkey, waterfowl

Recovery of salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest

Improving water quality and aquatic ecosystems in nationally significant "Great Waters" such as the Chesapeake Bay and Great Lakes

³ Organ, J.F., V. Geist, S.P. Mahoney, S. Williams, P.R. Krausman, G.R. Batcheller, T.A. Decker, R. Carmichael, P. Nanjappa, R. Regan, R.A. Medellin, R. Cantu, R.E. McCabe, S. Craven, G.M. Vecellio, and D.J. Decker. 2012. The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. The Wildlife Society Technical Review 12-04. The Wildlife Society, Bethesda, Maryland, USA





Women in Conservation Leadership Summit
Photo by: Kaila Drayton Photography

We Will Be....

One Federation. The National Wildlife Federation and its affiliates recognize that our strength lies largely in our structure as a true federation. Together, we are stronger than the sum of our parts. The relationship between the Federation and its affiliates is akin to a marriage—a partnership between organizations with a shared vision for a better future for people and wildlife, compatible goals, and a commitment to work together toward accomplishing that shared vision. Each partner has its own unique structure, programs and governance, and many have broader interests that are not part of the Federation’s overall vision but are also not in conflict with that vision. The affiliates are the Federation’s First Partners—those to whom the Federation has pledged its trust and support.

Transforming the Wildlife Conservation Movement

Working arm in arm with our affiliates, partners, and millions of engaged citizens, the National Wildlife Federation will champion a bold and ambitious Common Agenda for Wildlife to counter the decline of wildlife species and populations.

Building on the successes of the last century, this Common Agenda is put forth by the National Wildlife Federation and its 51 state and territorial affiliated organizations to engage the entire U.S. conservation movement in taking a series of critical and timely steps to not only reverse the decline of American wildlife populations but to significantly increase their numbers over the next 30 years. This document summarizes the larger plan that embodies elements of the first four-year installment on a 30-year goal for achieving that vision.

The Federation and its affiliates recognize the immensity of this plan’s vision, which includes broad-based strategies for conserving major land, water, and coastal ecosystems, greening communities, and building public support for conservation. It also recognizes that active management in a time of rapid change will be vital to helping fish and wildlife and their habitats adapt to major shifts in climate, demographics, land use, pollution, consumer habits, and more.

The challenges facing wildlife in the 21st century demand a bold new vision and strategy to bring wildlife populations back to healthy and abundant levels over the next generation. To successfully implement this Common Agenda for Wildlife requires it be embraced by the entire conservation community. It will take hundreds of agencies, thousands of organizations and private companies, and millions of people reflecting the full diversity of America in race, ethnicity, gender, culture, and political orientation. It will require greatly increased funding, organization, education, and action to achieve this vision. We are energized by the comprehensive approach and the broad-based partnerships that we are putting into action as part of this plan.

Building a Common Agenda for Wildlife

Strategic Priorities



Grow Capacity, Investment, and Innovation

The recent decline in wildlife populations tells us we cannot rely only on what has worked to date.

Widespread declines in many wildlife populations tells us we need to do more to address both longstanding and new pressures on wildlife—and we need to start right away. This Common Agenda for Wildlife builds on what’s working now and provides a new paradigm for reversing the decline of wildlife in America.

Three Pillars:

Our Common Agenda for Wildlife has three pillars that help describe what we will do, collectively, to restore America’s wildlife, starting over the next four years toward our 30-year vision. These pillars are to 1) protect, restore, and connect wildlife habitat; 2) transform wildlife conservation; and 3) connect Americans with wildlife.

Our Common Agenda for Wildlife



Pillar One

“If you care about wildlife, you need to focus on the habitats on which they depend. Reversing declines in the nation’s amazing diversity of plants and animals will require that we dramatically increase the scale of habitat conservation and adjust our approaches to more fully take into account emerging threats such as rapid climate change and shifting land uses. Protecting, restoring, and connecting core wildlife habitats across the full breadth of America is fundamental to achieve our long-term vision of thriving wildlife populations.”

— Dr. Bruce Stein, NWF Associate Vice President, Conservation Science and Climate Adaptation



Pillar Two

“As a lifelong hunter and angler, I believe it’s critical to have well-funded and strong wildlife agencies who use science-based wildlife management practices to ensure that future generations can enjoy and benefit from wildlife and wild places.”

— Kathy Hadley, Chair, National Wildlife Federation Board



Pillar Three

“People and wildlife are a part of nature. This is a timeless connection that must be passed on to future generations for mutual survival. Therefore, we intend to build a conservation army that mirrors America’s population. It will include the strength and diversity that is America; both urban and rural populations, liberals and conservatives, young and old, people of all races, ethnicities and sexual orientations. For as Pope Francis reminds us, we are ‘one people living in one home.’”

— Kent Salazar, Western Vice Chair, National Wildlife Federation Board

Growing Capacity through Investment, Integration, and Innovation



“As an affiliate leader, we are proud to be part of One Federation championing a bold vision and building the capacity we will need to make real and lasting change.”

— Rebecca Pritchett, Past President, Alabama Wildlife Federation

Pillar One

Pillar One:

Protect, Restore, Connect Wildlife Habitat



The American landscape is a complex matrix, with some lands and waters strongly retaining their natural conditions and others in various states of modification and conversion. We need to better align future conservation efforts with the particular challenges and opportunities that emerge from different landscapes. Achieving our vision will require that we think strategically about the various settings where we need to make a difference for wildlife and craft a continuum of landscape-specific strategies and tactics, including:

- Protected habitats and corridors
- Working lands
- Water for wildlife
- Coasts
- Communities

[CLICK HERE
for more detail.](#)

Success by 2021



The adoption of landscape-scale approaches to conservation



A nationwide network of well-managed protected areas and wildlife corridors, along with working lands, farms, and forests that support abundant wildlife



Water systems that have higher ecological value for fish and wildlife



Living (not hardened) shorelines



Green, healthy, and wildlife-friendly communities



What We Will Do:

- By working with private landowners and public agencies, advance creation of a nationwide habitat protection system, including a new riparian corridor network connecting and enhancing tens of millions of acres of the nation's core wildlife habitats.
- Promote and defend long-term protection of 300 million acres of national public and tribal lands including 35 million acres of core sagebrush steppe habitat across 11 western states.
- Conserve 25 million acres of wildlife habitat on private lands by reforming the national Farm Bill and the national Renewable Fuels Standard.
- Secure an additional \$2 billion in funding per year to protect and restore fish and wildlife and their habitats, and to safeguard and improve the quality of the nation's waters and wetlands.
- Maintain and secure increased protection for more than 1 million miles of critical smaller streams and related wetland areas under the Clean Water Act.
- Bring increased protection, restoration, and habitat improvements to 1,600 miles of the Gulf of Mexico coast, 30% of the nation's coastal wetlands, the Everglades, and major eastern estuaries such as the Chesapeake and Delaware bays.
- Actively engage 500 cities, towns, and counties in greenspace programs that create wildlife habitat and support thousands of acres of publicly managed habitat as well as habitat on private land.
- Implement programs to help 20,000 U.S. K-12 schools, 1,000 colleges, community colleges and universities, and 5,000 early childhood centers exemplify sustainable practices as leading community assets.
- Join forces with partner organizations to create 1 million pollinator, bird, and wildlife gardens in hundreds of communities across the U.S.



Ambitious and Pragmatic Approach

Landscape-scale approaches to conservation recognize the complex nature of the landscape and strive to protect, restore, and connect habitats on public and private lands, in terrestrial and aquatic environments, and in areas managed primarily for conservation purposes as well as those where human uses predominate.

Protecting some of everything and enough to last. There is an urgent need to fill the gaps in the system of protected lands and waters to ensure representation of the full array of ecosystems, which in turn are necessary to sustain the full diversity of fish, wildlife, and plants.

Connecting core habitats to provide wildlife room to roam, permit genetic exchange among wildlife populations, and allow for longer-term range shifts in response to changing climatic conditions.

Active management of conservation lands and waters. Given the pervasive changes that have already affected ecosystems across America, coupled with the accelerating effects of a shifting climate, habitat conservation will increasingly require active management. Ecological restoration will increasingly need to focus on restoring or maintaining system functions rather than seeking a return to past conditions.

Meeting the needs of people and wildlife together. Urban planners who incorporate habitat conservation enhance valuable ecological services and buffers for communities and create safer, more appealing places to live for both people and wildlife.

Pillar One

1. Protected Habitats

Protected areas make up core habitats that are particularly valuable to wildlife. For core habitat areas to be able to sustain and increase fish and wildlife populations, they must be seen and managed as part of a larger, interconnected system. This means enhancing connectivity among protected areas. Linked habitats are key to enabling plants, fish, and other animals to disperse and allow gene flow among populations and are also essential if species are to adapt to longer-term shifts in climate.

Protected Habitats Goal: Our goal is to expand and connect protected areas nationwide to sustain healthy fish and wildlife populations and to allow for seasonal migrations and climate-driven range shifts.

Priority Strategies:



Pillar One



2. Working Lands

Nearly two-thirds of the American land base are used for farming, grazing, active forestry, and other production activities. These activities, while vital to our economy and way of life, must be better balanced with the needs of wildlife. Some landowners are managing their land to provide for the needs of wildlife, but many others could be doing more to embrace this stewardship ethic. The National Wildlife Federation, in partnership with our affiliates, will expand our existing collaborative work with private landowners to further increase beneficial wildlife habitat across the landscape. This work, combined with efforts to reform harmful subsidies like the ethanol mandate and other policies that encourage land conversion, will help the Federation achieve a net increase of wildlife habitat on working lands.

Working Lands Goal: Our goal is to improve wildlife habitat and increase the habitat effectiveness of active working and production lands such as farms, grazing lands, and production forests to support and boost healthy populations of fish and wildlife.

Priority Strategies:



Advance collaborative conservation by supporting the management and use of agricultural, grazing, and forestry lands to improve wildlife habitat, enhance habitat connectivity, and avoid or minimize damage to adjacent habitat and waterways.



Halt the conversion of additional natural fish and wildlife habitat to active agriculture, grazing, forest plantations, mining, or energy/ethanol production in the United States and important areas internationally.



Restore wildlife habitat on private agricultural, forestry, mining, and energy production lands that have been abandoned or are ill-suited for production but would make high-quality habitat.





Pillar One

3. Water For Wildlife

America’s abundant waters are the lifeblood of the nation’s wildlife resources. Our rivers, streams, lakes, aquifers, springs, and wetlands are home to countless species of fish, mussels, and other aquatic life, and are also essential to the nation’s terrestrial wildlife. Over the years, however, most of our water bodies have been altered, and often diminished, as a direct or indirect consequence of human use. Nearly all our water resources have been affected by pollution and all are feeling the effects of climate change in the form of drought, heavy storms, temperature changes, and other impacts.

Water is a particularly valuable way to connect fish and wildlife conservation to benefits for people. This is because cleaner water means purer drinking supplies; more abundant water means more dependable supplies

for localities and agriculture; protection of stream flows supports inland and coastal fisheries, and more. To succeed in reversing the decline of wildlife populations, it will be necessary to restore aquatic ecosystems large and small, greatly reduce pollution from agriculture and cities, and find ways to meet human needs for water and for protection from floods, storms, and other natural hazards without destroying the habitat wildlife need to survive.

Water for Wildlife Goal: Our goal is to protect and restore the natural function and quality of the nation’s waters, wetlands, floodplains, and riparian areas to sustain healthy fish and wildlife populations.

Priority Strategies:



Use water management to support a riparian corridor network that provides pathways for wildlife movement across the American landscape.



Restore large-scale aquatic ecosystems with a particular focus on nationally and regionally significant water bodies (“Great Waters”).



Maintain Clean Water Act safeguards for wetlands, headwaters, and riparian areas.



Improve water quality in rivers, streams, and lakes by advancing federal, state, and private actions that reduce polluted runoff from rural and urban lands.



Expand the use of natural features, such as wetlands and floodplains, to reduce risks to people and wildlife from floods, storms, droughts, and water pollution.



Secure sufficient in-stream flows for fish and wildlife, especially in states and watersheds facing drought and water scarcity.



Maximize fish and wildlife conservation benefits from water development projects by removing harmful structures, improving operations, and preventing destructive projects.

Pillar One



4. Coasts

Our coastal areas are under constant development pressure, suffer from pollution, and face new challenges brought on by climate change, including sea-level rise and ocean warming and acidification. The Federation currently has a robust program, working with partners, on the restoration of the coastal wetlands of the Mississippi River Delta and on the ecological restoration of the Gulf of Mexico in the aftermath of the 2010 BP oil disaster. In the next four years, we will expand this work, with the long-term goal that coastal ecosystems are managed to reduce impacts of climate change and other coastal hazards in ways that protect coastal communities, economies, and important fish and wildlife habitat.

Coasts Goal: Our goal is to protect and restore coastal ecosystems to sustain fisheries and wildlife and to protect people and wildlife from rising sea levels and intensifying coastal storms.

Priority Strategies:



Accelerate restoration of large-scale coastal ecosystems and estuaries to reestablish their natural functioning and enhance their ability to adapt to sea-level rise.



Expand the use of nature-based coastal features, such as restored dunes, wetlands, and living shorelines, to reduce risks to people and wildlife from sea-level rise and extreme storms.



Advance federal, state, and private actions to protect coastal and near-shore marine ecosystems, including marine canyons.



Reform flood insurance and disaster preparedness/response programs to reduce development in flood-prone areas and focus mitigation measures on nature-based approaches to natural hazard risk reduction.





Pillar One

5. Communities

Eighty-five percent of Americans live in cities, towns, and urban counties. Whether in metropolitan or in rural areas, the attitudes of these community dwellers toward wildlife are vital to the recovery of wildlife populations. Cities, towns, and metro counties themselves are important to wildlife because they are typically located in areas where, originally, there was reliable water, good soil, and abundant game and vegetation. While heavily developed, America's 40,000 cities, towns, and counties, including those in rural areas, often contain valuable habitat—supporting not only resident but also migratory wildlife. These habitat areas are predominately located in local parks and open spaces that can be managed more effectively for wildlife. Measures to increase habitat include increasing the amount and availability of native plants and supporting water availability.

Communities Goal: Our goal is to create and connect wildlife habitat in cities, towns, and rural communities to benefit both wildlife and people.

Priority Strategies:



Pillar Two

Pillar Two:



Transform Wildlife Conservation

To reverse the decline of wildlife in the United States, actions to improve habitat are essential but are not enough. It will be imperative to manage wildlife with a focus on stabilizing and recovering species populations. The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation has had enormous successes, most notably state fish and wildlife agencies' progress recovering populations of iconic game species such as elk, mule deer, pronghorns, and many others. But many other species—critical to the food web but not as visible as the iconic species—are suffering declines, some of them dramatic. Better management of all species, game and nongame, iconic and inconspicuous, is the challenge that we must meet to recover wildlife in this country.

To truly transform wildlife management in the United States in ways that increase fish and wildlife populations we must:

- Advance 21st-Century Wildlife Management
- Confront Climate Change
- Defend Public Interests in Public Resources
- Address Systemic Threats to Wildlife

Success by 2021



Increased public funding for fish and wildlife conservation



Greater emphasis and effectiveness throughout the wildlife conservation community in creating thriving populations of species (game and nongame)



Expanded research, skill, and competency in the field for addressing rapid changes, including climate adaptation



Fish and wildlife community actively engaged in addressing emerging threats, including greenhouse gas emissions, invasive species, shifting disease vectors, and new and insidious forms of habitat loss and pollution



New “proof points” of wildlife recovery, such as bison restored to a key portion of their original range, increases in predator species, stabilization of other declining species, and more



Halt erosion of the public trust by preventing privatization of public lands and wildlife

[CLICK HERE for more detail.](#)

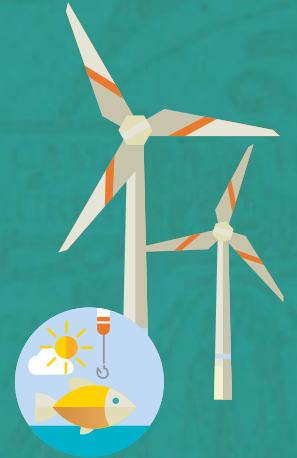
What We Will Do:



Secure

\$1.3 BILLION

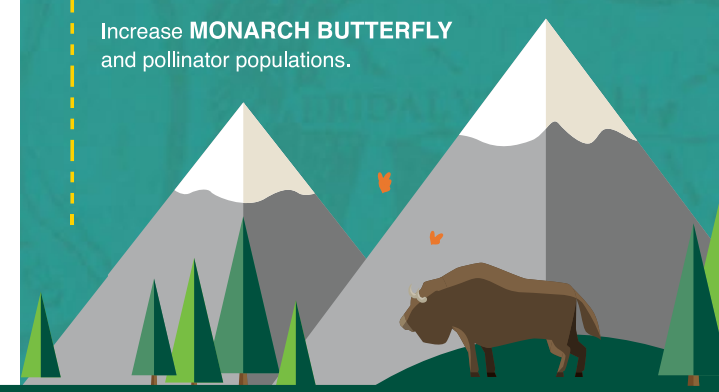
annually in new federal funding for state fish and wildlife agencies.



PARTNER WITH LOCAL VOICES in the hunting and fishing, recreation, agricultural, forestry, faith, business, tourism, and other sectors to build trust and support for action on clean energy, climate-friendly land and resource management, and climate adaptation practices.

Restore **BISON** to key tribal and public lands.

Increase **MONARCH BUTTERFLY** and pollinator populations.





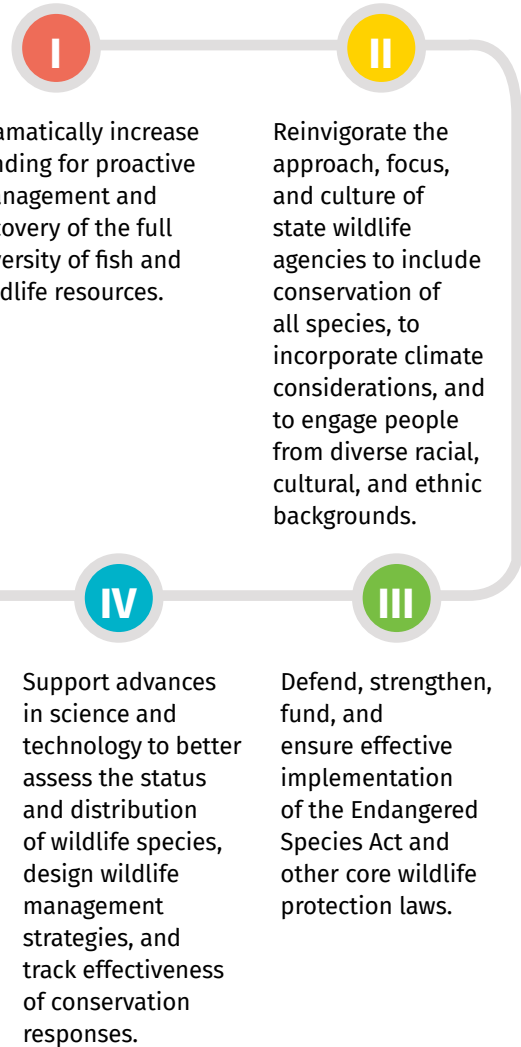
Pillar Two

1. Advance 21st-Century Wildlife Management

The system of fish and wildlife management that has developed over the last century has been responsible for great successes in managing wildlife and recovering some of our most treasured wildlife species. However, the fish and wildlife agencies responsible for these successes must expand their approaches to tackle emerging natural resource threats and remain relevant to a changing society. Twenty-first century wildlife management needs to include a multipronged effort to increase wildlife conservation funding to recover the full diversity of wildlife, alongside current funding for game species such as large mammals, waterfowl, and sportfish; broaden the constituency of fish and wildlife agencies; and expand the programs and services that agencies offer.

Advance 21st-Century Wildlife Management Goal: Our goal is to sustain strong wildlife agencies by enhancing their ability to address 21st-century wildlife management challenges and opportunities, including emerging wildlife threats, advances in science and technology, and shifting demographics.

Priority Strategies:



Pillar Two

2. Confront Climate Change

Climate change represents the most significant long-term threat to the survival of America's wildlife and will require aggressive action both on reducing the carbon pollution fueling global warming and on adapting to and coping with the impacts of rapid climate change. More assertive policies to curb greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration are vital to restore healthy fish and wildlife populations. The National Wildlife Federation, its affiliates, and its partners fill a unique niche in bringing the voice of wildlife and habitat into the national dialogue around climate solutions and in building support among hunters, anglers, outdoor enthusiasts, and rural communities. We are leaders on the issue of climate adaptation and will continue to promote "climate smart" policies and practices designed specifically to adapt to the scientific realities of climate change.

Priority Strategies:



I Build authentic non-partisan public support for local, state, regional, and private-sector policies that promote carbon reduction and natural resource solutions, including a comprehensive, economy-wide price on carbon.

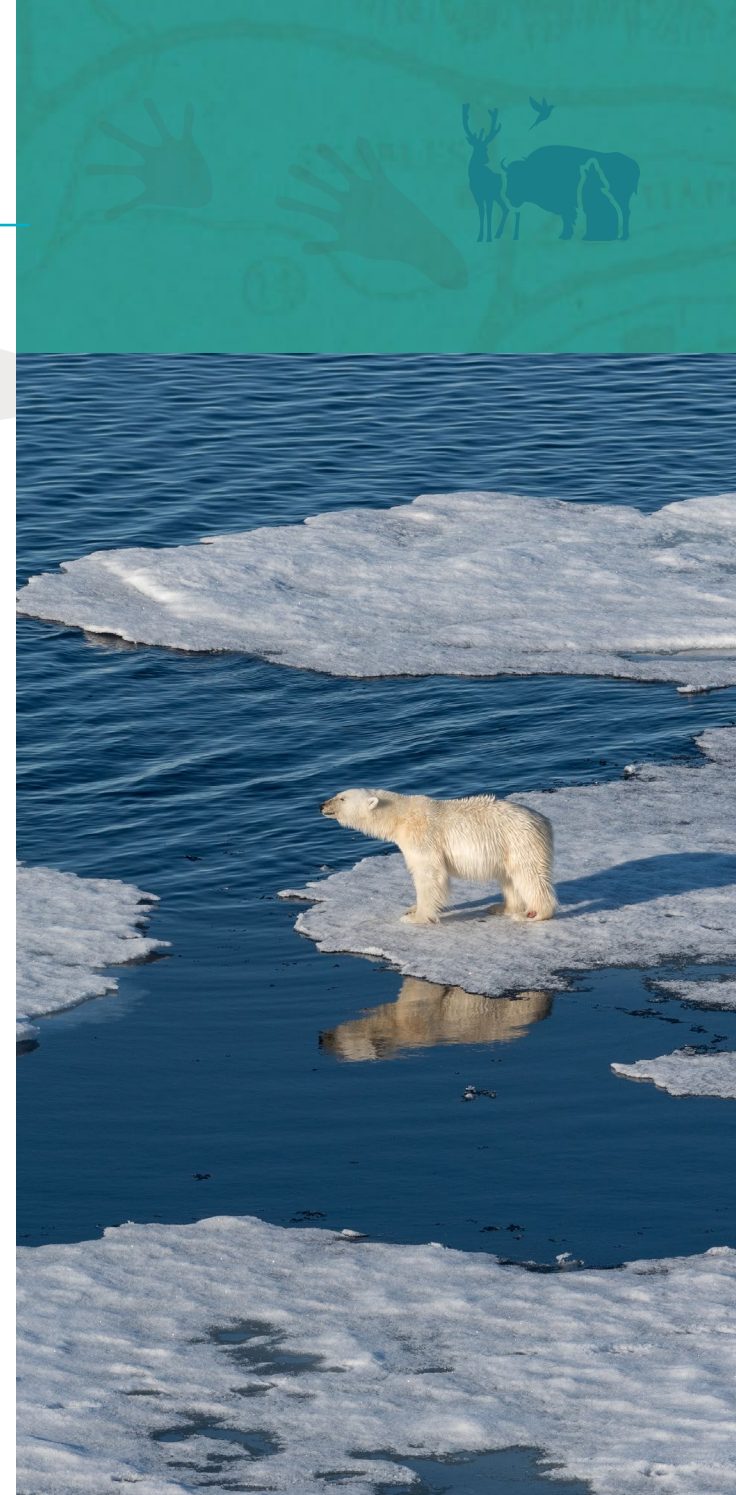
II Work with farmers, ranchers, and forest managers to adopt and regularly employ practices that sequester carbon while restoring wildlife habitat and natural resources.

III Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting wildlife-friendly clean energy and low-emission policies and projects, including expansion of offshore wind.

IV Advance climate adaptation at the federal, regional, state, and local levels to reduce risks from climate change to people and wildlife.

V Support climate solutions that help people from diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, and faith backgrounds.

Confront Climate Change Goal: Our goal is to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, increase carbon sequestration, and advance the science and practice of climate adaptation to minimize climate impacts on people and wildlife, while maximizing economic benefits from clean energy.





Pillar Two

3. Defend Public Interests In Public Resources

Fish and wildlife are owned by the general public and are accessible to those willing to abide by the rules set down by public agencies that work to protect and enhance our natural resources. Attempts to place wildlife in private hands, such as farms for deer, or to transfer habitat lands from public to private ownership, such as efforts to sell off federal public land, infringe on the public trust.

Defend Public Interests in Public Resources

Goal: Our goal is to ensure wildlife remain in the public trust and advance public ownership of and access to public lands and waters.

Priority Strategies:



Activate a broad coalition to defeat efforts to transfer and privatize public lands and reinforce a shared national commitment to their collective stewardship and ownership.



Partner with affiliates to defend and expand public access to streams, rivers, lakes, and other waterways.



Protect the authority of state wildlife agencies to manage wildlife and defeat efforts to privatize and commoditize wildlife.



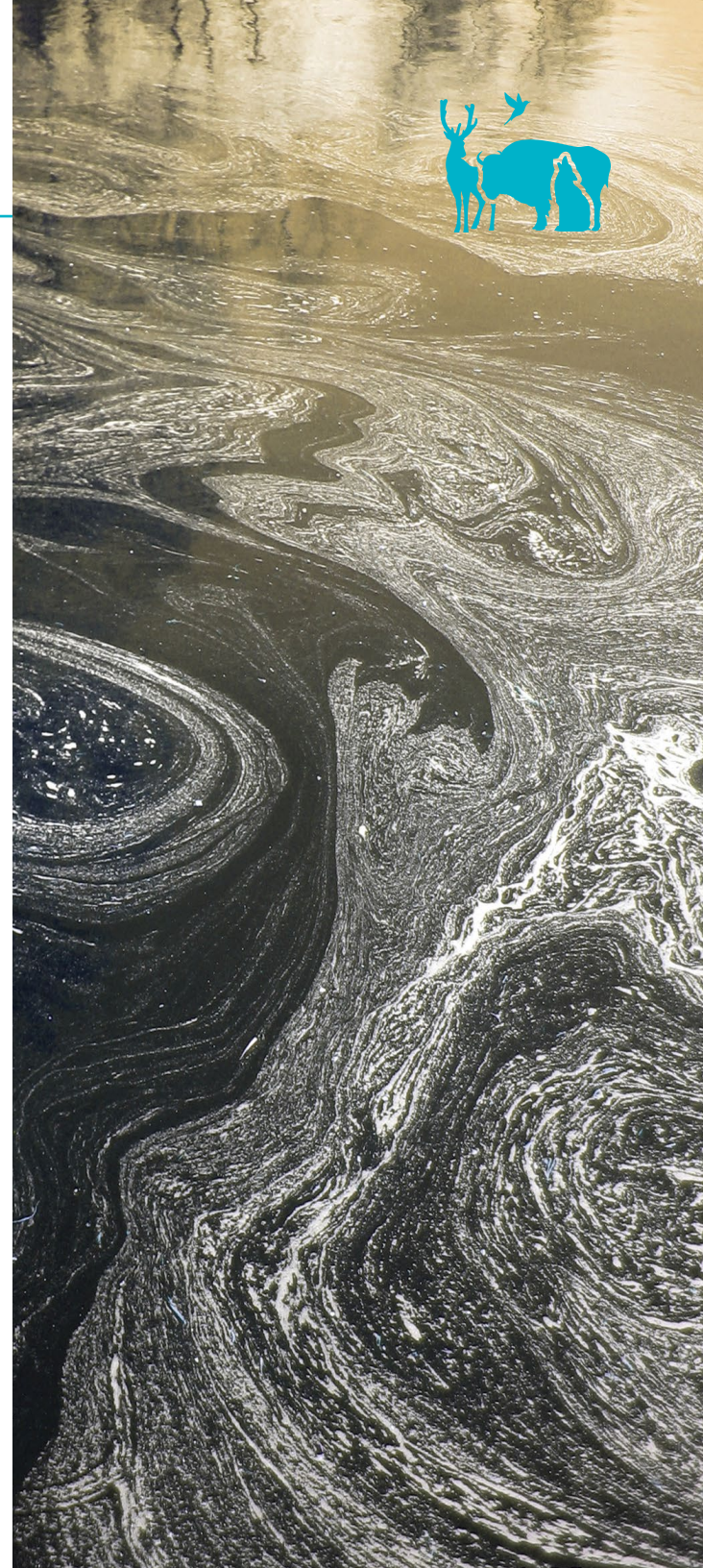
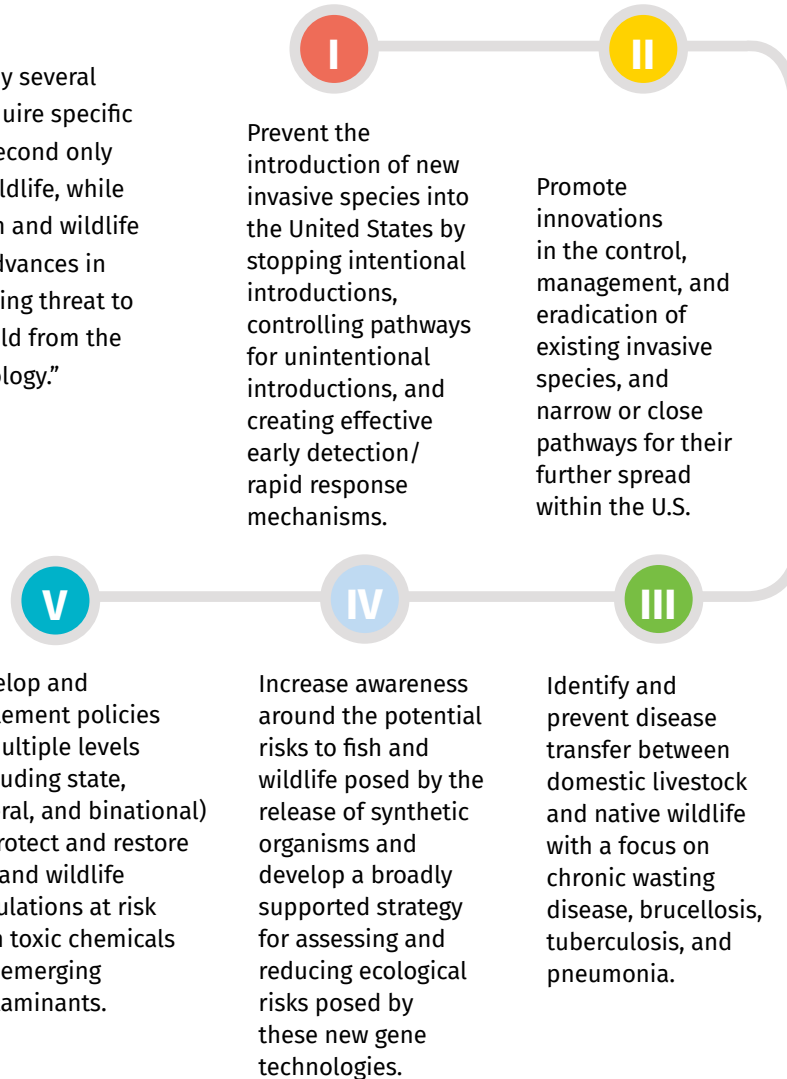
Pillar Two

4. Address Systemic Threats to Wildlife

Wildlife managers are being confronted by several widespread and systemic threats that require specific attention. Harmful invasive species are second only to habitat loss in their threat to native wildlife, while disease is taking an increasing toll on fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. Recent advances in gene editing technologies pose an emerging threat to wildlife with possible releases into the wild from the largely unregulated field of “synthetic biology.”

Address Systemic Threats to Wildlife Goal: Our goal is to aggressively attack the threat of invasive species, wildlife disease, and other significant threats to fish and wildlife.

Priority Strategies:



Pillar Three

Pillar Three:



Connect Americans with Wildlife

The habitat and management changes we seek are sweeping, ambitious, and imperative for wildlife and people, but they will not happen easily; they will require substantial changes to our civil society and culture. So it is only natural that people live at the heart of this strategic plan for wildlife.

To achieve the vision of increasing fish and wildlife populations—our Common Agenda for Wildlife—we will need to build unprecedented levels of public engagement and support. The Federation was built on the principle that coordinated effort and collaborative action are critical to conservation. Tens of millions of people and thousands of organizations will need to find common cause with this plan for it to be a success over a generation. We recognize that the Federation alone will not carry the full load. Our approach will be to create a movement with a common agenda and shared ownership and accountability for advancing that agenda. Our goal is to inspire, empower, and grow a movement of tens of millions of Americans by building relationships that are powerful and transformational.

A Three-Tiered Conservation Army-Building Strategy

We will develop a constituency plan of action that will help the Federation, its affiliates, and its other colleague organizations to achieve a vision of thriving fish and wildlife populations within a generation. We use the term “army” to convey a large movement of people committed to a vision of helping fish and wildlife populations. Our army must be reflective of the Federation’s uniquely diverse culture and be prepared to operate at massive and variable scales. Our army-building approach will need to be targeted, yet diverse and broad. This is a state, territories, metro, rural, and regional approach.

[CLICK HERE
for more detail.](#)

Pillar Three

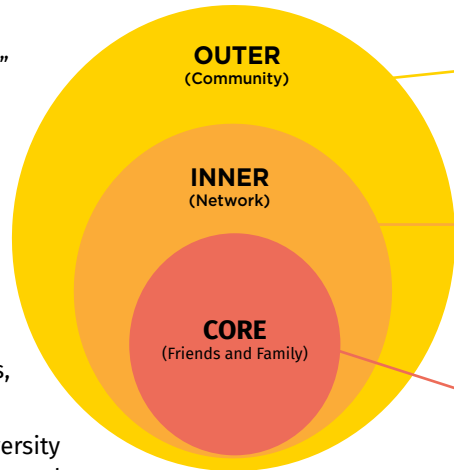


Levels of Engagement

Our fish and wildlife conservation “army” starts with the Federation and our 51 state and territorial affiliates and branches out through our publications, partners, and coalitions to engage 11 million people by 2021.

Ambitious and Pragmatic Approach

- Unprecedented levels of cooperation between organizations, agencies, and businesses.
- Erect a big tent reflective of the diversity of American people in race, ethnicity, culture, and political orientation.
- Clearly communicate our shared vision to the public, local decision-makers, business, and community leaders.
- Empower people where they live and work to take local action and support policies and practices that protect wildlife.
- Instill a love of nature among today’s children and youth through education and outdoor experiences to prepare the next generation of leaders capable of answering tomorrow’s sustainability challenges.



Transactional relationships, taking actions to advocate for and protect wildlife

Example: Community creates Certified Wildlife Habitat for pollinators

Transitional relationships, collaborating and supporting wildlife conservation

Example: Regional watershed coalition advocates for habitat protections

Transformational relationships, leading efforts to protect wildlife and habitat

Example: Affiliate leaders engage with their elected officials to support funding to protect wildlife

Success by 2021



11 million wildlife activists



10,000 influential leaders



A movement as diverse as America



25 million young people



300,000 educators and 20,000 schools



Career training for 2 million young adults

What We Will Do:

- Organize an active network of 11 million people willing to fight for and promote fish and wildlife conservation, including at least 10,000 high-level influential leaders.
- Reflect the full diversity of American society (urban, rural, racial, ethnic, cultural, and spanning the political spectrum) in the network of 11 million people.
- Identify and engage bipartisan and geographically diverse elected officials at the local, state, and federal level.
- Engage 25 million young people in conservation education and meaningful, recurring outdoor experiences that will connect them to nature and teach them to be skilled and effective in conservation as adults.
- Enlist the support of 300,000 educators, 20,000 K-12 schools, 1,000 college-level institutions, 5,000 early childhood centers, and 1,000 state and local park agencies.
- Provide higher education and career development training for 2 million young adults.





Pillar Three

1. Conservation Stewardship Ethic

Nationally, there is growing support for the core principles of sustainability—environment, economy, and equity. This paradigm will give strength to the conservation movement and can also be helpful in healing some of the major divides in America. People share an appreciation for wildlife and nature, and while they may have differing views on subjects such as government land purchase or regulation for environmental protection, most will agree that nature is important to them and their families.

Conservation Stewardship Ethic Goal: We aim to unite Americans in an ethical commitment to the sustainable use of land, water, soil, and vegetation that will balance human needs with those of thriving wildlife populations.

Priority Strategy:



Conduct a major background assessment of ethical frames, pertinent social science, and educational practices needed to build a broader conservation ethic and bring it to fruition on a large scale.



Institute a Federation-wide culture that employs social science research and survey information for robust data-driven message development to achieve a major increase in public support for wildlife, resource conservation, and climate change solutions across diverse segments of American society.



Develop and enhance pilot stewardship-ethics training and orientation projects for several key audiences.



Pillar Three



2. Next Generation of Conservationists

Modern life has removed the traditional nature play many of today's adults experienced as children and has replaced it with indoor activities, organized sports, digital gaming, and more, leading to a lost connection between children and nature. Such a disconnection from the natural world threatens the heart and soul of the wildlife conservation movement. Additionally, today's educational system needs to be much more effective at educating children on the underlying principles of nature and wildlife.

Next Generation of Conservationists Goal: Our goal is to instill a love of nature and wildlife in one-third of America's children through nature experiences and provide them with the nature-based knowledge and skills they will need to succeed as global citizens and future stewards of our planet.



Priority Strategies:



Launch a concerted national effort to connect a diverse cohort of 21 million children, teens and young adults to nature by providing them with ongoing nature and outdoor programming that is richly affirming via schools, childcare centers, local and regional park agencies, scouting, and other large-scale venues.



Provide organized and pedagogically sound conservation and environmental education to 20 million young people that will create in them a lasting base of environmental literacy, stewardship, and problem-solving skills.



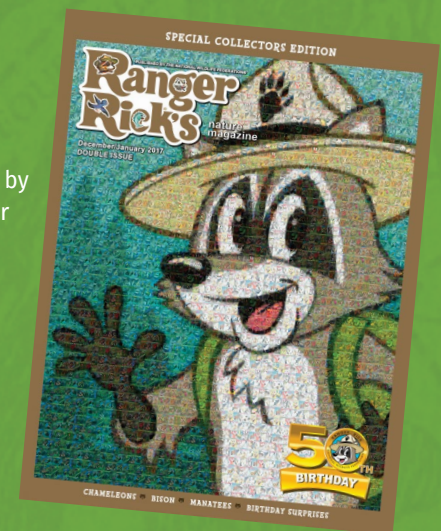
Provide support and educational resources to help 2 million young people build conservation and sustainability career and job skills into their higher education and professional lives.



Engage youth in civic action, support of policy campaigns, and legislative reforms.



Instill a love of nature in children by increasing Ranger Rick, Ranger Rick Jr., and Ranger Rick Cub subscriptions to 5 million per year.





Pillar Three

3. Broaden the Wildlife Constituency

The Federation will build a larger and more diverse big tent of individuals and institutions to take action in support of a Common Agenda for Wildlife. This will include continued work with people across the political spectrum, states, cities, counties, towns, and media partners, as well as the huge cohort of agencies and organizations that have the ability to directly improve conditions for fish and wildlife. We need to improve their ability to work together on a common agenda through activities such as place-based campaigns, while leading or strengthening coalitions for wildlife, clean air and water, and public lands in all 50 states and territories.

Broaden the Wildlife Constituency Goal: Our goal is to grow and diversify an army of engaged individuals and institutions demonstrating a stewardship ethic and a commitment to increase wildlife populations.

In addition to the Federation’s close partnership with its affiliates, many others will be engaged, including:

- Conservation and environmental organizations, federal land management and agricultural agencies, state natural resource departments, transportation agencies, local watershed and coastal conservation organizations, land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, parks, nature centers, zoos, gardens, school districts, campuses, garden clubs, neighborhood and homeowner associations, and more.
- Hundreds of private corporations and businesses to play a leadership role in supporting the Common Agenda for Wildlife.

Priority Strategies:



Grow and enlist the National Wildlife Federation’s millions of members and supporters to champion and execute a Common Agenda for Wildlife.



Collaboratively create and build capacity with the affiliates to execute the Common Agenda for Wildlife.



Deepen partnerships with the National Wildlife Federation’s traditional constituencies—hunters and anglers, birders, gardeners, tribes, outdoor industries, farmers, ranchers, other landowners, and citizen science networks.



Transform the Federation through increased partnerships and more active engagement with diverse groups and by living the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Enlist the corporate sector and their suppliers in using and promoting pro-wildlife practices.

Pillar Three



4. Build Power for Wildlife

We will grow a movement—a conservation army—of 11 million Americans. This will require unprecedented engagement across the Federation and beyond. Our army-building methods will need to be targeted, yet diverse and broad. This is a state, territories, metro, rural, and regional approach. The conservation army will use its collective power to engage elected representatives on the priorities of the Common Agenda for Wildlife and recruit more champions for wildlife.

Build Power for Wildlife Goal: We will engage a diverse conservation army to take action to increase wildlife populations.

Priority Strategies:



I Build a larger, more diverse “big tent” of individuals and institutions taking action in support of the Common Agenda for Wildlife, including a broad spectrum of political ideologies, cities and towns, identity groups (gender/age/race), and media partners.

II Increase support by state legislatures and governors for wildlife conservation.

III Develop and resource an action plan to engage millions of voters in support of local, state, and national pro-wildlife initiatives and policies.

IV Identify and engage a bipartisan and geographically diverse cadre of members of Congress who champion wildlife conservation.





Change Starts with Us

[CLICK HERE for more detail.](#)



Growing Capacity through Investment, Integration, and Innovation

Leading a Common Agenda—What Will It Take?

Increasing wildlife populations in the long run demands bold action in the short run. Implementation of this plan will require the National Wildlife Federation and our affiliates to examine current ways of working and explore new ways to make measurable gains as One Federation. We know that the change we want to make starts with us.

What's Not Changing: Our Commitment to Collaboration

The National Wildlife Federation's diverse constituency of millions of hunters, anglers, birders, gardeners, campers, and outdoor enthusiasts from all walks of life, political affiliations, and demographic groups makes us different from other groups. Along with our sister organization, the National Wildlife Federation Action Fund, we hold fast to the belief that even as our nation struggles to find common ground politically, we can unite Americans around the cause of wildlife conservation.

The Federation is proud of its 80+ year history of successful partnerships. We will need to be even more intentional partners and engage an increasingly diverse list of new and existing partners across the conservation movement to co-lead the Common Agenda for Wildlife toward a level of collective impact none of us could ever achieve on our own.

Continued Planning FY2018-FY2021

Strategic planning is just the first component of a multi-year planning effort that extends through FY2021. Over the next four years, the Federation will engage affiliate, regional staff, and key partners in joint planning along concurrent tracks to more fully realize our vision.



Change Starts with Us

5 Priorities for a Stronger, Sustainable National Wildlife Federation

1. One Federation Supporting the Common Agenda for Wildlife

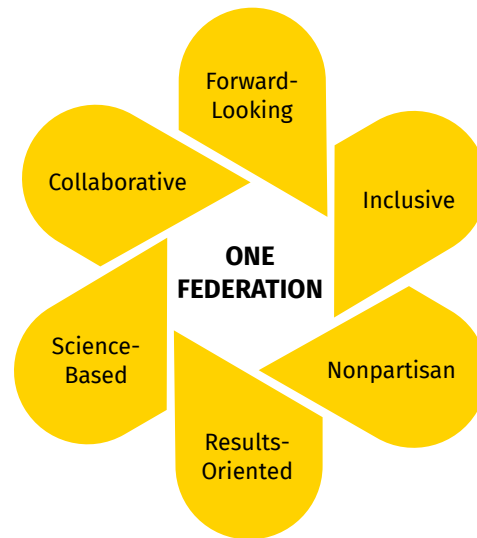
Vision – The component parts of the National Wildlife Federation—51 state/territorial affiliates, regional offices, and national organization—are committed to a shared vision for **uniting all Americans to ensure that wildlife thrive in a rapidly changing world.** The uniquely American Federation model is unrivalled within the conservation community. It has been the foundation for 80+ years of success because it directly links the grassroots to the highest levels of power. One Federation takes the Federation model to a new level. It moves us (affiliates, regional offices, and the national organization) from transactional relationships to transformational relationships.

We are One Federation because:

- We share values, vision, and plans
- We use our combined talents and resources as a force-multiplier
- We are based in diverse and local communities, reaching all levels of power

We act as One Federation by:

- Being “First Partners”
- Joining together on common/shared work, but also retaining independence
- Strengthening individual and institutional relationships

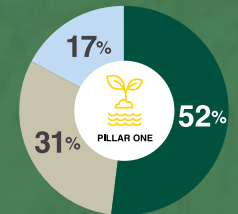


Culture – As we collectively create the conditions for wildlife to thrive in a rapidly changing world, our success as One Federation requires an organizational culture that promotes openness to change, adaptation, and innovation. Our culture helps our Federation to “learn forward”—ensuring that we consistently use the best of what we know to inform what we do.

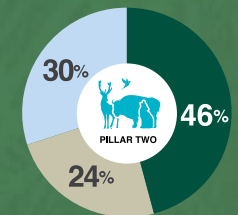


Scope of Change

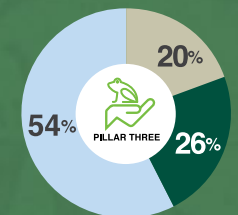
While the goals of this strategic plan are high-reaching, the Federation is not starting from scratch. In fact, the Federation has robust programs standing behind the majority of strategies in the plan, though many will need to be scaled up or modified. Programs that do not align with this strategic plan will be phased out and resources reallocated to new or expanded programs and initiatives that deliver our four-year goals and advance our 30-year vision.



Protect, Restore, Connect Wildlife Habitat



Transform Wildlife Conservation



Connect Americans with Wildlife

Existing Pivot New



Change Starts with Us

2. Organizational Development

Essential, internal changes will impact every part of our organization, processes, and infrastructure to make the Federation stronger and more nimble. An organization-wide alignment with the plan and commitment to make the plan part of everything we do is vital to the successful achievement of our Common Agenda.

3. Expanded Capacity and Expertise

The plan calls for the Federation to build capacity and expertise in a variety of areas:

- **Programs** – wildlife management, ecological and habitat science, social science, western water, marine policy, education, grassroots constituency building, and community sustainability.
- **Operations** – fundraising, communications, social media/digital resources, and brand marketing.

This expanded capacity and expertise will require the addition of more than 160 regional and national staff and potentially 100+ affiliate staff by 2021.

4. Innovative Brands, Products and Services

With the benefit of having one of the most trusted brands in conservation, the Federation is well positioned to capitalize on brand awareness in ways that bring attention to our Common Agenda and increase revenues. We will innovate to catch the imagination and wildlife passion of the public while increasing brand awareness, communicating our mission, and expanding our flexible funding sources.



Change Starts with Us

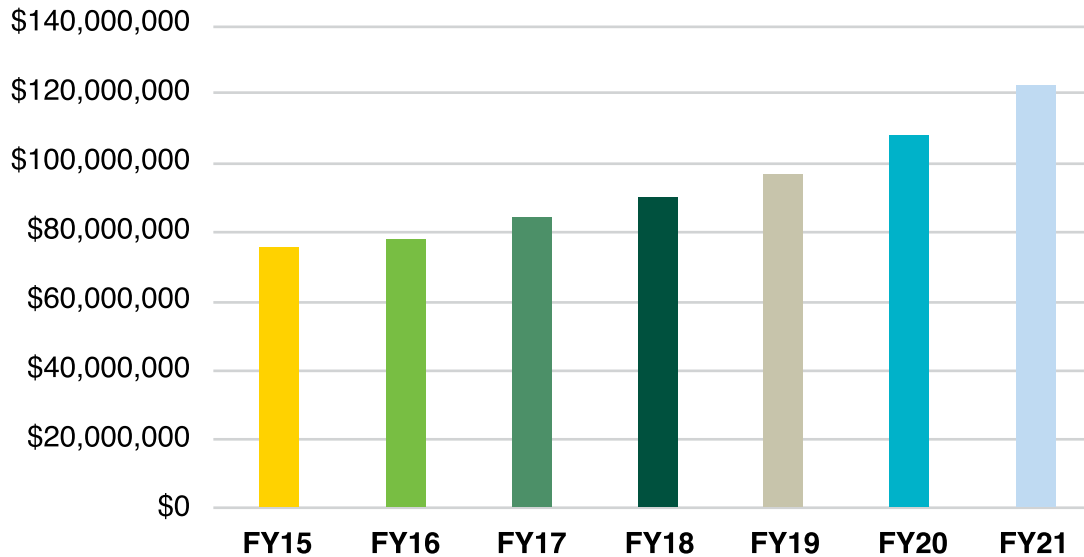


5. Significant Revenue Growth

Real change requires real investment. The National Wildlife Federation plans to significantly grow its revenues over the next four years, including new sources of flexible funding, to ensure we can deliver successful programs while at the same time providing the level of innovation needed to advance results at scale. Our goal is to achieve robust, year-over-year

revenue growth from FY2018 through FY2021 with a target to increase the Federation's overall budget from a projected \$85 million in FY2017 to \$120-\$140 million per year by FY2021. In addition, we anticipate joint fundraising with affiliates yielding an additional \$10 million or more per year for affiliates to sustain and enhance their state and local efforts.

Actual and Aspirational Revenue Targets



Most of the Federation's planned revenue growth will come from six sources:

